

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Friday, 28 July 2017

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A****Chair:**

Ms F.E. Bedford

**Members:**

Mr T.S. Bell

Ms N.F. Cook

Mr J.A. Gardner

Mr J.P. Gee

Mr T.J. Whetstone

*The committee met at 09:00***DEPARTMENT OF STATE DEVELOPMENT, \$683,049,000****ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE DEVELOPMENT, \$13,911,000****Minister:**

Hon. S.E. Close, Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Higher Education and Skills.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr M. Duffy, Chief Executive, Department of State Development.

Ms A. Reid, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of State Development.

Mr J. King, Executive Director, Skills and Employment, Department of State Development.

Ms P. Chau, Director, Performance and Governance, Department of State Development.

Mr R. Murt, Chief Executive, TAFE SA.

Mr J. Eastwood, Director, Finance, Centre of Excellence, TAFE SA.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome to committee A, as we gather on Kurna land for the estimates committees, which are relatively informal and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed to an approximate time for the consideration of proposed payments, which will facilitate a change of departmental advisers. Can the minister and lead speaker for the opposition confirm that the timetable for today's proceedings as previously distributed is accurate?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, I agree.

**Mr GARDNER:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure the Chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 27 October 2017. This year, estimate committee responses will be published during the 14 November sitting week in corrected *Daily Hansard* over a three-day period.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements of about 10 minutes each, should they wish. 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 ask a question at the discretion of the Chair. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced at the beginning of the question. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*.

There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the committee; however, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution to the committee. Incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the house, that is, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the minister, not the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response.

During the committee's examinations, television cameras will be permitted to film from both the northern and southern galleries. If there is anyone in those galleries, I ask that they turn their phones to silent. On that procedure, I open the following lines of examination: the portfolio is State Development and the minister appearing is the Minister for Higher Education and Skills.

I have some changes to the committee. I advise that the following members have requested to be discharged: the members for Goyder, Wright, Elder and Unley, and they have been replaced by the members for Morialta, Fisher, Napier and Chaffey.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 4. I call on the minister to make a statement, if she wishes, and to introduce her advisers. You may make a statement if you wish, minister, and introduce your advisers.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I would like to introduce my advisers and then give a brief opening statement. On my right I have Robin Murt, who is the Chief Executive of TAFE SA. On my left is Alex Reid, the Deputy Chief Executive of the Department of State Development, and on her left is John King, Executive Director, Skills and Employment. Behind me is Mark Duffy, the Chief Executive of the department; Phuong Chau, who is the Director of Performance and Governance; and Jason Eastwood, who is the Director of Finance in the Centre of Excellence in TAFE SA.

I will make a brief opening statement, and thank you, Chair, for acknowledging country. South Australia is transitioning to a new economy based on innovation technology and knowledge-based services. Industry structures, job requirements and skills needs are changing rapidly, and our forecasts suggest that this will continue. Skills and qualifications will provide the backbone to support the state government's \$200 million Future Jobs Fund, announced in the recent state budget, and to supply skilled workers for our \$9.5 billion investment in infrastructure over the next four years.

It is important that our investment in training is sustainable. We prioritise areas where we will get the best results and the most value by understanding the varied and changing needs of people: groups such as small businesses, projects—like those in defence—places and regions, and sectors, for example, disability.

The Training and Skills Commission provides us with world-class economic modelling and advice on industry priorities for qualifications. In May this year, the commission released its Skills for Future Jobs 2020 Series, which explores critical issues affecting the South Australian VET sector and provides a platform for industry to address our economy's skills and workforce development needs. The state government's WorkReady policy targets public investment in the VET system's skills and employment activity.

Earlier this year, I launched the first annual Skills Investment Plan for 2017-18. The plan outlines the directions for the state government's \$290 million investment in training and skills initiatives for the next financial year and makes our decision-making process transparent. It will support industry and training providers to plan their involvement in a more sustainable, open and contestable market where people and businesses have a greater choice of training and support services.

The plan emphasises sustainability, market stability, simpler processes, faster responses and making funds available to the market sooner. Under this plan, we will focus on the state's key industry sectors, including traditional trade areas of automotive services, building and construction and electrotechnology, health and community services, in particular the National Disability Insurance Scheme, primary industries and defence. This year, through adjustments that refined WorkReady, we have made initiatives more flexible and cut red tape. In 2017-18, more courses will be available through the subsidised training list, more places and courses will be available via submission, the funding processes will be made simpler and faster and providers will receive funding sooner.

The bulk of our investment—around \$260 million—will support approximately 70,000 students to study around 350 vocational qualifications on the state's subsidised training list. Importantly, both students and industry will have more choice. For example, in 2017-18 there are an additional 20 courses open to private sector registered training organisations on the STL (subsidised training list). There are now around 160 courses where students have a choice of training provider for subsidised training, which is a 40 per cent increase since 2015. Private sector registered training organisations can now apply to subsidise any qualification or national skill set where there is a tight link to specific jobs. The course does not need to be on the STL.

The South Australian government remains committed to the public provider and the role it plays in providing services to the training communities statewide, including our very important regional areas. As the state's largest operating provider, TAFE SA continues to be an important and strategic presence. It is integral to a stable, reliable and innovative training sector. Through the WorkReady implementation process, the state government is supporting TAFE SA under the stewardship of its independent board in its transformation to operate in a more competitive environment.

TAFE SA will continue to strengthen its role in delivering the skills needed for our transforming state economy, supporting the government's economic priorities and looking at innovative ways to provide training that drives growth, sustainability and diversification for South Australia's businesses and broader community. In South Australia, we also need to make more room for private and not-for-profit providers.

Our investment in training and skills for South Australians seeks to ensure the state has the workforce capabilities to underpin the development of a high-skill economy. It also supports our participation objectives by helping South Australians equip themselves for jobs in a modern labour market. The more people participating in education, training, and ultimately employment, the stronger and more resilient our economy and our community will be.

A key element of our Skills Investment Plan is to ensure that people who need additional assistance, who are vulnerable and who have complex needs, are supported and not left behind by economic transition. The plan supports apprentices, trainees and school-enrolled students seeking entry level qualifications, as well as people out of work or facing unemployment, including workers connected to the automotive industry, to gain skills, retrain and find jobs.

WorkReady investment offers access for people who need to build their foundation skills before embarking on vocational training or reconnecting with work. We are working closely with industry, the training sector, local communities and people accessing services to ensure that training expenditure is targeted at areas of greatest need and supports our economic transition.

The changes we are making to provide greater choice for students increase transparency of decision-making and deliver funds to providers sooner, and they have been extremely well received by stakeholders—both employers and training providers, who have commended the department for its approach to listening to the needs of stakeholders and then streamlining initiatives and procedures to respond. They are improving our ability to help South Australians develop the skills they need for the jobs we need. I now welcome questions.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 105, the TAFE SA Strategic Plan. Can the minister update the committee on how TAFE is progressing towards the full contestability we are expecting to see in 2019? What will TAFE's key roles be in 2019?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** TAFE SA is required to operate in a competitive market environment in accordance with the government's approach to the publicly funded VET system, as set out in the WorkReady policy. However, in doing so, TAFE SA is required to address both commercial and non-commercial objectives. In accordance with the TAFE SA charter, as the minister, I can require the corporation to contribute to government policy objectives by undertaking non-commercial operations.

To support the government's policy objectives, all WorkReady subsidised training activity undertaken by TAFE SA in 2015-16 and 2016-17 has been on a non-commercial basis. This arrangement acknowledges the importance of the sustainability of TAFE SA services in priority areas of training across the state to the stability of the VET system.

The arrangement also provides TAFE SA with time to implement changes that are required to both improve competitiveness and prepare for commercial exposure in those areas identified by the government as being suited to commercial funding arrangements. In line with the phased implementation of WorkReady, TAFE SA will be exposed to an increasing number of subsidised courses that are identified as commercial.

In relation to commercial activity, TAFE SA is obliged to operate in accordance with the Public Corporations Act, which requires that commercial operations must be performed in accordance with prudent commercial principles. The 2016-19 TAFE SA Strategic Plan clarifies that the mission of the corporation includes the delivery of sustainable training and education in a competitive environment. In supporting this mission, TAFE SA is implementing a range of initiatives aimed at becoming more customer-oriented, implementing innovations in the way training is accessed and delivered, and reducing costs.

In order to give you a more specific answer to your question, in 2016-17, following discussion with the Department of State Development, TAFE SA identified courses that could be delivered under commercial terms and conditions, that is, at the same rate of subsidy being paid to TAFE and non-TAFE providers. The identification of courses has been supported by the training review reform undertaken by TAFE SA.

In 2017-18, the Certificate II in Horticulture is available on commercial terms and conditions, and approximately 300 places are available to eligible students in 2017-18. In line with its charter, TAFE SA is required to ensure a separation between its commercial activities and its non-commercial activities, and the department is in the process of identifying milestones for 2018-19, which will be informed by the lessons from 2017-18 and TAFE's ongoing transition.

**Mr GARDNER:** The minister just identified that the department is in the process of identifying milestones for 2017-18. Perhaps she can clarify which financial year she is talking about and when that work will be complete.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We anticipate releasing the STL in May of next year and we will be ready before then to identify the milestones for the following financial year for TAFE SA.

**Mr GARDNER:** At the moment, is the minister satisfied that TAFE SA is on track to be in a position to implement those changes she described previously to enable TAFE SA to engage in that competitive environment? Is the minister satisfied that TAFE is on track?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** TAFE has undertaken an extraordinary effort in modernising its service operations. It has made significant savings in the process and is operating extremely professionally, so I have no reason not to believe that they are well on their way to the contestability anticipated by the end of 2018-19.

**Mr GARDNER:** While on TAFE, can you advise what the most current board fees are for TAFE SA board members, including the chair?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The total remuneration for board membership for 2016-17 was \$518,000.

**Mr GARDNER:** How much of that was for the chair and how much for the board members?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Remuneration for the chair was just under \$100,000 and the remainder was divided amongst the board members.

**Mr GARDNER:** Going to page 99, the financial commentary says that at this stage the government has not reached an agreement with the states on the proposed replacement Skilling Australians Fund. Can the minister advise where the state government is up to in talks with the commonwealth about this fund and what contribution the state government might make to that program?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** A ministerial council meeting in Brisbane in early September has been pencilled in and it is our expectation that it will be much further advanced by then. Officials have been working on the terms of the Skilling Australians Fund. However, I note that the legislation has not yet been presented to federal parliament in order to create that fund. The fund has been established through a levy on 457 visa workers. Employers are having to pay a levy if they employ 457 visa workers. To do that requires legislation. We do not yet know how that legislation will emerge from federal parliament. While we will be significantly advanced in our agreed views on how the fund might be constructed and what it can be spent on, I do not see how that can be a final view until the legislation is through.

I take this opportunity to note that I find it concerning that the federal government has decided to so tightly link the revenue and the expenditure. Governments have a right to raise revenue, but to put in peril funds for training Australians by how many 457 visas there are in any given year at a time when our economy is going through such dramatic transition, when we most need to ensure that there are sufficient training dollars and that they are spent sensibly, to me is highly problematic, but that is a decision that the federal government has made. I look forward to the papers being presented to us for the September meeting in order to understand how far along we are in agreeing on how those funds ought to be spent.

We have had one ministerial council meeting. The fund itself essentially came out of the blue. We had been given to understand that there would be no further national partnership on training. Then through the budget process, assistant minister Karen Andrews rang me the night before to tell me that there would be a fund, and I appreciate that she did that. In policy terms, it came out of the blue that we were informed that there would be this fund and what its construction would be. We have had one meeting since then, which was a useful meeting in terms of trying to define the most useful way to spend those funds, and I look forward to the next one.

**Mr BELL:** I might just go back to salary and board payments. Last year, the chair was paid \$37,000 plus a retainer of \$48,000, giving a total of \$85,000. You have now indicated that payment has gone up to close to \$100,000. Can you break down the actual payment for the chair plus the retainer to get to that \$100,000, plus the annual fee per board member, plus retainer per board member?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Certainly, and you are right about the two elements of the payment for the chair, but you are missing a third element. This remuneration is constructed in three elements. There is a base remuneration, which is \$37,000 for the chair and \$24,000 for each of the board members. In addition, there is an attraction and retention allowance. The chair receives \$48,000 and board members receive \$23,000. Then, for participating on board committees, the chair receives \$10,000 a year and board members receive \$5,000 a year.

**Mr BELL:** Can you inform me how many times the board has met in the last six months?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will take that on notice and inform you.

**Mr BELL:** Any idea? Three times, five times?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** In no way do I want to be unhelpful, but I do not really like guessing and being vague in estimates, so I would rather take that on notice. They have certainly met frequently, but I would like to give you a precise number, and we will be able to do that reasonably quickly.

**Mr BELL:** Thank you, minister. While we are on salaries, can you indicate to the committee the salary of Robin Murt, the CEO?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The CE's package is \$325,000 and there is an additional \$50,000 that is tagged as a performance bonus that requires the CE to meet certain performance targets to the satisfaction of the board.

**Mr BELL:** In the last financial year, was that \$50,000 at-risk salary component paid and, if so, how much?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Some of the performance was paid and some was not. I believe that TAFE SA is already on notice with the Budget and Finance Committee to give the precise figure, and I am happy to supply that also through this process.

**Mr BELL:** This might be through Budget and Finance as well: are there other executives on an at-risk component? If so, how many and to what value?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** For 2015-16, six TAFE SA executives participated in the performance allowance process. I will have to return with the answers to the other questions you asked about the figures.

**Mr BELL:** On page 104, \$3.7 million was tagged as once-off costs associated with the TAFE enterprise agreement. Can the minister explain what that \$3.7 million was for? I am particularly interested in whether these were lawyer fees associated with the negotiation.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am informed that the vast majority of that figure was back pay because the negotiations went past the termination of the previous agreement.

**Mr BELL:** It was not for lawyers or those acting on the department's behalf?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am informed that there were not any lawyer fees included in that and, as I say, the vast majority was back pay. We can get some details about the bit that is not back pay.

**Mr BELL:** That would be great, thank you. I want to turn the minister's attention to page 99 and lease arrangements. In the budget paper, there is a \$73.9 million increase in income, primarily due to a net loss on disposal of TAFE SA campus assets to Renewal SA of \$113 million and a net loss on disposal of the Millicent campus of \$2.2 million. Can the minister explain this process and how there is an increase in income due to a net loss on disposal of key assets?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The answer comes from the Department of State Development, as opposed to TAFE SA, because TAFE is a lessor of the properties rather than the holder of the properties. Every five years, the department's land and buildings are re-evaluated by an independent certified practising valuer. Given this periodic review of asset valuations, it is possible that asset values are not reflective of the current market conditions. A net loss of disposal and assets occurs where the sales proceeds received are less than the current value reported in the balance sheet of the asset. This loss is disclosed in DSD's Agency Statement of comprehensive income as negative income.

You asked a specific question about the Millicent campus. A net loss on the sale of approximately \$2.2 million was recorded for the sale of the Millicent campus to the Department for Education and Child Development. The net loss is likewise due to the sales proceeds received being less than the value reported in DSD's asset register.

**Mr BELL:** Could you indicate how much DSD was receiving in rental income before the assets were sold? How much was TAFE paying DSD to lease those buildings?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** For all campuses or for Millicent?

**Mr BELL:** For all campuses. My calculation was about \$41.2 million, but I just want to check whether that is close to the mark.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Given that we do not have terribly long, I will take that on notice so that we give you an accurate answer and you can keep asking questions.

**Mr BELL:** Can the minister indicate how much it now costs to rent all the facilities back from Renewal SA?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Equally, I will take that on notice. We will be able to provide that reasonably quickly.

**Mr BELL:** Whilst on notice, this one may be able to be determined quickly. I believe DSD now pay TAFE a subsidy or a payment to then pay Renewal SA for the lease of those buildings. Can you indicate to the committee how much this top-up payment, for want of a better word, actually is?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am taking time not to take time reading a really long answer; I may have miscalculated. The brief answer is that DSD will charge TAFE SA \$54 million for the use of VET infrastructure in 2017-18—so, forward casting—including \$53.8 million to align with DSD's leaseback arrangement with Renewal SA. That is an increase from \$20.7 million in 2015-16 and \$31.9 million in 2016-17. I think that answers the questions I just took on notice, but we will confirm that and if anything is missing we will provide it.

**Mr BELL:** With these lease arrangements, basically DSD is subsidising rent to Renewal SA; that is fine. However, I would like to know what the terms of the lease are in terms of renew dates because in 2019, if it is going to be an equal playing field, you have a \$33 million subsidy kicking in there. I am wondering how that is actually going to go forward in 2019.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** DSD will be taking that into account as part of its calculation of the commercial viability of courses.

**Mr BELL:** I want to go to aggregate savings targets. In 2016-17, can you indicate what the aggregate savings task was and whether your department achieved that task?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Do you mean all of DSD?

**Mr BELL:** For TAFE.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Those figures sit within DSD, so it is not a simple matter. The 2016-17 aggregate savings task for TAFE SA was \$18.5 million. We are still in the process of confirming the final figure of achievement.

**Mr BELL:** Any idea whether you are going to make that savings aggregate?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** At present, it looks like that will be underachieved, as has been reported to the Budget and Finance Committee, but there are a number of factors yet to be taken into account, so that is not yet a final figure.

**Mr BELL:** I just want your thoughts on this. On page 103, the decrease in expenses in the forward estimates due to operational efficiencies is a reduction of only \$3 million. I believe it was reported in a Budget and Finance Committee that the savings would be \$15 million; however, from my reading of this, the savings achieved will be only \$3 million. I am getting that figure by \$309 million take the 2016-17 estimated result of \$303 million, which to me is \$3 million.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Those figures are not the full picture of all the factors that are taken into account to determine whether the savings target has been reached. As you rightly say, at Budget and Finance it was estimated that about \$15 million has been achieved but, as I say, although we anticipate that there could be a shortfall of \$3.5 million, that is not yet a certainty. Those figures do not fully capture the detail of the TAFE SA finances.

**Mr BELL:** Can you explain that? If they do not capture the figure there, where does it capture the \$15 million savings? You have put the savings that will be realised and identified in the forward estimates. I totally understand that you have unders and overs and, with some savings, there may be overs, but I find it hard to believe that you could have a \$15 million saving, yet say that it only reports a \$3 million saving in the paper and that that is attributed to something else.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will take it on notice so that we can give you a comprehensive answer, but part of the issue is accounting for revenue, so there are savings achieved by not spending so much and savings achieved by overachieving with revenue. Between those two, we probably get to \$15 million. It could be a bit more, but we need to be clear about that.

**Mr BELL:** My last question on this theme is: does DSD require TAFE to accumulate any shortfalls or failures to make their savings in the next financial year? Next year's aggregate saving is

meant to be \$19.5 million. Does DSD require TAFE SA to add the \$3.5 million shortfall to the \$19.5 million in next year's budget?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Currently, that is not a requirement, but DSD is constantly managing the budget impact of TAFE SA. In previous years, TAFE SA has produced surpluses, for example. This year, it looks like there may be a shortfall. So in preparing the amount of money that is being transferred to TAFE SA over the next few years, all those factors will be taken into account.

**Mr BELL:** Page 99 states 'cessation of allocation of resources for a Ministerial Office, (\$1.5 million)'. Was that your current office, minister, and what was the headcount for this?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That was the transfer, I believe, of minister Gago's responsibilities to me. I already had an established ministerial office, so I presume that is the way that ministerial offices are established. There had been an establishment that was attached to DSD. My establishment is with the Department for Education and Child Development. I am sure that the people in Treasury make all that end up so that there is no extra money sitting around anywhere, but it would give the appearance of a reduction.

**Mr BELL:** This is my last question before I hand over to the member for Chaffey. In the Public Works Committee, it was indicated that the Tonsley site was aiming for 12,000 student enrolments and, as of last year, I believe it is a bit over 4,000. Do you have concerns about this, minister, and how is TAFE going to achieve an uplift of 7,000 students, which is over double?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The advice I am given is that the 12,000 referred to the number of students, including Flinders students, and the TAFE element is 4,000. That is the advice I have been given here today. I will confirm that in order to ensure accuracy.

**Mr BELL:** I thought it was excluding, but I will refer to it; that is fine.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** TAFE International.

**The CHAIR:** What page are you on? Is it the same page?

**Mr WHETSTONE:** Page 97. How many staff members are allocated to international education activities through TAFE SA?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will get you the precise FTE count. I understand there are two managers and support staff around them.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** Are you able to tell me if that number has decreased over the last two financial years?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will bring that back as well.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** I have a regional question about Berri TAFE, if I may. How many staff currently operate at the Berri TAFE on a full-time basis and has this changed over the past financial year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Because TAFE does not manage by campus, it manages by area, and the people who may be training in that region are not necessarily attached to the Berri campus, we will have to take that on notice and see if we can identify the staff who are associated with the campus and also the staff who are training in the area. And you are asking over previous years, I understand.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** Would it be correct that the Berri campus of TAFE does not have tutors or lecturers for particular courses only provided through the WorkReady scheme?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is unclear from the advice here, so we will bring that back as well.

**Mr BELL:** NCVER data that was released about a week ago indicated that South Australia had the largest percentage decline in student numbers, with a decline of 17.9 per cent. On page 101, the budget paper indicates that the target is to increase people participating in VET from 70,900 to 72,500. With such a drop, and a drop in over 4,000 completions of qualifications over the last two years, how is TAFE aiming to—

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** More than TAFE.



**Mr BELL:** Yes, that is right—achieve this target?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** To be clear, while my advisers are getting some of the details, of course the training effort is not simply confined to TAFE, nor is the subsidised training by government confined to TAFE.

**The CHAIR:** While you are looking for that information, it is 9.45, so it will be the last question shortly. I am into one more these days.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We are forecasting an increase from the estimated result of 70,900 to 72,500 based on the stabilising of our funding for training and our close work with industry on making sure that we are offering the courses that are desired by both industry and people who are wishing to study, and the greater proportion of non-government providers that we are subsidising.

**Mr BELL:** This is my last question, on page 103. Does TAFE currently still have 32 positions excess to requirements and are they still 19 in education, 12 in salaried and one as a weekly paid admin position?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will confirm that by coming back.

**The CHAIR:** The time having expired for examination of these lines, the Department of State Development and the administered items for the Department of State Development, I declare the examination of the proposed payments referred to committee B.

**DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, \$2,506,014,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, \$254,385,000**

**Minister:**

Hon. S.E. Close, Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Higher Education and Skills.

**Membership:**

Mr Treloar substituted for Mr Whetstone.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R. Persse, Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms J. Riedstra, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr C. Bernardi, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms S. Cameron, Executive Director, Learning Improvement, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr B. Temperly, Executive Director, System Performance, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms K. Weston, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and External Relations, Department for Education and Child Development.

**The CHAIR:** I declare the payments open for examination. I refer members to the Agency Statements in Volume 2. While we are having a changeover of advisers, I am not sure if the minister has an opening statement that might be readily to hand. We have the introduction of advisers.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** If I can introduce my advisers, I have on my right Rick Persse, who is the Chief Executive of the Department for Education and Child Development; Julieann Riedstra is on my left, who is the Deputy Chief Executive of the department; and next to her is Karen Weston, who is the Executive Director of Strategic Policy and External Relations. Behind me is Ben Temperly, who is the Executive Director of System Performance; Chris Bernardi, who is the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer; and Susan Cameron, who is the Executive Director of the Learning Improvement division.

I will make a brief opening statement, and I will include some commentary that covers the administered items where there is no opening statement for that item and it is coherent with school education. Education will be the key to the future of our children and the future of our state. We must ensure that every child receives a high-quality education no matter their background or their circumstances. This government is committed to achieving this and continues to build the foundations of education that prepare our children for the future. In all, we operate almost 1,000 children centres, preschools, primary and high schools throughout South Australia.

The pinnacle of our education system is the SACE qualification, which is of a very high standard and, in addition to South Australia, is taught in the Northern Territory, China, Malaysia and now Vietnam. This certificate aims to develop the capabilities of our students that they will need to enter the next phase of their lives, whether this is further education, a job or working for themselves.

This includes a foundation in literacy and numeracy, and we are moving towards integrating capabilities in innovation and entrepreneurship. It also includes initiatives such as the research project, which is aimed at introducing students to the demands of the learning needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It allows students to draw together all the skills and understandings they have gained in their school career and apply them to a topic of interest and importance.

I note that research projects have been introduced as a compulsory element of high school certificates in many other places, and of course the IB (International Baccalaureate) has had the equivalent since the 1970s, namely, the extended essay. Given that it requires skills of initiative, research, analysis and problem solving—all crucial to 21<sup>st</sup> century workplaces—research projects are likely to continue to be added to modern high school qualifications.

It is pleasing to see that we have seen a recent increase in the number of students studying a language in year 12 since the universities made changes to their entry requirements two years ago at the request of this government. We must encourage children to establish an interest in one or more languages early and give them an opportunity to excel at these. Initiatives such as the two bilingual language programs that commenced this year—one in French and one in Chinese—are significant steps towards achieving this.

I am pleased to say that the number of students achieving their SACE is increasing each year. Last year, we saw a record 15,107 students achieve their SACE—a number that has been rising since 2011 when the new SACE was introduced. Pleasingly, we have also seen increases in the number of Aboriginal students and students from the country achieving their SACE.

It is important that our children's learning gets off to a great start. We cannot afford to leave anyone behind. In fact, the state government believes early childhood education is one of the best investments we can make. This state government is committed to expanding the network of children centres from 42 to 47, all of which will be opened by the end of 2018. We are also opening 20 nature-based outdoor learning areas in 20 preschools across South Australia, as evidence shows unstructured outdoor nature play, being active and learning new skills promote positive and healthy attitudes leading to behaviours that can be maintained over a lifetime.

However, these facilities are only as good as the educators who work in them. I am very proud to say that we are seeing great teaching in our preschools. Since 2014, 2,005 DECD preschools have been assessed and rated according to the National Quality Standard. Of these, almost 80 per cent have received an exceeding rating under the National Quality Standards, compared with 56 per cent nationally. This highlights that South Australian public preschools are among the very best in Australia.

Once our children begin school, it is important that we give them an opportunity to explore a number of different subjects so that they can start to focus on what they enjoy and what they are

good at. In response to the changing world, the need for innovation and an understanding of technology increasingly includes science, technology, engineering and maths subjects (STEM). This is one of the growing fields throughout the world, and our children must at least have an understanding of these subjects. If they enjoy STEM, they must have the opportunity to become expert in it. This will be key not only to their futures but to the future of South Australia.

This state government is investing in STEM. An amount of \$250 million was allocated towards the STEM Works project in the 2016-17 budget, and we will deliver STEM facilities to 139 schools over the four years following. The first STEM Works project at Brompton Primary School was completed in June 2017, and all projects will be completed by the end of 2018. This will give students and teachers access to modern facilities that will encourage children to experiment and collaborate in these fields.

In December 2016, construction began on the Adelaide Botanic High School, which will be a STEM-focused school. An amount of \$100 million has been committed towards the new school, which will cater for 1,250 students, and Mr Alistair Brown was appointed as principal in May 2017. The school is scheduled to open in 2019 with year 8 and 9 students. Furthermore, we are investing in teachers to increase their confidence in teaching STEM. The STEM learning strategy will train teachers to lead these areas in pre, primary and high schools, so that the standard is raised for all our students.

We are offering many other opportunities for our teachers to increase their skills and abilities to inspire learning. We are offering leaders the opportunity to complete a Graduate Diploma of Strategic Leadership. Seventy-five graduated in March this year, and we have 159 leaders currently enrolled. Furthermore, we are offering teachers scholarships to undertake master's degrees in relevant areas of study, including education, IT, Aboriginal studies, special education, literacy, and languages.

This state government recognises that these teachers and school staff must be supported to direct all their attention towards teaching students. From 1 July this year, the state government is fully funding electricity, gas and water costs, and processing all utility invoices for every South Australian public school and preschool. This will mean that our schools can use more of their resources on education and staff can concentrate on students instead of administration.

We will also continue to invest so that they have the facilities they need. As announced in this year's budget, Adelaide's growing northern and southern suburbs will be home to two new birth to 12 schools for 1,500 students each. This adds to the investment in education infrastructure that this government has made in the growing northern and southern suburbs of more than \$500 million since 2002.

This new capacity in our public education system will give these students access to the most modern facilities. These schools will give students the opportunity to develop the capabilities that will get them the jobs, the places for further study or the entrepreneurial opportunities of the future. Education is vital to the future of every one of our students and to our state, and this state government is committed to ensuring it is of the highest quality.

**Mr GARDNER:** In Budget Paper 3, on page 93 there is a note in relation to student enrolment numbers that a 1 per cent growth in government school enrolment numbers above the levels incorporated in the budget would increase expenditure by approximately \$20 million per annum. Can the minister advise if the dollar impact therefore decreases if there is a reduction in numbers?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right. The funding is based on enrolments. We have seen a small trend towards government schools recently that has seen quite an expansion in our numbers.

**Mr GARDNER:** With regard to the 1 per cent sensitivity to enrolments, does the dollar impact change whether the enrolment is in primary or secondary school?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are you able to advise what the rate therefore is for both primary and secondary school enrolments?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will take that on notice to provide the detail.

**Mr GARDNER:** In Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, starting with page 13, for the minister's office the FTEs listed are 10. I note that last year 11 FTEs were listed and I asked whether there were any other staff in the minister's office. About a month ago, we got an answer back saying there were six ministerial liaison officers and other people as well. Can I please ask now what other staff are in the minister's office paid for by the department, or indeed by other departments, in addition to the 10 FTEs listed here? If we could get an answer sometime in the next eight months this time, that would be useful.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will absolutely commit to give you an answer more quickly than last time and, yes, of course there are additional staff who are administrative departmental staff from the different departments for which I am responsible.

**Mr GARDNER:** We will go to another budget paper, Budget Paper 5, page 31, the new superschools. I am sure there is probably one in the other budget papers as well. You have \$7 million over four years for the two new superschools. The minister identified them also in her opening statement. In my budget speech, I actually identified a number of questions that I would be asking today, so I am hoping that some of the answers are fairly easy to hand. In relation to the Sellicks-Aldinga new superschool, where exactly is that to be located, or is it yet to be determined?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The location for that school is yet to be determined.

**Mr GARDNER:** Presumably, either Sellicks or Aldinga then. When are these two schools set to open?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is expected that they will be completed by 2022. That is when our demographic analysis suggests we require them.

**Mr GARDNER:** What year levels will be offered at that time?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will make a decision closer to the time. Because the schools will be completed, it will be possible simply to start the school from all year levels, but it may be that the demographics make sense to start in some year levels and allow it to grow over time, and the answer may be different for each of those schools.

**Mr GARDNER:** The minister has identified that the demographic research the department has done has identified this need, but, especially if you are considering opening all year levels with 1,400 R to 12 students, 100 special school students and 55 in children's centres, what existing schools are going to be impacted and in what way are they being engaged and consulted?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We are building schools because we know that we need them and that the existing schools will not have the capacity. As we develop these schools over the next few years, we will be working very closely with the existing school communities, and that will be part of the consideration as to which years we start with.

**Mr GARDNER:** I accept that, but certainly if those schools in the surrounding area are currently over capacity by 1,500, or on track to be over capacity by 1,500, then you can imagine the new schools opening without impacting those schools. The minister has identified that the department will be engaging with schools in the surrounding areas, so can you identify which schools you will be engaging with over the coming years to talk about how these new schools will impact them?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We could probably give you a comprehensive list on notice, but it will be all the schools within those catchment areas. Just to distinguish, saying that we may have all year levels does not imply 1,500 students; it is simply about the age of the students who cannot be accommodated elsewhere. It may not mean that there is a full year level for each of those ages, so it may well not be 1,500 immediately. It will be dependent entirely on the needs of the community, but the school will be completely ready. We can make those decisions. We are not closing any schools in the area. It is about balancing the numbers as we build up. We have some time to do that while the site is identified and the schools are built.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is the government giving consideration to starting the school with only a primary school level or only a high school level to ease into that impact on local schools? Is that one of the options available?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Naturally, when we say that we may start with some year levels, we may start with all. Any combination is feasible; it needs to be dependent on the requirements of the community.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to the 100 special school students identified as being part of the cohort of these schools, is the plan for there to be a special unit within the school or a special school located adjacent to or near the main school, as we have at some schools at the moment?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will allow that to also be part of the consultation and the work with the community. We are anticipating that it will be a unit that is linked to the school rather than a discrete school within that larger site.

**Mr GARDNER:** When are you expecting those special classes or that special unit to be operational?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It will certainly be available immediately and we expect it to be needed immediately it is opened.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can the minister explain how the public-private partnership will operate?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The Treasurer will be the commissioning minister for that, so I think it is simpler if we direct questions to him so that there is a single point of truth.

**Mr GARDNER:** Will there be a cost to the education budget once the school is operational in 2022?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Indeed, there will be the operating costs that the students require. As the number of students are there, then we will be paying for the teachers to teach them.

**Mr GARDNER:** Will the schools be funded from 2022 as other schools are?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Using the same model as the current PPP schools that we have.

**Mr GARDNER:** One school that does not appear in these documents is the Magill education precinct. Why has the government not progressed that commitment from the last election?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I understand with Magill that a feasibility study is either close to completion or may, indeed, have been completed. I am yet to see it. As the member will be aware, this is a feasibility study that has been undertaken with the University of South Australia. We will speak alongside our partners in due course.

**Mr GARDNER:** As the local MP, I obviously have some level of interest, and the minister would be aware that I am a member of the governing council, and I have been very careful not to mix those two roles. However, as the local MP, I have been given a copy of the correspondence from the Norwood Morialta High School Governing Council chair, Sandra Mestros, in which she writes to the minister:

...the NMHS Governing Council and school community were disappointed that there was no mention of the Magill Education Precinct development in the SA State Budget presented in June. As you can appreciate, our Governing Council and community have invested a large amount of time discussing the future of our great school and are eagerly awaiting an outcome...

She goes on to seek a 'prompt formal written response' from you and offers to meet in person. Minister, have you read this correspondence and responded to it? Alternatively, will you be open to meeting with the school's task group?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am always open to meeting with people from school communities. I will have to check my records as to whether we have responded to that letter yet, but there is nothing to go into the budget until we have a completed and agreed feasibility study and can contemplate priorities against other priorities.

**Mr GARDNER:** Will that feasibility study be completed in time for consideration of these matters before the Mid-Year Budget Review, presumably in December?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I cannot comment about the timing. We will see.

**Mr GARDNER:** Has the progress of the Magill education precinct development been impacted in any way by the proposed development that a private Chinese school may be seeking to operate from an adjacent site to the proposed DECD build also on the UniSA campus?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I cannot speak on behalf of the University of South Australia, but it would be surprising if plans for their campus did not have an impact on other plans for their campus. I imagine that there is an interaction, but it is a University of South Australia interaction.

**Mr GARDNER:** Has the Department for Education or the minister or the state government had any interactions with the Chinese-based private company that is looking to build that school?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The chief executive had a brief meeting with them while on a China delegation earlier this year, but it was a brief meeting and I am not sure how much content there was in it. I am unsure whether I have met with them because I have been to China and I have met people alongside the University of South Australia, but I am not certain if it is the same group.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can the minister check whether she has met with them and get back to us?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can we also be advised of the nature and detail of the CEO's meeting and, perhaps if records need to be checked, they can come back, too?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We can do, but I think it was just a high-level and polite meeting. I do not think there was any content, but we can confirm.

**Mr GARDNER:** If we go to Budget Paper, Volume 2, page 20, which is the catch-all school education budget page, I have some questions about some matters relating to the Errington Special Education Centre. On 11 April, you took some questions on notice in the house, and I would like to ask if you are able to provide some answers or an update to this committee on the matter. On 11 April, you identified that the chief executive was going to review in detail the extraordinary comments of Magistrate O'Connor in relation to a case involving staff at the school, and determine whether he or the department needed to take any actions in response to the case. Has that review now been completed and, if so, what actions have been taken?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am loath to comment on the record because I understand that SAPOL is still involved in this matter, so I will take it on notice and see what is appropriate for me to say in public.

**Mr GARDNER:** I am happy if the minister wants to take a couple of other questions on notice, but I do have other questions. If the review has not been completed, what is the time frame to complete it?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am going to take everything on this matter on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** On the same day, the minister undertook to determine whether any other or independent reviews of this case were underway and get back to the house. She has just identified, obviously, that SAPOL has an interest there. Can she now provide that advice?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Again, I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is SAPOL's review in relation to their own internal conduct of the prosecution, or is it in relation to the education department's activities in relation to these matters, or is it in relation to something else?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will not comment on that at this stage. We will take everything relating to this matter on notice and determine what is appropriate to give a written answer to.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to another question taken on notice by the minister in April, what is the status of the three staff members who were singled out by the magistrate for comment?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will continue to take those matters on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Has the minister or the chief executive met or spoken with the former teacher, Jemima Raymond, who was acquitted in Magistrate O'Connor's court?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, the chief executive has not.

**Mr GARDNER:** And the minister?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, I have not.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is the minister, or the chief executive, willing to meet with Ms Raymond to discuss her situation?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I understand there are legal proceedings, so I will have to take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Will Ms Raymond be allowed to regain her registration as a teacher so she can regain employment in her profession in South Australia?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am afraid that is the same answer.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will stay on the same page but maybe ask some different questions. I am interested in the structure of the department. The chief executive's restructure has helpfully been identified through handy flowcharts on the department's website, with attractive pictures of lots of people who are in this room—

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** You are very generous.

**Mr GARDNER:** —which is helpful because it helps us put these things into order. We have the eight executive directors underneath. I note that the flowchart has been updated in the last couple of weeks. I understand there has been some further restructure and some of these notes identify that changes from the senior executive realignment in December 2016 are now suggesting that this organisational chart may change further in coming months.

I would like to go through each of the eight areas, starting with the area under Ms Riedstra, Mr Bernardi and Mr Treadwell. Are there any further new directors to be created in this area as a result of the executive realignment, or is the current document identified on the website still accurate? Are there to be any changes to it in coming months?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is still accurate for that area.

**Mr GARDNER:** As at today or according to the most recent figures, how many FTE staff are working under each of the directors or acting directors and what is the headcount?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the total budget over the forward estimates for the divisions under each director?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are seconded to that division from schools or other areas in the department and who meets that cost?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The division headed by Ms Riedstra?

**Mr GARDNER:** This is the division headed by Ms Riedstra, with the assistance of Mr Bernardi and Mr Treadwell.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am asking just for clarity because I will be taking it on notice. We need to make sure what we are answering.

**Mr GARDNER:** Where are each of these directors based, and how many of their staff are based at that location (Flinders Street or Hindmarsh or anywhere else)?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The three identified executives are based at Flinders Street.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are all their staff also based at Flinders Street?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, they are not.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are the others all based at Hindmarsh?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, they are across the state.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many of their staff are based at each location?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to the people and culture section, headed by Ms Schonfeldt, we have five directors listed. Are there any further new director positions to be created in this area as a result of the December realignment?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No.

**Mr GARDNER:** So these five are set in place. As at today or according to the most recent figures, how many FTE staff are working under each of the directors and what is the headcount?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the total budget over the forward estimates for the divisions under each director?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are seconded to those divisions from schools or other areas in the department?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Where is this executive director based?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** She is also based at Flinders Street.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are all the directors under her based at Flinders Street?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, they are.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are therefore at that location? I suspect it will be similar to the question that we just took on notice.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right, so we will take that on notice and make sure that is answered.

**Mr GARDNER:** Moving on to Learning Improvement with Ms Cameron, there are five directors listed at the moment. Is that going to be maintained until the end of the year or until the next realignment?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes.

**Mr GARDNER:** As at today or according to the most recent figures, how many FTE staff are working under each director and what is the headcount?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will provide that to you.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the total budget over the forward estimates for each director's division?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will provide that to you.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are seconded to those divisions from schools or other areas in the department and who is meeting that cost?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will provide that to you.

**Mr GARDNER:** Which of these directors are at Flinders Street and which are at Hindmarsh?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** All the directors are at Hindmarsh.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is the executive director based at Hindmarsh?



**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** She is.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are based at Hindmarsh and how many are based at any other locations?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will return with that answer.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to Partnerships, Schools and Preschools with Ms Millard, there are currently four directors listed and I think 20 education directors. Is that arrangement being maintained until the next realignment?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes.

**Mr GARDNER:** As at today or according to the most recent figures, how many FTE staff are working under each of those directors and/or education directors and/or acting directors and what is the headcount?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We can provide that.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the total budget over the forward estimates for the divisions under each director?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide that.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are seconded to those divisions from schools or other areas in the department and who meets that cost?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide that.

**Mr GARDNER:** Where is each of those directors based?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Other than the education directors, they are based at Flinders Street.

**Mr GARDNER:** The education directors are based around the state?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right, and those directors are on the list to go to Hindmarsh when it is able to accommodate them.

**Mr GARDNER:** Just formally, in case I did not get it on the record before, how many staff are based at each of those locations and other locations?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will return with that.

**Mr GARDNER:** On the education directors, does the same number of staff work with each education director or does that vary from region to region?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Essentially, the model is the same, although there are slight variations. I will confirm the detail for you. One that strikes me is possibly the APY, which might have different requirements, but the model is essentially a standard one.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will move to the System Performance division, headed by Mr Temperly. Where is he based?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Flinders Street.

**Mr GARDNER:** Currently, there is one director, one acting director, one manager and one general manager listed under him. Are they all based at Flinders Street as well?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, they are.

**Mr GARDNER:** As at today or according to the most recent figures, how many FTE staff are working under the director, the acting director, the manager and the general manager in their respective portfolios and what is the headcount?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide that information.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the total budget over the forward estimates for the divisions under each of those individuals?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide that.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are seconded to those divisions from schools or other areas in the department, and who meets that cost?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide that.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are all their staff based at Flinders Street?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide that detail, too. I think they are, but we will be clear.

**Mr GARDNER:** If not, how many are at other locations?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will move to Strategic Policy and External Relations with Ms Weston—welcome. There are currently three directors and a manager identified in this area, and I think this is one where there has been some change recently. Are there any further directors, managers or other changes to be made as a result of the realignment?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is correct at present.

**Mr GARDNER:** As at today or according to the most recent figures, how many FTE staff are working under each director or manager and what is the headcount?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide that.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the total budget over the forward estimates for the division under each director or manager?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide that.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are seconded to that division from schools or other areas in the department and who meets that cost?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will provide it.

**Mr GARDNER:** Where is Ms Weston based and where are her directors and managers based?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** At Flinders Street.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many of their staff are based at that location and how many are at any other locations?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** They are all at Flinders Street.

**Mr GARDNER:** And you will get back to me with the numbers of staff as well?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will.

**Mr GARDNER:** Thank you. In relation to this role, it was advertised a little while ago as being a fairly handsome package. Were there many applicants for this role and when was the role filled and on what salary?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There was an enormous amount of interest in the position, but I will get the details of the timing and so on.

**Mr GARDNER:** In regard to the changes made as a result of the realignment of things like non-government schools and services, what was the reasoning behind moving some of these services out of—I think they were previously in system performance and into this new role, the restructure of the creation of this line?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** As this is properly the business of the chief executive, I will invite him to give an answer to that question.

**Mr PERSSE:** I think it is important to describe the context for the realignment, as you say. It happened in November last year, and it was precipitated by the fact that the former Families SA

was moving out of the department into the new Department for Child Protection, which enabled us to have a look at our structure in Education.

What was remaining in Education were essentially two separate offices—one was the office of corporate and one was the office of education—so I took the opportunity to flatten that structure. That resulted in the abolition of the chief education officer position, and the executive directors underneath that role now report to me directly. That is the restructure that you are referring to.

I created two new divisions. I should stress that this was at zero cost because I had removed a very senior chief education officer position and replaced one new position, which was the position that Karen Weston is in. I saw the two roles being quite important.

Just to describe the system performance role, which is the role that Mr Temperly is in, this is to ensure that there are system-wide strategies that are being executed consistently across the state. Functions include change management and the facilitation of that, and the data and evidence that underpin all our policy and strategy. We had two different divisions running business intelligence and data management, so we brought them together under one executive director just to make sure there was consistency. The other key role in there is accountability and coordination across the state.

The new strategic policy and external relations role that Ms Weston has been recruited to is to lead and facilitate a quality and consistent strategy and policy development function across the department, which my view was we could improve on, and also to ensure that we are doing that in a best practice approach. The position is also responsible for a strategic and coordinated engagement with stakeholders and partners. Those stakeholders and partners I am talking about are entities such as principals associations, the universities and our interjurisdictional colleagues. That was the rationale behind it.

**Mr GARDNER:** There was one other unit that we will get to in a separate part of estimates, I think, regarding early years. I have a couple of other questions in relation to this area. How many staff across the department are on unpaid leave?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can we get some corresponding figures for the last two years in the budget on that?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will also take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** If you are taking it on notice, how long has the current cohort been on leave, by brackets of six months perhaps?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many less than six months, more than six months, more than a year and so forth?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will add that to the notice questions.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the average time they have been on leave?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will add that to the notice questions.

**Mr GARDNER:** Since the last election in March 2014, how many times has the education centre at Hindmarsh been renovated or refurbished?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Twice that we are aware of: once, which I think we talked about last time, to accommodate the partnership meetings; and then more recently to accommodate the relocation of some staff.

**Mr GARDNER:** That more recent project to do with the relocation of staff is still underway, or are those renovations complete?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We have finished with that centre and it is now the building next door in order to accommodate far more staff.

**Mr GARDNER:** To clarify then, the current building's renovations are complete and now there is a new building coming in next door. When that build is complete, how many staff will be located at Hindmarsh and how many are there at the moment?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There are 120 at present. The new building will accommodate 300, but it may be that there will be some more staff that we are able to allocate as well. We are determining whether another department can also go out there.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the cost of the recent refurbishment at Hindmarsh, not the one we talked about last year.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** For the 2016-17 year, we have spent about \$90,000.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the cost of the new building that is going up?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** To be clear, it is not a new building; it is a refurbishment of an existing building adjacent and we have allocated \$11.6 million.

**Mr GARDNER:** That is \$11.6 million and, once that is complete, 300 staff will be moved out of Flinders Street finally and into Hindmarsh, as was suggested a couple of years ago.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It will be a minimum of 300 staff.

**Mr GARDNER:** How much has the department spent in Cabcharges over the last financial year and how much of that was on Cabcharges for people moving between Hindmarsh and the city and back?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take it on notice, but I am not certain that we will be able to provide an answer because we do not record our Cabcharges by locations, but we will do what we can.

**The CHAIR:** Before we move to the next question, I would like to acknowledge a group in the gallery today, members of the Royal Society for the Blind at Port Noarlunga, who are guests of the member for Kaurna. We very much welcome them to parliament and hope they enjoy their time here with us. It is lovely to have you with us.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will have to try to be a bit more interesting, member for Morialta, now that we have an audience. Can I add to the previous answer, of course, that there is the magnificent tram and we do encourage our staff to use it.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the distance from the Hindmarsh office to the tram?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I have not measured it, but I have walked it.

**Mr GARDNER:** Were you carrying equipment such as one might take to a briefing with teachers?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am always carrying quite a lot of gear.

**Mr GARDNER:** Moving to Budget Paper 3, page 30, let's talk about education funding. What is the additionality funding received this year and next year from the federal government? Sorry, I should slightly rephrase that. What schools received the additionality funding this year and next year (2016-17 and 2017-18) from the federal government? What schools will that go to and how much per school?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The details we can take on notice, but we determine the allocation within government schools. We receive the funding as a block. However, let us be clear: while we have got 2016-17, it is still not entirely clear what we will be getting from the federal government. I cannot pass up the opportunity to point out that we are going to be \$210 million short on the agreement that this government signed with the commonwealth government for six years—\$210 million short for this state across the three sectors, \$157 million short in the next two years for government schools alone.

That agreement was going to take us close to the school resourcing standard that we agreed was appropriate and necessary for high-quality education, yet we will try to provide a good education without the \$210 million that is needed for this state. I can provide to you the amount the government

is choosing to give us, but I will also point out what the government is choosing not to give us. Two sovereign governments signed an agreement; one of them has stepped away from that agreement.

**Mr GARDNER:** To confirm, the minister has agreed to supply a list of the schools and how much additionality funding they are receiving. Is that what she said when she took it on notice before?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, I said to you that I would provide the total amount that the federal government has given us. The federal government does not give it to us school by school.

**Mr GARDNER:** But previously the state government has identified in a list how much of the additionality funding goes to each school. I am asking whether we can get a copy of that list for last year and this year.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will give you what data we have.

**Mr GARDNER:** Does all that additionality funding from the commonwealth go directly to schools, or is some of it taken for other purposes within DECD—apart from that which goes to the Catholic and non-government sector?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** All the funding goes to education for the students.

**Mr GARDNER:** How much of the funding that goes to education for the students is serving that purpose within non-school DECD activities?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** For the first four years, we received 25 per cent of the total arrangement, so 75 per cent was sitting in the last two years. The federal government has essentially abandoned us. It is slightly less mean than the Hockey budget (not a big bar to jump over), which was \$335 million that we would have been short. What we have done is largely given the additionality directly to schools, that is both state additionality and federal additionality directly to schools, but we held some centrally, which was to provide additional support for students with a disability. We are determining how we will manage that for the next school year.

**Mr GARDNER:** When will that be determined?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** When we are ready to announce it.

**Mr GARDNER:** Given the state government's commitment to fulfil year 5 and 6 of the NERA from the state allocation, can the minister confirm the quantum of funding that this amounts to from the state government in 2018 and 2019?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We can take that on notice. I have a figure in my head. I am always loath to give inaccurate figures in parliament, so I will take it on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Hopefully, we will get the answers soon; I would not have thought it was too far from the table. How is that funding being allocated and distributed, the state component of year 5 and 6?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I think that is the conversation we just had. We are currently determining that.

**Mr GARDNER:** In terms of some of that state component, the minister and the Premier have gone on record previously to talk about, for example, increases in funding to non-government schools coming out of year 5 and 6 of the state component, and continuing as recently as last year's budget. Some commitments were made; I think it was about a 30 per cent increase. Can the minister confirm that that is the case?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I can confirm that the model is the model. We have stuck to our side of the bargain, and the funds that are allocated for non-government schools we will continue to allocate in the way that we had originally intended. It is interesting that, if we were to apply the federal Liberal government's approach, then we would be giving less to the Catholic sector—if we chose to adopt their model in the next two years. We have made a deal and we are going to stick by it because that is what a good government does. In terms of how we spend our own Gonski additionality, our own additional funding that we have continued to maintain, we are working through that at present.

**Mr GARDNER:** Minister, I am specifically asking about the state government's additionality funding.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Indeed, and so am I.

**Mr GARDNER:** The question is: when will you be able to tell us how that state government additionality funding is being allocated and to whom it is being distributed?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We can easily identify the allocation for the non-government schools because we already have an agreement, then within our own system we will determine the best priorities for that money.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the allocation from the state additionality, specifically to non-government schools, in those two years?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** You can keep asking questions; I believe I will have that information during this session.

**Mr GARDNER:** I will go back to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20. I note that according to some media releases and other media, and through talking to people, the state government has developed and is now delivering its own Safe Schools program. What has been the cost of developing this program, and what is the ongoing expense related to this program?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The way you have constructed that question, probably not deliberately, is not quite accurate.

**Mr GARDNER:** Please enlighten us.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The South Australian government has assumed the responsibility for paying for the Safe Schools project, but it is being delivered through SHine SA, which held the contract with the commonwealth government previously. We have not developed it in-house, but we have maintained a relationship with SHine SA. Regarding the cost, we have approved a budget of \$250,000 per year over the next three years as part of the contract.

**Mr GARDNER:** So \$250,000 a year is the contract with SHine SA?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right.

**Mr GARDNER:** Were there any other costs in setting up whatever the new delivery model is?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, it is entirely delivered through SHine SA.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is the minister's original answer suggesting that this is not in fact a new project but the same Safe Schools program being delivered by a different group? I thought SHine SA were the South Australian coordinators for the old program?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is not entirely identical because we had to have our own contract, and there has been still some ambiguity over whether we are allowed to call it Safe Schools, for example. The nature of some of the materials, because of intellectual property considerations, is substantially the same in that it is essentially there to support teachers in how they approach the subject of the various conglomeration of issues associated with the Safe Schools; that is, approaching issues around bullying associated with transgender, same-sex attracted, or gender-diverse students, and some individual support within a school, should the school call for that assistance with any particular issues relating to an individual child. I can give you an example.

I was contacted—I have been contacted several times in fact—by a parent of a child who is at school as one gender but was not born of that gender. People in the school are unaware of that; the children in the school are unaware of that child's history. The school is aware and the teachers are aware, and SHine SA has provided an enormous amount of support to that student to help them feel confident that should their history be made public they will be supported by people who understand what that child has gone through.

The mother is enormously grateful for the existence of such a program. She had a child who was contemplating self-harm frequently who is now feeling confident, and the teachers involved are

feeling confident that, in dealing with a matter that is reasonably rare, they have been supported to support a child undergoing a specific issue that can be challenging if not handled well.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the difference, if any, between the old federal Safe Schools program and the new state one, apart from who is paying for it?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I have not seen the contract that the commonwealth government had, so it is not possible for me to be completely sure. What I can say is that we have in our contract a great deal of clarity around the role of the governing councils being aware of and supportive of a school participating in Safe Schools. My understanding is that that was custom and practice in South Australia, but not necessarily in all the states, so we have firmed that up in our state-based contract.

**Mr GARDNER:** So there is a difference, potentially, in relation to the governance within schools of how schools sign up, and I will get to that in a moment. In terms of the content of the course that is being delivered, is there any difference between the new state South Australian Safe Schools program and the old federal Safe Schools Coalition Australia program?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Just to be clear, it is not really a course.

**Mr GARDNER:** Well, program.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is a support service that is largely directed at supporting teachers, but it does also work occasionally with students at the request of the school. The difference is that we are still determining—and if it has been resolved, it has not been made clear to me—the nature of the materials that SHine SA is able to provide to teachers because of questions of intellectual property.

I have no objection to the materials that were certified as being appropriate by the federal government's review of the content, but I am not clear yet whether we have been able to determine if they are all able to be used because the intellectual property does not reside in South Australia. I can get an update on that, but that is the latest I am aware of.

**Mr GARDNER:** So at the moment, the department's description of the Safe Schools Anti-bullying Initiative says that the SSAI (bullying does not get an acronym) will operate for three years and that SHine SA will deliver services and support to secondary schools in three areas—I am paraphrasing here. Those three areas are development to school staff (helping to train teachers), advice and support to school staff (presumably responding to needs raised by teachers) and the third is promoting youth leadership (for example, through the annual action day).

There were course materials that were involved in the old program and you have identified that at the moment they are not part of the South Australian program, potentially, because of intellectual property reasons. Is it the government's intention that those schools that sign up to Safe Schools here in South Australia will start having those materials, if possible, or new ones developed along the same lines?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It has been confirmed that my understanding is correct, that we are still resolving the question of what kinds of resources are able to be used and whether existing ones can be used. Of course, teachers are able to obtain information and support from wherever they really choose in how they wish to discuss certain complex matters with their secondary school students. We will be clear once we have some certainty about what is available.

My understanding is that the materials were never a particularly large part of the service provided; it was more about the relationship between the organisation, being SHine, and the teachers and some individual students and then, of course, for some students who wish to be activists in this area, that they were able to get some support in action days and so on, as you have listed. The materials were originally developed after teachers had requested that there be a consistent set of curriculum materials.

A review was done by the federal government, prior to its decision to no longer fund the program, by an educator from Western Australia, whose name escapes me, who certified that they were appropriate—

**Mr GARDNER:** Mr Louden?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, that is right; that is the guy. We may or may not be able to make those available but, as I say, teachers can in fact have access to anything they choose to inform their practice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are any non-government schools signed up to this program or working with SHine SA, whatever the term is; if so, how is that funded? If not, is it proposed that there be engagement with non-government schools?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am not aware that non-government schools have chosen to go into a relationship with SHine SA. I can inquire, but they would not necessarily let us know.

**Mr GARDNER:** Under the funding agreement with SHine SA, would the non-government schools be charged any more, any less or any differently from any public school that signed up?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It would be a relationship between SHine SA and any individual school. I have no way of answering that.

**Mr GARDNER:** There is nothing in your contract with SHine SA to deliver this program that differentiates between the school system?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The contract is not for them to deliver it to non-government schools. I have no responsibility or connection to the non-government schools' choice about how they wish to manage LGBTIQ student issues.

**Mr GARDNER:** To clarify, the contract is to deliver this for public schools?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Absolutely.

**Mr GARDNER:** And if SHine SA wants to do it with non-government schools, then non-government schools can come to some arrangement with SHine?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Exactly.

**Mr GARDNER:** Through what mechanism are parents given the opportunity for their child to opt out of the new state Safe Schools program, given the nature of the program that you have just described? I assume that we are really only talking about action days or something like that at the moment or, potentially, in the future, if there are curriculum-related materials to be provided. How can parents opt out?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There are a couple of levels. At the governing council level, for the school to begin to have a connection to SHine SA, principals will need to seek governing council endorsement before they join the initiative. With parents, the school has a responsibility to obtain parent consent for student participation in specific activities or events organised or delivered by SHine SA, such as attending the annual action day. Schools need to be aware of their obligations about student confidentiality, and there are some details provided to schools to assist them with that. That is essentially the summary.

**Mr GARDNER:** The intention you have identified is that there will be resources provided to teachers through the SHine SA program. Will there be an opportunity for parents to opt out of having their children participate in classes using those resources in the future, or is that still to be developed?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Given that we are not at that point in the contract, I will take that on notice and provide the information when it is available.

**Mr GARDNER:** How does this state-based Safe Schools program interact with the policy on supporting same-sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, which I identify is described in itself as a mandatory policy and staff are required to adhere to the content? In a number of places, it refers to staff delivering what is described in this document still as the Safe Schools Coalition Australia program. In particular, under Professional Learning, it states that DECD has a memorandum of operational collaboration with SHine SA to support the implementation of the Safe Schools Coalition Australia program in SA schools and then goes on to describe what Safe Schools is. Given that this policy is described as 'mandatory' in the first line of the policy, how does this policy



interact with what we have just said about how governing councils are required to have consent before the school signs up and so forth?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I do not have the policy in front of me, so it is difficult for me to give a detailed response. It seems to me that what we have is a policy that is about making sure that we do not breach discrimination legislation, and it is a policy to help guide schools in their approach. The mention of a program that is in fact voluntary, I imagine, is intended to be an additional resource that is available to schools. If it is not worded sufficiently clearly then we can clarify that, but I imagine that most people who read it would understand it.

**Mr GARDNER:** The policy also talks about the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum, which is a requirement under the DECD Child Protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services policy. Can I confirm it is mandatory for all schools to implement that policy?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum was developed originally—

**Mr GARDNER:** A while ago.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** —as a South Australian curriculum. I believe some other states have adopted it and the Catholic system has certainly adopted it. The importance of this is that it is about teaching children how to be safe. Teachers deliver this curriculum; therefore, they are required to have training in delivering the curriculum. It concentrates on the primary school years although it does continue all the way through. I see here that since 2006, 29,787 teachers have attended the full-day training.

In fact, I can see that the use of our curriculum has been adopted by the Catholic education system in South Australia; the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia; Catholic Education Western Australia; the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia; the Northern Territory Department of Education; Adventist Schools Victoria; St Patrick's College, Ballarat; the Australian International School Indonesia; the International School of Beijing in China; and the International School of Zug and Luzern in Switzerland.

The curriculum was originally constructed with the assistance of Freda Briggs, who has subsequently passed away, and, as I say, is absolutely focused on children understanding how to keep themselves safe in a variety of circumstances.

**Mr GARDNER:** Do any other anti-bullying programs, apart from the Safe Schools program, receive state-funded government support?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I believe that we largely have schools choosing if they wish to spend some school funding on bringing in an external body, but most of our work on anti-bullying is managed in-house. If there is any particular detail that I need to take on notice, I will.

**Mr GARDNER:** Does the government have any data in relation to the prevalence of bullying in South Australian schools?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Sorry?

**Mr GARDNER:** Is there any data in relation to bullying in South Australian schools that the government relies on to inform its policy?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We rely on advice from our schools.

**Mr GARDNER:** I appreciate that the data in the Safe Schools Coalition—and the state government has provided data supporting Safe Schools—refers to the proportion of LGBTI young people who feel bullied and where they feel bullied, and that has predominantly been in the school setting. I have seen that data. I am interested in how much of the bullying that occurs in our schools is related to other issues and whether there is any data that identifies the prevalence of bullying more broadly.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We do use a variety of mechanisms, including the ABS that runs surveys periodically. We contribute to the national Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group across the country. That working group oversees the development of frameworks, policies,

resources and other materials that support safe and positive learning environments and they are promoted and disseminated via the Bullying. No Way! Website, which is Australia's premier anti-bullying resource for educators, children and young people and their families.

We work closely with and promote the resources of the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner in the field of cyber safety, including cyber bullying. This year, we have given our schools an opportunity to apply for grants to support their anti-bullying strategies for the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence. We do, of course, also have some central effort through behaviour coaches and other support services that support schools in responding to bullying. Another example of a data source that we are able to use is the report that we get from our students on the middle year index.

**Mr GARDNER:** We will stay on the same budget line, but a different topic. Philip Amato, who is the Chairman of the Port Pirie Junior Soccer Association, recently wrote to the education department seeking clarification from the department on whether children who sometimes represent their schools in their soccer association and sometimes form a combined team from amongst a number of schools are covered by insurance when they are representing their schools outside of school hours.

Mr Amato's concern is that the FFSA is going to start charging each player \$25, on top of their affiliation fees, for insurance if the schools cannot provide him with evidence that those children are insured—I assume it is some sort of public liability insurance. Given that the department has not responded directly to Mr Amato, can I ask that question of you now. What insurance cover do schools provide for children participating in sporting competitions representing their schools, or, indeed, small schools grouping together to form a team?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We do not have a briefing here on that matter, so I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Last year—I think it was in the Budget and Finance Committee—the chief executive identified that there was a new review of whether year 7 would go into high school. Has that review been completed and, if not, when will it be completed?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I do not think the chief executive said that there was actually a review being conducted. If he did, he misspoke. There is a constant assessment of what other sectors are doing and what other states are doing, and clearly year 7 is on the radar. There is an obsession, almost, in some people's minds with the question of where 12 year olds go to school, so we are constantly keeping that under our attention. At present, there is no evidence to demonstrate any difference. It can be done extremely well in a primary school and extremely well in a high school. We continue to keep an eye on that.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff were separated last financial year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will start by giving you the TVSPs. In 2016-17, 21 employees, or 19.4 FTEs, accepted TVSPs. In relation to unsatisfactory performance, and therefore a different form of separation, since we introduced the new process, which is an additional support held centrally for principals in going through the process of performance management—which, of course, does not always result in a separation; it can absolutely result in an improvement in performance—since July 2015 up until May 2017 six teachers have been dismissed or the contract has been terminated for unsatisfactory performance, 36 teachers who were the subject of a managing unsatisfactory performance process have resigned or retired and, of those 36, four resigned immediately prior to their dismissal for unsatisfactory performance.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many teachers who underwent unsatisfactory performance management continue to be employed with those issues resolved positively?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I do not have the data in front of me, so I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many applicants were there for what I think was colloquially called the 'burnout bonus'?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** 'The teacher renewal program' is the expression you are reaching for.

**Mr GARDNER:** Yes, burnout bonus.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There were 257 registrations of interest received and 190 offers provided to eligible candidates. As of 4 July, 179 teachers have accepted.

**Mr GARDNER:** I do not have the figure in front of me, but was that an oversubscription?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It was.

**Mr GARDNER:** I am pretty sure that the budget line refers to a \$5 million cost for this program. What has the cost ended up being?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will be making that modification once we see how many have accepted. We are still in the process.

**Mr GARDNER:** At the moment, it is at least 179. Are all those burnout bonuses, or renewal program offers, of the same dollar amount?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is \$50,000. It is standard.

**Mr GARDNER:** So we are talking about at least \$8 million. If there are 170, we are approaching \$9 million for this \$5 million program.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is correct.

**Mr GARDNER:** I have a couple of questions about recommendations from the Debelle inquiry. We will stay on page 20; it is the catch-all for schools. One of the key recommendations of the Debelle inquiry was for an Ombudsman's inquiry into DECD's complaints handling process and practices. The Ombudsman had five key recommendations, which I believe the government undertook and said publicly that they would be complying with.

In relation to those five recommendations, has the department's brochure, entitled *Parent guide to raising a concern or complaint*, been amended or replaced by a new document to reflect current policy and procedure, correct contact phone numbers and so forth? Has that new or revised document been mandated for use in all schools and education sites from 1 January this year, as per the first recommendation?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The brief answer is that the complaints team has updated and distributed the brochure titled *Raising a complaint with DECD*. The brochure is now available at DECD sites, and sites have been required to make the brochure accessible on their websites. Just to be clear, when we say 'sites', usually people think of those as schools but, because some of them are preschools, we lapse into slightly more bureaucratic language at times.

**Mr GARDNER:** I understand. From 1 January this year, has each school and education site ensured that any internal processes for managing complaints in accordance with the policy and procedure are in place and published on their websites, as per recommendation 2?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We indeed accepted that recommendation and have acted on it. We are working through contacting all our schools, and all our preschools, to ensure that there is compliance.

**Mr GARDNER:** As per recommendation 3, prior to 1 July this year has each school or site manager ensured that proper and consistent record-keeping of all complaints received is implemented in accordance with the departmental policy?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Under recommendation 3, schools and preschools are required to comply with DECD policy regarding record-keeping practices of all complaints received. The complaints team has been working with partnership schools and preschools to develop a suite of templates and tools to assist in this process.

**Mr GARDNER:** Forgive me if I am wrong, minister, but that sounds like, 'We are working on it,' rather than, 'We have completed that.'

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, we are working on the templates and tools. The requirement for schools to be compliant exists. We are working on making the kind of processes that will make that simpler, so that is not to say we are just working on the recommendation. We have accepted the

recommendation and, at the very beginning of the year, we made it clear to schools and preschools what they were responsible for, including this requirement, but, as you would expect from a well functioning administration, we are continuing to work on making sure that works smoothly and developing tools for that to happen.

**Mr GARDNER:** As per recommendation 4, are we going to be able to have an adjunct module to the proposed EMS computer system for recording and reporting complaints and accompanying information by 2019?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is our expectation, but we are in the tender process at the moment for the education management system. Because we have accepted the recommendation, we absolutely expect that to be compliant by the beginning of 2019.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are school and site managers monitoring and recording complaint-handling compliance statistics and trends at least once annually, as per recommendation 5, and is the ECU providing an analysis of this information for the senior executive group?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We have accepted that recommendation that schools and preschools monitor and record complaint-handling compliance and statistics in order to be able to provide that in annual reports. While we are unable at this stage to have the EMS system do that automatically, we are reliant on manual collection of the data.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to another Debelle inquiry recommendation, recommendation 23 of Mr Debelle's report was for a fund from which governing councils can draw funding for legal advice when the governing council is in dispute with the department. The government lists that recommendation as completed on its website. The implementations subsection of the DECD website states that that recommendation has been completed; therefore, how much money is in the fund?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Rather than creating an individual fund, we recognise the right of governing councils to apply for funds. We will accept that, we have a process for that and that is in place.

**Mr GARDNER:** Who is responsible for administering that fund? The recommendations suggest the Crown Solicitor, but the website suggests that a policy adviser, governance, has been appointed. If it is that policy adviser, where do they work?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** As I said, there is not a fund that requires administration; it is a process and it is administered through Anne Millard's partnerships division that you referred to earlier, member for Moriata. That is the way we have handled it in the department.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many requests have been granted from the fund and have any requests been denied by the fund?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to page 23 of Volume 2, targets, increased student attendance at DECD schools, how many attendance officers are working within DECD? Last year, it was 22 and I think you confirmed that again this year, but is it still 22?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The establishment is 22 FTE. Today, I do not know how many people are working in there. We often have part-time people, but that is a team of 22 FTEs.

**Mr GARDNER:** What attendance data does the department currently require schools to provide to head office?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The EMS will enable us to have a much smoother reporting regime with the schools. The schools track their attendance. We receive an annual census of attendance, and also schools are asked to supply us with information about chronic non-attendance, which is the 10 days per term with or without explanation.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many chronic truancy referrals has the department received so far this year then and how does that compare with previous years?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr BELL:** Is the default position on EDSAS still recorded as present? If there is human error—that is, the teacher does not fill in the attendance record—is that student indicated as being present for the day because that is the default position?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I do not think I can answer that at this stage. Because we do not have a single system (that is where we are going to), it is likely that there will be variability between schools on what the default position is.

**Mr GARDNER:** I note that since last year there have been two successful prosecutions of parents for a child's non-attendance. Is the department now satisfied that the previously feared defect in the legislation that might have prevented a prosecution is not a problem after all, or did the wording of the legislation limit the department to only those two potential cases where they thought they might succeed in a prosecution?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We have gone through a consultation process on a bill that will modify the language in order to make it absolutely clear what we are able to do for prosecution. It is pleasing, although I say it with heavy heart, that we have been able to demonstrate that the legislation currently is functional, but it does not mean that it is the best model and the best fit for purpose.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are any further prosecutions being contemplated?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** None have come to me for final approval at this stage.

**Mr GARDNER:** Have you requested that the department consider further cases?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I do not operate in that way. The department is working on each individual case. They will determine whether they wish to come forward to me with a recommendation.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many cases is the department considering?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** The minister identified before that the bill will change its language. When is she likely to introduce that to the parliament?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Soon.

**The CHAIR:** It might have to be your last question, member for Morialta.

**Mr GARDNER:** As my last question, can the minister advise the committee of the full extent of sites and facilities with the behaviour management charter? Last year, I requested a list of the sites and their capacity for better behaviour centres in particular. In addition, I understand there are other sites where students, who have either been excluded or suspended from mainstream schools, are sent instead, with the charter. I am hoping that the minister can provide us with a comprehensive list of those sites and their capacity and how many students were in those schools on 30 June, which was the penultimate Friday of second term.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** Before we move on to the procedural motion, I cannot see anywhere a reference to instrumental music in the budget. Have I missed it?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is not separately listed, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** It is just that we did have some significant changes last year, and I thought there might have been some sort of representation here.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I see what you mean. We did increase the funds that we spent on instrumental music, but we did not identify it as a separate dot point.

**Mr GARDNER:** It might be in one of those lists of staff and services that I asked for details on.

**The CHAIR:** Okay; so I will look for your answer.

*Sitting suspended from 11:16 to 11:30.*

**Departmental Advisers:**

Dr N. McGoran, Chief Executive, SACE Board of South Australia.

Mr R. Persse, Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms J. Riedstra, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr C. Bernardi, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr B. Temperly, Executive Director, System Performance, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms K. Weston, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and External Relations, Department for Education and Child Development.

**The CHAIR:** We are still on the same proposed payment lines, but we are looking at administered items and early childhood development. You have new advisers, minister?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Chair, I do not have an opening statement.

**The CHAIR:** Do we have the same advisers?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, I will introduce the one new adviser—Neil McGoran, the Chief Executive of SACE.

**The CHAIR:** I noticed that.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Karen is sitting at the back, but Susan Cameron is no longer with us. She is here, but not sitting as one of the formal advisers for this section.

**The CHAIR:** We will go straight to questions.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 36 and 37, administered items. I will start with a couple of questions regarding cashflow. Cash outflows to non-government schools are listed as \$1.058 billion (that is on about the 10<sup>th</sup> line) and that is up from \$1.025 billion per capita funding. Cash inflows, which are on the next page, are listed as \$862 million—this is from commonwealth government grants, non-government schools—up from \$833 million.

Forgive me if I am wrong—there is nothing behind this; this is just me looking at this data and trying to make sense of it—but is it correct to say that the state government contribution towards the non-government schooling sector is \$196 million, up from \$191 million last year? That is me taking the figure on the left page of \$1.058 billion and deducting from that the grants that come in from the commonwealth on the right page. Is that a meaningful analysis to do, or am I missing something?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is generally correct. Your approach is accurate. There may be some other government payments that we need to be clear on, but essentially your analysis is correct.

**Mr GARDNER:** In terms of cash outflows, there is also \$5 million listed for the National Equity Program for non-government schools and \$5 million for the non-government preschools grants. Are those the other payments you are talking about, or are there others in addition?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** If you go to page 30, member for Morialta, there is a list under 'Grants and subsidies'.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is this page 30 of Volume 2?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is just a couple of pages earlier than where we were. There is the grants and subsidies line, which for 2017-18 is \$1 billion. Those are broken down on page 36, where you have the non-government schools and also the additional grants that you have identified.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can the minister identify the National Equity Program for schools? I see the word 'national' and I wonder if that is part of a national partnership or a national agreement or any other thing that we get funding from the commonwealth specifically for, or is that something we fund?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Because some of the titles used are legacy titles that appear in financial reporting, we will confirm exactly what that is for.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to the \$190-something million—\$191 million last year and \$196 million from the state government specifically, maybe a little bit more—how is that money disbursed to non-government schools at the moment? How is it identified which schools get how much?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We use the Gonski model, as it is known, to identify the quantum. With the Catholic sector schools, we pay the central authority; otherwise, we pay directly to schools.

**Mr GARDNER:** To confirm, in relation to the Catholic sector and that model of paying to the sector based on having worked it out by the individual school's needs and paying one lump sum to the sector, there is no suggestion that is going to change, is there?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We are continuing with our commitment to stick to the Gonski model for the next two years.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to that \$196 million that is the state government's contribution towards the non-government schooling sector, potentially plus other bits and pieces, what will that quantum become next year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We do not have the forward estimates with us, so we will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** If you are taking it on notice, can you also give me the other years in the forward estimates?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will give you what I can give you.

**Mr GARDNER:** Apart from this funding line here and the non-government schools loans program, are there any other ways in which the education department's policies or programs provide services, funding or support for non-government schools and their families?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There are some resources that we share across the three sectors, such as a disability committee that disburses some funds for students with a disability and some effort that, as sector heads, the three sectors meet and I attend, and there are some resources that are associated with that.

**Mr GARDNER:** I am happy for you to give some description now, or you may want to take aspects on notice, but can we get a breakdown of the level of support for students with a disability in non-government schools that comes from the state government?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Do the representative organisations receive any support from the state government, the Catholics and AISSA—Catholic Education and the Association of Independent Schools?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Our understanding is that we do not fund them as bodies to function, that they are entirely dependent on commonwealth funding for that.

**Mr GARDNER:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 23, highlights, the last dot point:

A total of ten non-government schools have been approved in the first round of the state government's Non-Government Schools Loan Scheme, delivering a total of \$38.5 million in loans for the development of STEM and/or early year's facilities.

I will have to check whether that apostrophe is in the right place.

This initiative makes available...

Ten non-government schools received loans totalling \$38.5 million. Can you tell us which schools and how much their loans are? Feel free to comment on the apostrophe, if you want.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Do not tempt me. From round 1, we have Pilgrim School, which is a non-system Catholic school, \$1.063 million; St Dominic's Priory, also non-system Catholic, \$4 million; St Michael's College, non-system Catholic, \$10 million; Good Shepherd Lutheran School Para Vista, \$4.2 million; Navigator College, Lutheran, \$3 million; Blakes Crossing Christian College, which is an independent school, \$2.35 million; Mount Barker Waldorf School, an independent school, \$2.5 million; Pinnacle College, an independent school, \$0.5 million; St George College, an independent school, \$9.55 million and Temple Christian College, an independent school, \$1.35 million. We are currently in the process of round 2. Applications have closed and we are going through the process of approving another round of loans.

**Mr GARDNER:** Did any schools apply in round 1 but were rejected?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There were 20 schools that applied in round 1 and 10 were successful.

**Mr GARDNER:** Has the department done any work with the 10 schools that were not successful to assist them in preparing for round 2?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** This is a program that is not just managed by the department because of the involvement of finance, so I would not be able to give a definitive answer.

**Mr GARDNER:** Has the government given them any assistance—

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I can take that on notice, I just cannot give a definitive answer now.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are you able to advise whether those 10 schools that were not successful, irrespective of whether they are getting any assistance from the government in reapplying, are amongst the applicants for round 2, and how many applicants for round 2 there are?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is there an expectation of how many grants are going to be given in round 2?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, there is no particular set number.

**Mr GARDNER:** I note that the initiative is \$250 million over five years. The first year has seen just under \$40 million in loans granted. Is there a budget allocation for how much is expected to be granted in each of the five years?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** This is held by the Treasurer, so I do not have the answer here.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are you able to get it for us?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I can take it on notice on behalf of the Treasurer.

**Mr GARDNER:** Going to page 34, the statement of financial position identifies that cash holdings are lower by \$92.8 million, which on face value sounds like a lot. Can you explain what is going on there? It is under 'Statement of financial position', about eight lines from the bottom, and says 'lower cash holdings (\$92.8 million)'.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That figure relates to the department's holdings, not the SACE Board's.

**Mr GARDNER:** Sorry, it is listed in the area under administered items, so whether or not it is relevant to the SACE Board, I assumed that it was a question—

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Let's be sure that we are responding accurately. Which page are you on?

**Mr GARDNER:** Page 34.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is the 'Summary of major variations'.

**Mr GARDNER:** So that is major variations across the department?



**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is all the major variations; exactly.

**Mr GARDNER:** Let's go to page 12 then and talk about the SACE Board. How much is the remuneration for the new CEO, the one who has not yet commenced and is not sitting here.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The board has not determined that yet.

**Mr GARDNER:** When will a new CEO be starting?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The applications closed on Monday, so it is anticipated there will be interviews over the next two or three weeks. From there, it will be dependent on who is successful and what their circumstances are. Very sadly, Dr McGoran will be leaving that position at the end of August. There is an interim CEO from within the organisation in readiness so that there will not be a gap should we need to wait longer for the new chief executive to start.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is there a salary band from within which the new CEO's salary is to be taken?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is the executive level band C, as reported in the SACE Board Annual Report, I understand.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the dollar value of that band?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am not sure anyone here has that, but I think it is available on the internet; if not, I will take it on notice and provide it.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many overseas students commenced the SACE last year and this year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Do you mean visa 571 students who are studying here from overseas or the students who are studying overseas?

**Mr GARDNER:** I meant the ones who are studying here, but if the figures are readily available for both then I am interested in both.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There were 705 overseas students. We will have to take the visa 571 question on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** What has been the completion rate of those students undertaking the SACE in South Australia?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many students are enrolled in stage 2 language subjects this year, in 2017?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The cut-off date is in September when we then receive the data, so we do not have that for this year.

**Mr GARDNER:** Given the difficulties that we saw in the last 12 months with the online NAPLAN test and the trial in some schools not going forward, is the SACE Board still confident that marking eight on-screen examinations by 2020 will be done as per the timetable of the SACE Modernisation 2016-2020 plan?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** As Dr McGoran has given an enormous amount of thought to and has worked on this project, I will ask him to answer that question.

**Dr McGORAN:** In response to the question, obviously the SACE Board has been watching the NAPLAN activity very closely. First of all, we had to undertake a very detailed procurement process using the state procurement process rules. Through that, we had four applicants or vendors that were apparently willing and able to meet our requirements. Our requirements were more than 600 and they related specifically to all sorts of activities, from authoring an examination right through to the students being able to undertake that examination in their own school setting on a computer.

Part of that was ensuring that, despite the bandwidth issues that schools might anticipate, we are still able to deliver that examination. In the end, we have selected a vendor and signed the contract at the end of June for delivery of this examination for the first time next year, which is English

literary studies, in November. The delivery model will be ideally online, but for those schools that have bandwidth and/or other concerns there will be other delivery options that this vendor will be able to provide to us, including having a box (a local intranet) in the classroom where the examination is taking place or even USB.

Our learning from the NAPLAN was that it tried to do two things at once: firstly, it tried to change the experience of the students and, secondly, it tried to change the actual format of the examination. Our learning from that is that that is probably not the best way of going. Our intent is, firstly, to change the experience of the student so they will respond electronically to the questions that we provide in a 1½ hour examination of close reading. Over time, we will then change the examination to include greater visual media technology once we are comfortable that schools and students are able to manage that. Our first step next year is changing the experience.

We have also thought about some troubleshooting; that is, what if we know in advance that schools are not able to do that. If that is the case, there will still be the paper version available, and the comparability will be possible because we have only changed the experience, rather than the design of the examination. It is really important because, if the examination on-screen is markedly different from the paper version, then the community would not be comfortable with the comparability. We have managed that.

Lastly, we are engaging very strongly with schools, particularly the IT coordinators in schools, to make sure that they are comfortable with the bandwidth requirements and the infrastructure and that we are aware of all their needs as much as they are aware of ours.

**Mr GARDNER:** Last year, the intention was, in addition to the 2018 delivery of English literacy that you have just identified, to have, in 2019, English as an additional language, history and geography and then, in 2020, psychology, biology, accounting and economics. Are they still on track in all those subjects and is it going to be the same vendor you have just described that will be delivering those modules?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is the same vendor and we are on track.

**Mr GARDNER:** Last year, we were advised that accounting and economics were being reviewed. Has that taken place now, or is that still to take place? The subjects were being reviewed ahead of them becoming on-screen.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The subjects that have been renewed and completed are digital technologies and music subjects, and in early 2016 we have already had accredited agriculture, biology, chemistry, earth and environmental studies, physics, ancient studies, geography and modern history. In the 2016-17 financial year, we have started Aboriginal studies, accounting, business and enterprise, economics, integrated learning, physical education and scientific studies. In the financial year we have just come into, the remainder of the subjects will be renewed.

**Mr GARDNER:** So the reviews of those subjects—accounting and economics and the others you identified—have started but are not complete?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is correct.

**Mr GARDNER:** We understand that Australian history is now history (that is a little pun for your enjoyment). Are any other subjects being reviewed given low numbers of participants?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** All the subjects are being reviewed. The review includes looking at the number of students, content and articulation with the Australian Curriculum and also exploring the opportunity to introduce any new subjects should a need become apparent.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can the minister articulate why Australian history has been dropped from year 12?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Australian history through to year 12 was not a particularly popular subject; we think that 24 students undertook it last year. We have integrated Australian history into modern history so that it is an elective a student is able to take should they take history or modern history from next year, bearing in mind that Australian history is a significant component of the curriculum leading up to year 10.

Many students have studied Australian history in that period and feel that they have done enough on Australian history and are prepared to go in another direction. Others who wish to continue to deepen their knowledge of Australian history will be able to continue to do that through studying the subject modern history.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to the on-screen examinations, why are the very popular mathematics subjects not part of the cohort of the first eight subjects?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Although they are popular subjects, we have identified that familiarity with using electronic devices to answer mathematical questions is not sufficiently strong yet. That is a combination of the need to demonstrate working out, which is frequently done using pen and paper, and the use of symbols and the requirement to move quickly. What we are anticipating is that we will be able to lift the use and facility of technology in producing the equivalent so that students are competent and not disadvantaged by having an electronic version of the exam in the future.

**Mr BELL:** My question is around absences for NAPLAN tests. Over the last three years, has there been an increase in absenteeism from NAPLAN?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is not actually this subject area because we are on administered items, but last year I think we had a higher participation rate than the year before. We do not have this year's results yet. Is that sufficient?

**Mr BELL:** That is fine.

**Mr GARDNER:** Going back to the SACE, how much money did the year 12 merit ceremony cost this year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** In 2016, it cost \$112,993.

**Mr GARDNER:** Sorry, I mean the one that took place at the beginning of 2017.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Sorry, that is for the 2016 cohort.

**Mr GARDNER:** Okay.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It occurred very early in 2017; you are correct.

**Mr GARDNER:** How much was the figure again?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It was \$112,993.

**Mr GARDNER:** How much of that was project management fees? In the last two years, you have used a private company to deliver that. Was the same private company used or a different private company, and how much?

**The CHAIR:** Your next question might have to be the last on this line, member for Mordialta.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am going to take that on notice because there are a number of elements to that answer.

**Mr GARDNER:** My last question, as the Chair has told me I have one more, is in regard to the SACE modernisation project again. Are we still on track to achieve marking 42,000 external assessments on screen and 17 examinations, and the other goals of the SACE modernisation project? Are there any that we are not on track to meet?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The SACE modernisation project is on track.

**Mr GARDNER:** Congratulations, Dr McGoran, on your new appointment. I am sure we will see more of you in that role.

**The CHAIR:** We are moving now to the early childhood development line.

#### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr R. Persse, Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms J. Riedstra, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr C. Bernardi, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms A. Hayes, Executive Director, Early Years and Child Development, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms K. Weston, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and External Relations, Department for Education and Child Development.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The change in advisers is that obviously we very sadly say farewell to Dr McGoran in many ways. I would like to put on record my sincere appreciation of the extraordinary work he has done in SACE, and I look forward to working with him in his new role with the Catholic education system. We have the addition of Ann-Marie Hayes, who is the Executive Director, Early Years and Child Development.

**Mr GARDNER:** Earlier in the estimates procedure, I asked a number of questions about staff in departments.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, we have one bit that is missing, so fire away.

**Mr GARDNER:** The missing piece in the jigsaw puzzle arises. Hello to Ms Ann-Marie Hayes, who is in the senior management group and is the Executive Director, Early Years and Child Development. The charts provided identify that, under Ms Hayes, there is a director for Aboriginal education, a director for the Child and Family Health Service, a director for engagement and wellbeing, a director for disability policy and programs, a director for early childhood services and a director for student support services. Are there any changes imminent as a result of the executive realignment, or are those the six directors—not necessarily the people but the positions—going forward?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** They are the establishment. There is no foreshadowed change.

**Mr GARDNER:** No foreshadowed change, excellent. As at today or whatever the most recent figures you have, how many FTE staff and how many headcount are working under each of those directors?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the total budget over the forward estimates for the division under each director?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many staff are seconded to that division from schools or other areas in the department, and who meets that cost?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** That is schools, or childcare centres or indeed anywhere else.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Sorry to cut you off. We will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** Where are Ms Hayes and her directors based?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** They are currently based at Flinders Street. They are a grouping that is intended to be moved to Hindmarsh. Forgive me, one of them has already gone.

**Mr GARDNER:** Sorry, minister, my hearing is not 100 per cent. Can you repeat that?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The directors who are currently in Flinders Street, which is nearly all of them—all but one—will go to Hindmarsh. CaFHS is based in South Terrace.

**Mr GARDNER:** Right, so CaFHS is at South Terrace under Ms Bradley. The others are all in Flinders Street but will go to Hindmarsh?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right.

**Mr GARDNER:** CaFHS will stay in South Terrace?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes. At this stage, that is the plan.

**Mr GARDNER:** And are all the staff, either at South Terrace or Flinders Street, moving to Hindmarsh?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No. It is highly complex, and we can give you the detail on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** So you will take on notice how many staff are based at each location, and take on notice how many staff are at any other location?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes.

**Mr GARDNER:** On face value, the departments of Aboriginal education and disability policy and programs, as well as even engagement and wellbeing and student support services, do not immediately strike me as being early years specific programs. With the executive realignment, is there a broader purpose that means that those areas fall within early years and child development, or is it just for administrative convenience?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** In essence, the point is that child development refers to the development of the young person all the way through, and those matters are about their development that sit alongside their capacity to undertake learning successfully.

**Mr GARDNER:** So they might as well be there as in any of the other groups then?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is a very similar kind of profession and expertise that is required in the leadership.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to the new superschools that we were describing earlier and the Magill school, I note it is anticipated to have children's centres attached to the two new superschools, and potentially Magill Kindergarten in the Magill education precinct. When will the 55-place children's centres at the two new superschools be constructed? Is that going to be directly in line with the other build?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It will. It will be all constructed at the same time and be ready in time for 2022.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is it anticipated that these will be B-12 schools with one governance model, or are we looking at having children's centres with their own separate directors and separate to the governance of the schools?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The starting position is that it will be the same as the existing birth to 12 superschools, but we have not settled finally on that level of detail.

**Mr GARDNER:** What local planning analysis has been done to determine the need for these children's centres, or is it a matter that, given we are building a new school, we might as well?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The age of the kids was taken into account in the demographic analysis, and it was determined that there was a need for that size of centre as well.

**Mr GARDNER:** Will the Magill Kindergarten be moved on to the Magill Campus of UniSA and, if so, when?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I cannot comment on the feasibility study.

**Mr GARDNER:** So that is part of the feasibility study for the Magill education precinct then?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is indeed part of the feasibility study.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to the year 1 phonics check, which I believe, from the minister's Twitter account, is also going to be taking place in kindergartens and year 1—

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, if I can just correct you: it is the question of reception and year 1.

**Mr GARDNER:** Sorry, reception and year 1.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** So always in a primary school setting, and we are ready for that to take place in this term. The advice we have received from Jennifer Buckingham, who is an expert in this field, is that we ought to do both year 1 and reception, because we are doing a trial, to determine the most appropriate age group for that assessment.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can the minister advise whether the decision to have the phonics check take place in reception was taken on the advice of Ms Buckingham or whether Ms Buckingham's advice led to a decision to have year 1 as well as reception?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We realised that there was a complexity where the UK age of the students in their year 1 is the same as students in our reception but they have had a different experience of education. While most of our young people go to preschool, that education experience might not be the same as the equivalent year in the UK.

While initially the fact that they were at the same age meant that the department's advice was that we should do reception, and in addition there was a view within the department that phonics is taught early in school and that that would be appropriate, it was drawn to my attention that this might not in fact be the best way of using a phonics assessment. We then contracted Jennifer Buckingham and set up a small panel to review the way in which we would administer this assessment. We are the first state in Australia to do this. As I think I have mentioned, it is a trial rather than a full rollout.

The advice was that we ought to do both years to take advantage of the trial to see whether the age is more important or whether the child needs two years of formal schooling before they are able to be assessed fully. The question really is around the intervention that might be precipitated by such an assessment. It is always better to do it earlier, but there is no point in assessing a child who has not learnt something and then regarding them as needing intervention because they do not know it. That interaction meant that we needed to seek advice on the best way forward. As I say, the advice has been to do it across the two age years. We will do that this term, and that will guide us for the way in which we will do it next year in our schools.

**Mr GARDNER:** I want to be clear, minister. The first answer you gave was that Ms Buckingham's advice was to do it across the two years, but from your second lengthy answer, which went into some detail, which I appreciated, I now have the picture—and correct me if I am wrong—initially the department's advice was that we would do this in reception because the age of the students was similar that of students in the UK. It was then drawn to your attention that this was not universally appreciated as the right way forward. You contracted Ms Buckingham and a small group to review the phonics check, and then a decision was made on Ms Buckingham's advice, or that of others, that you would do both year 1 and reception.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right.

**Mr GARDNER:** How many schools participating in the trial will be doing it in year 1 and how many in reception? Will any of those schools be trialling it in year 1 and reception at the same time, or will we have discrete sets doing it in reception and discrete sets doing it in year 1 as part of the trial?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is 54 schools. We were seeking 50, and 54 applied, so we said of course we will do it across all of them. We are working through right now with each of those schools whether they wish to do both years or one of the years, so I will be able to inform people later, but we do not have that information now.

**Mr GARDNER:** When is the check due to take place? I read somewhere that it was August.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am sorry, I missed your question because I was making sure I was accurate in my previous answer. Can you repeat that question?

**Mr GARDNER:** I appreciate your accuracy. When are the checks taking place? I was somehow under the impression that it was August.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right; it is in August. I believe training is occurring right now. There is an expectation that most of the schools will do it across both year levels, but it is not certain that it will be all of them, and that is why I cannot give you a more precise answer.

**Mr GARDNER:** Is the feedback from those schools that they are in fact introducing the concepts that are being checked—the phonics—in reception as well as year 1?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I do not have that feedback. I think that is part of the analysis of how the trial goes. We need to really understand from the trial how the Australian Curriculum, the South Australian application of the curriculum and the way we approach the first two years of school work with what is a very sound assessment from the UK, but one that nonetheless sits on top of a quite different school system.

**Mr GARDNER:** The minister in her earlier answer highlighted that this is a trial in the 54 schools and 'not a full rollout'. Previously, in the media you talked about it being expanded to all schools across South Australia potentially.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** My commitment is that we will do it next year in all schools unless something completely unexpected arises out of the trial.

**Mr GARDNER:** Coming out of the review from Ms Buckingham?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is my expectation.

**Mr GARDNER:** Are Ms Buckingham and the small panel you identified reviewing the process up to this point to inform the trial that is about to happen, or will they also review the trial itself? Who is doing the analysis of the trial?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We are not contracting Ms Buckingham—in fact I believe that is on her advice—for the assessment of the trial. She assisted us in the design of the trial. Jennifer Buckingham has recommended Professor Kevin Wheldall. I am not sure where we are on the contract with that, but we will of course be having the trial fully assessed, and we will use the best expertise available to us.

**Mr GARDNER:** Who suggested that? You said it was recommended—

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Jennifer Buckingham.

**Mr GARDNER:** Jennifer Buckingham suggested Professor Wheldall, who is going to do the assessment of the trial.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is our intention, but if we do not have a contract with him I cannot be certain that that will happen.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can I ask the minister if she will let us know when that detail of that contract has been finalised. The question I am asking is: when will that assessment be complete? I appreciate that is not possible if—

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take on notice the project plan for it.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to the panel that reviewed the process up to now, the one that Ms Buckingham was involved with, who else was on that panel?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** On the panel was Dr Jennifer Buckingham, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies; Anne Bayetto, a lecturer at Flinders University; and Professor Ann Castles, Research Chair at Macquarie University.

**Mr GARDNER:** Let's move on to another matter, namely, Budget Paper 5, page 32; Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 17, the financial commentary; and budget papers 1 and 2, which all talk about the SA Collaborative Childhood program. Can I ask some questions about that in this line.

This is a \$910,000 initiative for the development and support of the South Australian Collaborative Childhood Project, which is committed to researching and developing local approaches to the principles of the Reggio Emilia education philosophy; \$410,000 for prototypes, being sites or services committed to researching and incorporating principles; and \$500,000 for the 2017 early learning conference, being in Adelaide. Are you able to give some information about what sites are going to receive the benefit of that \$410,000, how they were chosen and how that money will be spent?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** At present, there are 18 that a board is working with, which includes representatives from the Catholic system, Early Childhood Australia and ourselves, and we will be identifying four of those 18. When I say 'we', I mean that group of experts will be identifying four from the different sectors to work with intensively to be the prototypes, and they have not yet been identified.

**Mr GARDNER:** I apologise if the minister was answering this part of the question just then and I missed it, but what criteria are being considered to develop those prototype sites and services?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The group I just described is currently working on those criteria so that they can guide the selection of the four.

**Mr GARDNER:** How is the Reggio approach—where assessments are not taken by testing and grading students but, rather, from featuring the children's construction of learning through inquiry and expressive language—being combined with the Australian Curriculum that demands specific outcomes and assessments that require demonstrations that children are learning according to defined standards?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It has been pointed out to me that this is Reggio inspired, rather than completely importing the Reggio model. There is an articulation into the early years framework and a lot of work has been done to make that flow.

**Mr GARDNER:** We are spending \$900,000 on pushing the Reggio framework and we also have some level of engagement with other philosophies, such as Steiner and Montessori, but unlike Montessori, for example, there are no prescribed written definitions of what constitutes a Reggio approach and no way to be officially certified as a Reggio Emilia school.

Can the minister explain the philosophical underpinnings of this educational approach, or a Reggio Emilia-inspired school with South Australian characteristics as somebody described it to me? What are the underpinnings that have inspired the government to spend this money? It might help the minister to answer by asking this: in deciding to spend \$900,000 here, did the government consider Montessori, Waldorf or other philosophies as alternative approaches supported by the state government?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** What I am going to do is ask the expert, Ann-Marie Hayes, to give you a short summary of the approach and why we are particularly attracted to the Reggio Emilia-inspired approach.

**Ms HAYES:** It is a philosophy that does not actually dictate 'how to' particularly. It is more about a value approach to children. We had a Thinker in Residence, as you would be aware, a couple of years ago. What we looked at is not to actually embed or import Reggio Emilia from Italy but to look at the values that underpin it, which is looking at children as citizens and as competent and having potential, whatever the nature of the child, to develop from that stance, as opposed to the more deficit model of some of the others.

It loosely translates right in the early days, so some of our children's centres have adopted the philosophy, but we also have the Child Friendly SA framework, which you would find on our website, that is totally in keeping with it. The framework supports Reggio Emilia, which looks at all domains of the child. The difference for Reggio Emilia is that it actually takes the child as competent from birth and looks at how we develop and support those competencies through a range of programs and supports.

**Mr GARDNER:** As I said before, \$410,000 is allocated for the prototypes and \$500,000 towards hosting the early learning conference. Is it possible at this stage to provide a breakdown of the costs associated with both lines? Is the \$410,000 across four sites, for example? Is that \$102,500 in each site, or is it done some other way? Is the \$500,000 a simple payment for the conference, or are there different fees that make up the \$500,000?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** The national regulations require services to have a quality improvement plan, which aims to assist providers self-assess their performers in delivering quality education and care and to plan future improvements. How is the Reggio Emilia process with South Australian



characteristics being implemented or utilised to meet those requirements for the quality improvement plan?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** They enhance them. As you may have noticed in my opening statement for schools education, I did reference early childhood and the fact that we have a very high rate of exceedance. It is much higher than the national average, so it generally just improves the quality of offering for early childhood as is consistent with the priorities of this government for the early years.

**Mr GARDNER:** What professional development strategies and opportunities will be offered for educators through this initiative and how will the government measure the success of this initiative?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is probably quite a detailed answer, so I will take that on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** In relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 16, under the financial commentary, the increase in expenses identifies \$5.3 million for 'additional expenditure associated with the implementation of recommendations of the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission'. Is the minister able to identify the nature of those cost increases that make up that \$5.3 million?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I can refer you to the recommendations from the Nyland royal commission that are the responsibility of the Department for Education and Child Development. One is recommendation 51 for the CFARNs, as they are known, the Child and Family Assessment and Referrals Networks. We had agreed to undertake three, as recommended by Margaret Nyland: one to be operated by a non-government organisation and two by the government.

As you are not the shadow for child protection, I will not take you through the detail of where that fits in child protection. We have subsequently decided to do a fourth in regional South Australia. Recommendation 89 is the increased promotion of SMART training. Recommendation 90 is around—that is probably not a cost. Excuse me, I will confirm which ones are part of our budget process.

Costs are essentially around training for abuse and trauma support for children who need support due to abuse and trauma who are under the guardianship of the state and also the CFARNs. I can give an exhaustive list on notice.

**Mr GARDNER:** I do have other questions, but we might do the omnibus questions now and then come back to me, if there is time.

**The CHAIR:** We can do that at the end of the day, if you want to, because it is the same minister.

**Mr GARDNER:** It is not the same shadow minister at the end of the day, though.

**The CHAIR:** It is the same set of questions, though. It is up to you.

**Mr GARDNER:** My point is, let's do them now and if we have time for me to do more I will come back.

**Mr BELL:** The omnibus questions are:

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 in 2016-17 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. In financial year 2016-17 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs (1) was and (2) was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2017-18?

3. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, please provide a breakdown of attraction, retention and performance allowances, as well as non-salary benefits, paid to public servants and contractors in the years 2015-16 and 2016-17.

4. For each agency for which the minister has responsibility:

- (a) How many FTEs were employed to provide communication and promotion activities in 2016-17 and what was their employment expense?
  - (b) How many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21, and what is their estimated employment expense?
  - (c) The total cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums, in 2016-17, and budgeted cost for 2017-18.
5. For each agency for which the minister has responsibility:
- (a) What was the cost of electricity in 2016-17?
  - (b) What is the budgeted cost of electricity in 2017-18?
  - (c) What is the provisioned cost of electricity in 2018-19, 2019-20 and, 2020-21?
6. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for please provide the following information for the 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years:
- (a) Balance of the grant program or fund;
  - (b) Budgeted (or actual) expenditure from the program or fund;
  - (c) Budgeted (or actual) payments into the program or fund;
  - (d) Carryovers into or from the program or fund; and
  - (e) Details, including the value and beneficiary, of any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund.

**Mr GARDNER:** What is the government doing to ensure that the demand for new early childhood teachers, directors and certified certificate and diploma staff will be met, and that there will be sufficient trained staff to meet that demand in the years ahead, especially with new childcare and children's centres being built and new requirements as a result of the new National Quality Framework?

**The CHAIR:** That's 14 questions.

**Mr GARDNER:** She can take it on notice if she likes.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The challenge is that that is really a training question rather than a Minister for Education and Child Development question, so I will return as that minister with an answer for you. Can I just very quickly put on record that Professor Wheldall is not going to do the evaluation. He has indicated that he would rather advise us. He will be on the selection panel to help choose the evaluation team rather than be on the team himself.

**Mr GARDNER:** Will the minister be able to get back to us when the evaluation team has been chosen and, further, when they are going to report?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am sure I will be making that public in due course.

**The CHAIR:** The time having expired for the questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the Department for Education and Child Development and administered items for the Department for Education and Child Development completed.

*Sitting suspended from 12:31 to 13:30.*

## **DEPARTMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION, \$479,666,000**

### **Membership:**

Ms Sanderson substituted for Mr Bell.

**Minister:**

Hon. S.E. Close, Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Higher Education and Skills.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms C. Taylor, Chief Executive, Department for Child Protection.

Ms J. Browne, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Child Protection.

Ms F. Ward, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Child Protection.

Ms B. Schumann, Acting Executive Director, Strategy and Performance, Department for Child Protection.

Ms J. Riedstra, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

**The CHAIR:** We are now looking towards the line for care and protection and the portfolio is education and child development. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education and Child Development. I declare the proposed payments still open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements in Volume 1. I call on the minister to introduce her advisers and make a statement if she wishes to.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will introduce the advisers and also give a brief opening statement. On my right is Jenny Browne, who is the Chief Financial Officer of the Department for Child Protection. On my left is Cathy Taylor, the Chief Executive, and on her left, Fiona Ward, who is the Deputy Chief Executive of that department. Behind me, I have Brette Schumann, who is the Acting Executive Director of Strategy and Performance in the department, and next to her is Juliann Riedstra, who we know from the previous session is the Deputy Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Child Development.

Clearly, the reason that we have people from both departments is that the department was formed during the period we are discussing, so we want to be able to answer questions quickly and accurately. I will make a brief statement.

The 2017-18 budget continues to build on the reform of child protection and child development systems in this state. Prior to the release of the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission report in August last year, this government made an initial funding commitment of \$200 million to fundamentally change the way we manage child protection in South Australia. Following the delivery of the report, we committed a further \$232 million, for a total of \$432 million in the 2016-17 Mid-Year Budget Review, to re-orient and better build systems that protect our children and young people, provide assistance to vulnerable families earlier, help improve parenting practices and better support our invaluable carers.

The 2017-18 budget commits a further \$86.5 million to bring this government's current funding commitment to child protection to \$518.5 million to meet the extra costs of children in care. As we have outlined in our first progress report, released last month, considerable changes have taken place in South Australia for the protection of some of the most vulnerable children in our community. This includes increased funding and FTEs to support children and young people with a disability and broader support for carers through the introduction of four relationship managers.

With the creation of a new Department for Child Protection on 1 November 2016, and the appointment of Ms Cathy Taylor to head this new department, we are now embarking with our partners across the government and non-government sector on some of the most significant child protection reforms this state has ever seen. These reforms have already begun to improve areas that Commissioner Nyland and the rest of us agreed required significant focus.

The first of these I am pleased to report on is the wait times people experience when contacting the Child Abuse Report Line, known by many as CARL. In the 2016-17 year, the call centre received a total of 64,899 phone calls. It may be of benefit to the community to know that

since December 2016 the average wait time has steadily improved, and for the month of June 2017 an average call wait time of 23 minutes 14 seconds was recorded, which is approximately half the wait time for December 2016. In the months since December 2016, we have been seeing a steady reduction in the average wait time, and we anticipate this positive trend will continue.

Another very important improvement I am pleased to report on is that, as of today, there are no children or young people in motels, hotels or caravans. Furthermore, significant work is currently underway to place all children, where appropriate to do so, in family-based care settings. This is especially important in our regional communities, where a concerted effort is being made to find family, kin and community for Aboriginal children and young people needing care.

As you would be aware, as part of the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission, Commissioner Nyland recommended refreshed leadership in the new department with an emphasis on the attraction and retention of leaders who have recognised credibility in child protection and who have the capacity to lead a major reform of organisational culture. This has occurred with a number of key appointments made to the department's senior executive group, creating a revitalised leadership team along with a new organisational structure, which came into effect from 3 July this year.

In November 2016, the government released 'A fresh start', which responded to commissioner Nyland's report, 'The life they deserve'. To make progress on the 256 recommendations that the government accepted from Commissioner Nyland's report, the Department for Child Protection Reform Implementation Team was established in January 2017. This team is overseeing a number of positive child protection reforms, including the creation of the Child Safety Pathway.

The new pathway relies on multiple agencies to offer a broader range of responses for families and children at risk. The aim is to refer families to the services they need early, when they might otherwise have fallen through the gaps. This is part of the focus on implementing strategies that offer support to families early and preventing issues escalating to the point where statutory intervention is needed. The state government has in particular committed resources to early intervention and protection measures, including through funding the Family by Family program and the Triple P parenting program.

We are also ensuring that every dollar we spend on child protection goes towards what works. We are investing in world-leading research and building the evidence base of child protection programs. That is why we have established the Early Intervention Research Directorate in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The EIRD brings together Australia's best child protection researchers to review early intervention and prevention programs, evaluate the extensive reforms that this state is undertaking and provide advice to the government on these most important areas.

This government acknowledges that there is still much work to be done, and we are committed to the ongoing reform work that has commenced under Cathy Taylor's leadership. We will continue to report on progress as per our last report to the public on the implementation of the royal commission reforms, which I invite all to review on the public website. I thank my advisers for being here today, and I look forward to questions.

**Ms SANDERSON:** In Budget Paper 4, Agency Statements, Volume 1, page 89, Program 1: Care and Protection, under description/objective, point 2 states:

receiving and responding to reports of concern about children and young people, including investigation and assessment where appropriate

My first question is: how many notifications were there for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 years? Is there any difference between the number of notifications and the number of screened-in notifications or are they interchangeable terms?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will go to your last question first, which is around the terminology. I believe that when someone contacts the CARL or goes to eCARL they intend that to be a notification, so we will often talk about that larger figure, which was around 60,000 in the last year.

If you take the answered calls and the eCARL for 2015-16, there was a bit under 67,000. Then, for what we regard as notifications in the sense that people are actually trying to give

information, in 2015-16 there were around 55,000. The screened-in is another level again that we need to record on our system, and I can give you those figures for the two years that you have asked about. The notifications for 2015-16 actual are 21,424. If we look at the 2016-17 year, it is an estimated result at present. As I believe you are aware, we go through a process of confirming the data, so our report is somewhat later. There is an estimated result that is very similar at 21,100. You just asked about notifications, did you not?

**Ms SANDERSON:** That was the screened-in?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right.

**Ms SANDERSON:** You are saying that there were 54,000 of just notifications last year. Do you have an estimated figure of just notifications for this year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, around 51,200. What we see is that the number of calls will be around 60, and now up to 75, which are answered calls plus eCARLs. The number of what we would regard of those phone calls being notifications, another level down, is around the 50,000 mark, and then around the 20,000 mark are the screened-in notifications that we are putting onto our system. As you can see, that gives a pretty neat illustration of the funnel. We get a huge amount of information and a lot of interaction with people that are many times what we end up with as these screened-in notifications.

**Ms SANDERSON:** If we know that for 2016-17 there were 64,899 calls—some of those were answered, some were not—what was the eCARL for that same year then so I can try to make the figures work?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** For both years, there were around 30,000. For 2015-16, there were 29,000. The reason I am hesitating is that I have a recollection of a figure that is not exactly what is here, so I will say that, for both years, the eCARL is around 30,000. I will not give a precise figure because I am just wanting to test the one that is in front of me.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Thank you. How many of the calls for both years were closed with no action (CNA)?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We do not have that data here. What we can say is that roughly 20,000 contacts are regarded as screened-in notifications, and we make about 4,500 investigations each year. We are talking about around 13,000 kids in a given year. That will vary slightly from year to year but is actually reasonably stable. I can give you that data. I do not have those individual notifications that are closed, which might be for a variety of reasons.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Is it possible to bring that back to the house?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take it on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Also, for the same two years, how many were deemed notifier only concerns?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Of the total screened-in notifications, what is the breakdown of tiers 1, 2, 3 and interfamilial? I already have last year's, which you gave me in estimates, but this is for the 2016-17 year.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Again, I can give you that, but they are not finalised figures for that year, as they were not last year either, so they are estimates. Tier 1 is 1,240, tier 2 infant is 3,788, tier 2 not infant is 7,604—there are two lots of tier 2s, so give me a minute.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Is infant to age one or two?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** What I will do is give you this: tier 2 infant is 3,788, the remaining tier 2 is 12,908, tier 3 is 538 and extrafamilial is 2,542.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Tier 3 was how much?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It was 538.

**Ms SANDERSON:** And interfamilial?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Was 2,542—extrafamilial, so they are not related to the person who is thought to be—

**Ms SANDERSON:** Is it interfamilial?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Interfamilial is all the rest or legal guardians. Extrafamilial means that, if they are not related to the child or they are not a legal guardian, that is recorded separately and it is usually a SAPOL matter. The others are about the way that children are being treated by their carers, usually their parents.

**Ms SANDERSON:** What is the current backlog of eCARL reports and the average time to assess those?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** As per the royal commission recommendation 36, they recommended that the eCARL notifications are assessed within 24 hours. Do you have a goal of when that will be achieved?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** In our response to the Margaret Nyland report, we had the reform of the call centre team and the Child Safety Pathway in the first tranche of our response, which means over the next year. We are now in the financial year where we are starting to build that team. We have already seen a change in process that has seen a drop in the wait time for answering phone calls, for example. We will see another level of improvement as we start to put together the Child Safety Pathway project, which was funded in the previous Mid-Year Budget Review and is a response to the Nyland report.

**Ms SANDERSON:** So there is not a set time then; it is just ongoing at the moment.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is an active project at present.

**Ms SANDERSON:** You may have mentioned this amongst the figures, but for the 2016-17 year what is the total number of investigations and substantiations?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is always around the 4,000 mark. We believe that for 2016-17 it is 4,058, but again that is not a verified figure. We think the substantiations for 2016-17 are just under 1,500. All that will be verified in time for the annual report. You do not necessarily need to write this down, but there are a number of ongoing investigations that may turn into substantiations. So you will have an investigation come in and it might not be complete by the cut-off, but that does not mean that that is not being undertaken; it will just be captured in the next year.

**Ms SANDERSON:** On the same page under grants and subsidies, can you explain the drop of the \$60.271 million for the 2017-18 budget, as opposed to the 2016-17 estimated result?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There is a net decrease, but there are of course ons and offs that then net out to the net decrease. The biggest movement has been the decrease in out-of-home care expenditure, as children move from the more expensive non family-based care options to cheaper family-based care options.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I believe that, for the current year, there was a \$99.7 million overspend on emergency care. It looks like the drop of \$60 million means you think that you will be overspending by only \$31 million. What is that based on—how many children and over what period of time?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The figure that you are referring to is not simply about emergency care, although I can understand why there is some confusion about this. It is also when we are using non-agency staff, non-departmental staff, within our residential care. If we have vacancies, we bring people in from external organisations, and that then contributes to that cost.

**Ms SANDERSON:** What was the total cost of residential care in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 years?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** What was the total cost of emergency or commercial care, as it is also known, in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 years?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice also.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Do the new figures in the budget estimates for grants and subsidies also account for single shifts in all residential and emergency care, as recommended by the royal commission?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** In response to the Nyland royal commission, we said that we would move to the double shifts in the third tranche of our response for in-commercial care offerings. If I can just interrupt this very detailed figure answer to say I am sure I would not be alone in feeling very strongly that, ideally, children and young people are in family-based placements. There are some for whom that is not possible, either through disability or behaviour, but there are far more than are currently in family-based placements.

We are putting an enormous amount of effort into increasing the number of family-based placement options for children and young people. To return to your question, we have double shifts for children and young people in commercial care on the basis of how we analyse the need of the child or young person, and we will move to fulfil the Nyland recommendation in the third tranche of our response.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Do you know when the third tranche will be? Is it in the next financial year or is it in a couple of years?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, it is not possible to give such a precise answer because it is about sequencing rather than timing. We are attempting to sequence a very big shift towards family-based placement, and putting a huge emphasis on that, and then any remaining commercial care that is absolutely necessary, and it would be lovely if there were none. We will manage that after we have made the big transition.

**Ms SANDERSON:** In your opening statement, you mentioned that there are now no children living in motels, hotels or caravan parks, yet as at 30 June your figures show that there are 162 children in commercial care. Where are they living?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** They are largely in residences that we have hired, rented, leased for these purposes. I think in the media there is an image that commercial and emergency care means hotels and caravan parks. It largely does not, and we have been able to eliminate that option. Because you mentioned the figure in June, today there are 147 in the category of commercial care. It is a somewhat difficult category; I do not think it is the most accurate or helpful.

There are some children—some very, very little babies or young people—who are in an arrangement where we require shift workers, who are paid to be shift workers, because the children have very serious disabilities. Some have end-of-life plans attached to their disability. I do not think that is the kind of care that is usually in people's minds when they hear about commercial and emergency care. They think that we have just removed the child and we have to temporarily house them in a hotel; in fact, we do not any longer use that form of accommodation. For some but not all of the children and young people, the option is the one that suits their needs best, and I think we are working towards having a better definition so that we are clearer about the different forms of care.

What it all comes back to for me is that if it is at all possible to have a child in a family-based placement, if that suits the child, then that is what we should be working hard to do. As you will have noticed, every time I am in the media I try to insert a request for anyone interested in being a foster carer to do so, whether it is respite or long term, because that is the answer to the vast majority of our children's accommodation needs.

**Ms SANDERSON:** On that point, on page 91, in the highlights, point 6, foster care placements increased by 4.1 per cent over 10 months. Firstly, do you have the figure for the full year ended 30 June, and how many of these were new families and how many went to families that were already in the foster care system?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will have to take that on notice because we are still finalising the figures. We have seen real growth in the number of carers and also percentage growth in the number of kids who are in that form of care, but it is not finished yet.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Is it possible to get the figures for 30 June 2015, 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2017 for the total number of foster families that were there at the beginning of that year, then how many came in and how many left? In that way, I will have the total for each year.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice. I would note that I think there has been a perception that we have lost foster carers over the years. In fact, the data can occasionally be messy because people stop being carers and stay registered. Then we have a clean-out, and all the ones who are no longer going to be carers are taken off the list. So the bumpiness of that register is different.

I have looked into the carers who have placements and that figure has increased steadily from the year 2011-12 through to 2014-15, at least, which was the last verified figure I had that showed a steady increase. The challenge is that we need to increase it still further, and we also need to look at the number of child placements per family.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I was not able to reconcile this figure last year, but in June 2015 you made an announcement of \$4.4 million to be spent on foster care as \$1.1 million per annum. Then in February, seven months later, you announced \$9 million for foster care to be increased by \$130 million over three years. I am just trying to reconcile, is it actually \$9 million over three years, and how many extra foster carers do we have now and how much of that money has been spent?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will reply via taking it on notice because I do not want to mix up the different programs, as we have had that conversation previously. It will not be possible for us yet to fully test the effectiveness of more recent campaigns because there is a lag between people expressing an interest in being a foster carer and having a child with them—and even being registered. We are hopeful that the trend upwards that we have seen will continue because of the efforts we have made in the last 12 months. In terms of distinguishing between those two projects, I will take that on notice and provide a written reply.

**Ms SANDERSON:** In February of that year, you also announced a specific child only foster care plan with Anglicare. How many children have been placed as part of that program?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will take that on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** On page 91, point 2, under highlights, the Nyland royal commission report, 'The life they deserve', is referred to throughout this year's budget. Is it possible to get a breakdown of the costs so far for the royal commission itself, the response, the 'A fresh start' report, the implementation so far (what has been spent) and then also the costs of the legislation (we have had the screening bill, safety bill and the children's commissioner bill) as well as the planned Family and Community Services changes. One that you might be able to answer now, because it is referred to but with differing figures, is the actual cost of transferring the department. Sometimes it is \$4.5 million, sometimes it is \$4.7 million and sometimes there is a minus figure somewhere and it is a bit hard to tell.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The original set of questions I will have to take on notice. Some of what the member referred to, as she will be aware, was referred to the Attorney-General's costs, so we will take that down seriously and work through that.

In terms of the cost for the new department, the new money that was required was \$2.1 million. Other figures relate largely to transfers from DECD. There was money that was sitting in DECD that was transferred over. There is some \$4.5 million.

**Ms SANDERSON:** The actual cost of moving over to the new department—

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The new money was \$2.1 million.

**Ms SANDERSON:** That would have been letterhead and logos because you did not actually physically move anywhere. That would have just been stationery?



**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** So \$31,000 of it was on formal branding. The \$2.1 million figure referred to the initial establishment additional cost, which was borne from roughly 1 November last year. There are ongoing additional costs in having a separate department, so, although the branding itself was a relatively small amount of money, some \$30,000, much of the cost is in having a separate department, human resources, finance and chief executive. Stand-alone departments cost more than small bits in other departments, so much of the cost is associated with that.

**Ms SANDERSON:** That was the \$2.1 million in new funding?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It was \$2.1 million for the 2016-17 year, which is not a complete year for a new department.

**Ms SANDERSON:** As to the budget for the Commissioner for Children and Young People, what is the 2016-17 estimated spend and the budget for the 2017-18 year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Because that is housed in DECD, I will let my advisers from that department inform me. The ongoing expenditure for the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, is that the question you have asked?

**Ms SANDERSON:** And the set-up costs.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The ongoing expenditure is \$1.7 million a year indexed. I am not sure if I have the set-up costs, although they would not be particularly significant. It is not significant, so I will make sure that we are able to give you an answer on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Are there any plans that you are aware of for moving the office from the Wakefield Street office? Has that been included in the projection for next year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I know that there are some discussions about where the commissioner will locate. I do not know whether it is necessary to make additional budget provisions. It depends on the location. I am unaware of the detail.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Page 92 of the activity indicators, the number of children in out-of-home care as at 30 June, what is the average cost of placing a child in out-of-home care? I am going to ask for the breakdown for each of the categories—foster care, kinship care, residential care, commercial care—and then you would have the overall cost divided per child.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We report on that data through the Report on Government Services (RoGS), so we have no more up-to-date data than is sitting in the RoGS at present, and we will be working through reporting on that in due course.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Would it be possible just to get the total spend for each of those sections based on 30 June and I can divide it myself? Well, we can do an average anyway.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It would be roughly because you do not know how many are in at different times. I will take both questions on notice and I will provide what is available to us.

**Ms SANDERSON:** For the 2015-16 and 2016-17 years, could the minister inform the house how many children were in commercial care who stayed for longer than 31 days, the average length of stay for each of those years and the longest length of stay? I think you gave that last year for 2015-16.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I did. The detail I will take on notice, but I would just point out, as I was raising earlier, that the definition of commercial and emergency care is not particularly useful. The child I believe I reported on last year, who has been in very long-term care under these circumstances, is there due to significant disability. It is not that we are incompetently unable to find another location: this is the location that provides the needs that that child has. We have nurses for more than one of our children on constant roster.

I do not think that answering that question about who has been the longest really elaborates on the situation. That child will be there almost certainly for as long as that child lives because that is the care that it has been deemed that child needs. Fortunately, we have had the same stable group of workers with that child since mid-2013, which has been extremely helpful for the care of that child.

If the question is coming from how long we turn over children in what you might suggest, and not wrongly in some cases, is an unsatisfactory care arrangement if the children in fact are destined to be in a family arrangement—so you are looking for short term—the understanding of how that works is not helped through understanding that some children are there for a very long time because that is in fact the way in which we are caring for those children with those individual needs.

**Ms SANDERSON:** If a child is there because of medical or disability issues, would you not then put them in permanent residential care, or would there not be disability housing? Will that change now that we have the NDIS? Will there be purpose-built suitable housing for children with disabilities so that they are not staying in child protection?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The housing we are leasing for young people who have particular needs is suitable for their care, and we have made further accommodations to make that work. The way in which we operate with the NDIA is that we are in constant discussions about their role in the care of young people under state guardianship.

My advisers are pointing out to me that of course there are many children—in fact, something like 30 per cent of children under care—who have a disability, so by no means are all of them accommodated in this form. This is a particular form of accommodation that suits those individual children and their needs. As a result of the royal commission, we have brought on two staff who are working hard on the relationship between the NDIS and children with a disability under care generally, as well as, of course, specific accommodation for these children we are discussing.

**Ms SANDERSON:** One of the royal commission's recommendations was to have all the children under the guardianship of the minister assessed by 31 March. How many have been assessed and when do you expect to finish assessing them all?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will just clarify that in response to the Nyland report we did not say that we would be able to meet that deadline necessarily. We are working systematically through, but I do not have here the percentage that we are at to date.

**Ms SANDERSON:** For the last financial year, can the minister give me the number, the age and the frequency of missing person reports made by DCP staff for children who are in residential care?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take that on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I know that you are already looking up the number of children who have been in commercial care and emergency care for longer than 31 days, as well as the length of stay, the average length and the longest stay, but could I also have the figures for the number of children who were under the age of 10, and then the same figures for those who were in residential care—so over 31 days, average stay, longest and how many under 10?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take all that on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** On page 92, activity indicators—and I know that I have asked this, but I do not remember if we got a final answer—last year in estimates there was a backlog of 1,500 in eCARL notifications, so I was wondering what your exact backlog was as at this year.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is under 400.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Do you have an anticipated time when they will be assessed within 24 hours, as per the recommendation?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We did have that discussion earlier about the—

**Ms SANDERSON:** It was ongoing.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** —establishment of the Child Safety Pathway, which is the new creation of what is currently the CARL centre. Part of the expectation of the Child Safety Pathway is that we are able to have a very speedy turnaround both in answering phones and also in eCARL mainly, both of those being unified by getting to see children who need to be seen more quickly. As we bring that new service on board, those are the service parameters that we are establishing and it is a priority for us.

We have already seen a decrease in the backlog, we have seen a decrease in the waiting time for people to answer and we have seen a higher proportion of calls being answered despite both more calls and more eCARL notifications, so we are already trending in the right direction. Once we have the Child Safety Pathway established, we would have a reasonable expectation that those figures will get better.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Regarding the Child Safety Pathway, under targets, point 1, page 91, there was a recent pilot. I am wondering if you could share with me the findings from the recent pilot.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** If you are referring to the first dot point under the target 2017-18, that is the project that we are currently engaged in.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I believe the pilot has already commenced and finished?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** This is an action that we are currently engaged in establishing. The term 'pilot' is used because what we are going to do in the course of this financial year, in establishing the Child Safety Pathway, is trial a number of different ways to manage the workflow. One of the very strong messages throughout the Nyland commission report was the importance of, first of all, taking our time; secondly, allowing trial and error; and, thirdly, working with the community and across government.

In that spirit, rather than being a hardwired model that we are implementing rigidly, the Child Safety Pathway is one that we have the shape of and the resources for, but we will allow some trial and error for the exact manner of its operation because what we know is that we want to get to more kids more quickly, and there are different pathways to do that, hence the terminology 'pilot'.

**Ms SANDERSON:** In particular, I am talking about the reference the PSA brought up. Has the department resolved its differences with the PSA over the proposed separation of receiving and recording notifications from the actual assessment of notifications?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, we have.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Will the people involved in that also be social work qualified?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, they will be.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I refer you to page 92, activity indicators—again, children in out-of-home care. What is the average cost of accommodation per child per night and the total cost per year, broken down by month for the 2016-17 year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I think we have already taken a question on notice that includes that.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I asked this question last year in estimates and I got back the answers, but I only have the 2015-16 year, not the 2016-17 year.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** You are just asking about the accommodation costs, as opposed to the total cost of care?

**Ms SANDERSON:** That is right. For example, for the month of July 2015-16 it was \$428,508.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will take what we can on notice. The difficulty is that in some cases we lease the accommodation and in other cases the providers do, so it is hard to disentangle the separate accommodation costs.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Yes, I am not sure how you did it last time. As long as they are comparative, then that would work. Regarding the performance indicators on page 92, the investigations within seven days, do you have a percentage figure now as at 30 June?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We do not yet have an update on the figure that appears in the papers.

**Ms SANDERSON:** It was estimated to be 72.3 per cent and you have next year's target at 80 per cent. That is a pretty big jump. How are you planning to achieve that?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Much of the Nyland reform and our response to it will result, if working, in an improvement in those figures. It is not simply a matter of saying, 'It will be nice if we could reach 80 per cent.' It is a matter of entirely reforming our service provision and providing significantly more resources in order to make that real. The only challenge we have is the constant increase in the number of notifications we are receiving and the complexity of the children we are dealing with and the circumstances they are in.

Before long, we will have what we have called a backlog team, another team in the northern area of some 53 FTEs, which will be able to assist the current team working on investigations to focus on investigations. At present, there are so many children who need help in that area that the investigation team is also spending time looking after children once they are under orders. The backlog team, which will exist for a two-year period, will assist in smoothing out the workload for the investigation team, and we anticipate seeing a lift in figures as a result. That is certainly our aim.

**Ms SANDERSON:** When you get that final figure to 30 June for the percentage of investigations commenced within seven days, could I also have the percentage of those substantiated within one year of a previous substantiation?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take it on notice and absolutely work on replying. The difficulty is that the data closes off sometime in August to September. RoGS is where we then report, so it may be that there is no advantage in taking it on notice because RoGS will have that verified data, but I will take it on notice with my best endeavours.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Often I have found that the RoGS is a complete year off what we need; we do not usually get the current information in the RoGS. Could we now move to page 91, highlights, point 2. Actually, I think we have already talked about the NDIS and we have also talked about the commissioner, so we will skip that one. I will move to a different section, part 2, Budget measures—child protection, page 17. You mentioned in your opening statement the \$86.5 million increase in the budget. What programs and services are being implemented with respect to early intervention and prevention and how does the government intend to consult with stakeholders and the community to implement those effectively?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Early intervention is largely not the province of the Department for Child Protection, which is really concerned with the statutory process of intervening and supporting children and young people. The work you are asking about largely sits within DECD as the lead, with a significant contribution from Health and other community-based departments like DCSI. Importantly, we have invested in the Early Intervention Research Directorate, which sits in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Although much is said about early intervention, at this stage there is not enough reliable evidence that has been tested worldwide to determine which form of early intervention is most effective in different circumstances. There is some evidence for some work, but it is not a comprehensive and deep knowledge. The Early Intervention Research Directorate is not only important in assessing and advising on projects before us but I believe will also be very useful for other states and places in the world to draw on the research evidence they produce.

As an example of the kind of early intervention work that DECD is taking on as part of this new approach to child protection, DECD is running the CFARNs, the Child and Family Assessment and Referral Networks. There were three that were recommended as trials by Margaret Nyland, and we have decided to do four after a lot of feedback from the community about the need to trial a regional network. We are in the process of establishing all those, one of which will be run by an NGO.

It is important to understand that these are trials. That is why we have gone with an NGO running one and government running others—so that we can also test out what the best delivery mechanism is. A combination of that kind of work and the research being undertaken on its effectiveness is at the crux.

You may also be aware that the Department for Education and Child Development is leading the development of legislation on early intervention, which is a rarity. In fact, it would probably be the first in Australia if we are successful in having the legislation come through to being an act. The intention is to really identify the way in which legislatively we establish early intervention and indeed prevention.

I will give you just one more example of work that is being undertaken within the Department for Education and Child Development: the 60 wellbeing practitioners who started last year. We are getting the Early Intervention Research Directorate to do the analysis of the effectiveness of those positions from a perspective of early intervention for vulnerable children.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I refer to page 89, program summary, the FTEs. Given the government has been unable to fill its FTEs for years and the figures show there is a considerable difference between what you anticipated and what you have now estimated at the end of the 2016-17 year, can you explain both the shortfall for 2016-17 and how you expect to increase this by 411.2 by the end of next year?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There is just a clarification to make, in that we may have vacancies for people to be established in a position, which does not necessarily mean that we are not paying people to do the work. I will explain. We had an approved budget FTE cap of 1,853.5 as at June 2017, and we paid 1,803.8 FTE, so very close to the approved cap. While we have carried vacancies for some time, we have been employing people to do that work. It is just that those vacancies have not been filled, and that is in part because the Residential Care Directorate is just employing agency staff to come in and do the work because we have the children.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Was that a difference of 50?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is a difference of essentially 50; that is right. However, we have had a much higher attrition rate than other government departments in recent years—unsurprisingly, given both the nature of the work and the way in which it has been spoken of in public year after year. We are putting a lot of effort into not only doing a better job but also improving the culture and making it a more attractive place to work. I will ask Cathy Taylor, as the CE, to speak briefly about some efforts we are making to really have a good recruitment drive and get some more staff.

**Ms TAYLOR:** Quite rightly, the focus on recruitment and retention is a really big issue for us this year and in the coming years. One of the things we are really ensuring is that, whether it be residential care or right across the board, we have a fully functioning HR department. It was one of the critical findings and recommendations that was made as a result of the royal commission.

We are backing that up then by investing in learning and development and in good supervision for our staff. We have an up-to-date workforce strategy, particularly targeting what is happening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. We currently have nearly 5 per cent of our staff identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and we have given a commitment to increase investment and recruitment to closer to 10 per cent, recognising the numbers of our clients who identify. We have actually given an increased commitment to the support we will provide them. We are actually meeting 100 per cent of the costs now, which has not always been the case, of the costs associated with studying for each of the subjects, and also meeting the costs of their placement.

We find that it is not enough for us just to recruit staff. We need to then ensure that we continue to support them once we have recruited them, so we are going to pay as much attention to retention. We have recently undertaken some focus on wellbeing as well because this is difficult work. I do not know that there is any more difficult work than child protection. We need to ensure, when our staff are dealing with this sort of complex trauma day in and day out, that we are providing them with access to support and debriefing, so we are also doing that.

I think it would be fair to say that it is a significant focus and it is going to take a lot of effort. If I could talk about residential care for a moment, just this Monday, 24 July, we had an additional 13 new recruits come on board. The next lot of 13 further recruits come on board on 21 August. We also have a further 13 staff who have previously been found suitable in residential care but have deferred their start dates, so we are going back to them to confirm when they can start. So you are right: it is a big task. It is a challenge, and we are embracing it and moving forward.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I have a question, through the minister, based on what you have just said. For the extra—I heard there were 13 and another 13; there were quite a few mentioned there—for the residential care, I assume they have all had the psychometric testing, which is now part of your policy. What percentage of people fail that? How many candidates applied that you have ended up with 13? Are a lot of people failing?

**Ms TAYLOR:** I cannot tell you how many have failed, but I can certainly say that under the regime that was established in 2016 we have certainly moved to take all new recruits through the new endorsed provision, which is obviously the battery of psychometric testing and the one-to-one interviews. We have now introduced, from January of this year, that requirement within the department.

The new legislation that has recently passed also extends that to both licensed departmental and non-government residential facilities. I can certainly inquire as to whether we keep a record of those that are found unsuitable. I am not sure whether we do because obviously, in terms of new recruits, we are really only focusing on those who are successful.

**Ms SANDERSON:** It is just a percentage really. I was just wondering how rigorous it is if only 50 per cent of people pass or if 99 per cent get through. One issue that has been raised with me is that different departments are competing for the same social work graduates and that the Department for Child Protection often advertises for an Allied Health Professional 1, whereas the health department will ask for an AHP2, so they are sort of taking the best of the people coming through. I do not know if anything is being done about that or whether you think that is true.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I do not think that we could comment on that; it is not within my control.

**Ms SANDERSON:** This time last year there was a discrepancy between the vacancies. I think this time last year you had recorded 120 vacancies, yet the PSA was claiming shortfalls of between 180 and 200. Currently, the PSA is claiming 149.5 vacancies with 160.5 new positions promised and 80 future positions for growth, which totals 390. Perhaps that is where you are getting your 400 extra planned by the end of 2017-18. Would that be right?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is broadly correct, that there is what we are describing as a movement of some 411 FTEs. Obviously, as I have explained, we are paying people to do the work, but they are not filled positions. There is always a slight detail between the PSA and ourselves over counting people who are on WorkCover or otherwise in positions but away from the work and whether or not we regard that as a vacancy. That happens across the Public Service. The bigger truth is that we are looking for a lot of people in the next year to come on board as employees.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I refer to page 89, point 6, securing permanent out-of-home care where it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of their parents. How many children have been placed under the Other Person Guardianship in 2016-17, and can I have a breakdown of those who were placed with foster carers and kinship carers?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There were 18 who were placed under OPG through the courts in 2016-17. Did you just ask about kinship as well?

**Ms SANDERSON:** Yes. For example, in July 2015, there were 112, and 52 per cent went to foster carers and 48 per cent to relatives or kinship carers.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** So you would like the total who are under OPG orders at present?

**Ms SANDERSON:** Yes, the total would be good.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** For the end of the financial year and what percentage are with people who are not related to them and what percentage were placed with people who are related?

**Ms SANDERSON:** Yes; if I can get the total, that would be great. The new ones were 18, and last year there were 17 new ones, despite a lot of money being invested in pursuing this. It does not seem to be increasing. Can you think of any reasons why we are not getting many?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It has increased since the year before, or the year before that, when it was lower. We have already had four this financial year under orders for OPGs, so we are starting to see an increase. However, the challenge has been having a process that works well for carers; it has been too lengthy. In fact, the very first conversation I had with Ms Taylor was about Other Person Guardianship. Since her arrival, I have seen an increase in focus amongst the workers on OPG and, therefore, I anticipate a better outcome.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Do you have an estimate of how many families are eligible to apply for OPG under your rules, like how many years do they need to be with a foster family?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The new process is not really about rules; it is about the carers expressing an interest and then the circumstances of that child or those children being assessed for whether that is an appropriate way for those children.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Is there any difference in the amount of money that a carer would receive for the same child, whether they are a kinship carer, a foster carer or an OPG carer, including their normal payments and any changes or differences to reimbursements?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Essentially, there is no difference. The carer payment and the support for education remains the same. Although a lot of different views of child protection have been expressed within the community, OPG is not about the carers and their relationship to the department; it is about the children and stability within that family. Since Ms Taylor has been on board, that has been reinforced and made much more explicit. It is not about minimising costs for the department; it is about the child or the children in that household knowing that they are secure in that family.

**Ms SANDERSON:** That is why I cannot understand why the figures are not higher and, if there is no difference in money, why there would not be so many children now in stable placements.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I am sure you would appreciate just how much work in reform has been going on in this newly established department since November last year. The work to refine and strengthen the OPG process has been taking place over the last several months, and the new process has been in place only since the first of this month.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I anticipate that OPG would cost less to the department in that you do not have to have so much regular contact over a haircut, a trip interstate or a school camp.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** That is right. While I am at pains to say that that is not the goal of OPG, there is a consequence that we are less involved in case management for the child because—

**Ms SANDERSON:** That would be better for the family and for the department.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** If that is what suits the carers and the children. For some carers and/or some children, engagement by the department is useful; for others, they want to be living as a family that is biologically related. The new process that Ms Taylor has brought in that started almost a month ago—it is almost the end of July now—will see a change in approach and ought to see an increase in numbers, assuming that that is suitable for the children, which I am confident it is for a larger number than we have presently under OPG.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Page 89, again under description/objective, point 5 states 'working with families to reunite children, who were previously removed for safety reasons'. In June 2015, the government announced \$1 million per annum to reunite adolescents from out-of-home care with their family. How many, per annum, have been reunited in the previous two years?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We have not brought that with us. We will take that on notice.

**Ms SANDERSON:** If you are checking that, then for how many years is this initiative planned; and, if it is not going well, will you be changing that or going with a different program?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Yes, we can include that in the answer on notice. I would point out that this initiative has been essentially a recognition that late reunification, adolescent reunification, is a pattern that we see anyway, where a percentage of young people feel the call to be back with their biological family, even though they had to be removed. That link can be incredibly powerful, and is also potentially of less risk to a young person than it is to, say, a small child. In recognition that there is a trend with a certain number of young people to reunite, the funding we put forward was to support that working well, rather than simply watching it happen from a distance so that the funding is spent where it is necessary and useful to so do.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Also on page 89 under description/objective, point 1 states:

providing family support services (directly or through referral) to strengthen the capacity of families to care for children

How many families have participated in the Triple P program of the anticipated 28,000 over four years now that we are two years into that program?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** As much of the early intervention is managed out of the Department for Education and Child Development, I will have to take it on notice from that department.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Could you then also find out how much of the \$9.3 million that was budgeted for four years has been spent two years in?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Sure.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Prior to estimates last year, you announced \$50 million to merge the Salisbury, Elizabeth and Gawler Families SA offices. Could you update the house on whether that is still planned and whether that will still go ahead at the Smithfield Plains High School site given that the departments are now separated? It is a DECD asset and a Families SA or Department for Child Protection plan.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I think we started to have this conversation last time. I cannot quite recall the timing of when our view on what we ought to do changed. It is less about the separation of the two departments because it is all government, and if the site had been suitable and desirable we would have continued. The Playford city council came forward with a proposal for us to occupy and lease part of a building that they are establishing in the Elizabeth CBD, and we determined that that was a better solution than using a government site out of the central area.

I think I might have signalled at the time—but it has certainly become much clearer—that Gawler is not such a good candidate for the relocation, so it will be Elizabeth and Salisbury offices. The advantage of being in a location where it is easier for public transport to reach is one of the overwhelming reasons. Because they are building the building, it will be a space that is purpose-built for the design that we need, as opposed to trying to repurpose a high school site. Although the idea of merging the offices was where this came from, I think the change is an improvement for the service delivery.

**Ms SANDERSON:** When do you anticipate that that would be opening? Given that you have budgeted \$15 million, would that then just be used to pay off the lease?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I think what we have done is transform that capital into money that enables us to lease. I do not have a date for when it is expected to open, but we are in the design phase with the council at the moment so that they are able to design it in a way that is suitable. We are hopeful for late next year. We are not the builders, but that is our hope. As I say, the funding has just been treated differently by Treasury so that it is now enabling us to lease.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Was there a Nyland recommendation to merge any departments, or was this just a separate idea?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Margaret Nyland did not make any recommendations about co-locations, but it has just been drawn to my attention that we are looking at whether one of the CFARNs would also co-locate there, which would make a lot of sense. There is a lot of discussion going on at present about the best model of service design.

One of the advantages, of course, of the CFARNs not sitting in Child Protection but sitting with Education and Child Development is that it is about bringing together a variety of services in one place. Although I do not believe Margaret Nyland recommended that we merge offices of the department, her model for how we triage, support and refer did encompass a sense of multidisciplinary and multi-agency across government and non-government.

**Ms SANDERSON:** On page 87, investing expenditure summary, the investment program is listed as \$6.3 million and this includes four individual residential care dwellings in the northern metropolitan area. On page 88, \$5.94 million was budgeted in 2016-17, yet the estimated result is only \$101,000 and \$6.339 million is now in the 2017-18 year. I am assuming that means there has been a delay of a year. I am just wondering what happened.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is a delay in the project.



**Ms SANDERSON:** There is a delay? On page 96, it refers to the completion of a residential care facility in Davoren Park of \$6.3 million, so I am wondering if Davoren Park is one of those four and why that says it has been paid for but the money is not spent yet.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It is unlikely that the figures are quite referring to the same things, but because we are dealing with the budget that was being held by the unified Department for Education and Child Development and now we are dealing with a separated budget, we do not have a clear answer here today, so we will find out. I am sure it will make sense because if there is one thing that both of those departments do well it is the finances, but it is just not easy to explain here.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Do you think that the Davoren Park residential facility is one of the four that were listed in the residential care facilities?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** No, we think that Davoren Park is in addition to the four that we are building, but allow us to be clear on notice because, as I say, it is difficult to cross two departments.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Is it possible to get any more information regarding the four individual residential care facilities, for example, the age group that you are going to be placing there, the CAT (complexity assessment tool) rating, whether it is a therapeutic treatment facility, whether it is going to be run by DCP or whether that will be outsourced to Anglicare or a different provider?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We are still clarifying the service model that we will use. We agreed with Commissioner Nyland's recommendations that we not outsource future services, so it is anticipated that we will be running it. Bear in mind that Margaret Nyland gave us lots of permission to make mistakes and to change our views as we refine how best to serve children, but our starting position is that they would be ours.

The model of care in terms of the age of the children and their needs is still being refined. It is a question of recognising that there are some children and young people who need to be cared for in that kind of setting but a desire to see more children in family-based placements than are currently in family-based placements, determining how far along we are on that transition, and therefore what the needs are of the children who need to remain in that kind of setting and what kind of care model and also physical construction are required.

As I have indicated earlier, for some kids it is about disabilities; for others, it is behaviour, and being with other children and other young people can be problematic. We are working through the detail of the most useful and flexible physical space to accommodate what we can best anticipate to be the needs of the children and young people.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Even though this was budgeted for to be completed last year, are you saying that you do not even have floor plans and that they have not even started to be built yet?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** The physical building is due to start soon, so we are a long way down that planning, but that does not entirely close off the question of the age of the kids and what kind of care model we have wrapped around them.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Do you know the capacity of each building, at least?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** They are three-bedroom facilities. That does not necessarily imply that there will be three children in each due to the different needs of different kids.

**Ms SANDERSON:** One could be for the overnight carer, so that would be a one to two ratio.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There is an office separate to those facilities, with a bedroom.

**Ms SANDERSON:** So up to three children?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** It really is around what the needs of the cohort of children we are looking after at the time require.

**Ms SANDERSON:** How many residential care facilities have been closed in the last year, if any?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We do not believe we have closed any in the last financial year.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I know there was a report several years ago recommending the closure of many of the larger capacity residential care facilities at the time. Have they all been closed, or are there plans in the future to close those facilities?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** I will take on notice a summary of what we have and what we have closed in recent times. Bear in mind that the dramatic increase in the number of children under orders without a similar dramatic increase in the number of carers able to take children into their family homes has made it hard to accommodate children. I would rather that we did not have very many children at all in residential care, only those who absolutely need it, but we have to house the children and we have to care for them the best way we can.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Just back to the FTEs on page 89, in previous years I have been able to get the breakdown of the FTEs. What they have been called has changed in different years, but is it possible to get the breakdown of however you have now named them all for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 years? In previous years, there were corporate services; practice and policy; statewide services, which included CARL; and residential care, country, southern, northern and metropolitan. Sometimes there is one called central metropolitan, but in other years it must have been included in general metropolitan. Is it possible to get a breakdown or to know how they are broken down now?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** We will take that on notice. We have had a restructure as at 3 July, so we can give you 30 June, which is the old structure.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Thank you. Back to the NDIS, I am informed that around 25 per cent of the children who are in child protection have a disability of some kind and they are really there because their family could not receive the support to keep them at home. So there is a large percentage of children—not all of those children—who could be at home if adequate supports had been made available to them. Is that something you are looking at when you go through and do the assessments of the NDIS, whether children could go home?

For example, minister, when we both visited Tregenza House, there were two children, one child on that side of the road and one across, who were there due to having cystic fibrosis. I would have thought it would be less stressful on the child and the mother, and better for the child and cheaper to have a nurse visit morning and night. Even if you had to have meals sent in, it would have been a cheaper way of dealing with a complex health issue and keeping the child and mother together.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** About 30 per cent of children in care have a disability. By no means are they all in the situation where they are only in care because their parents have been unable to manage their disability, and they would be able to with some additional support. There may well be some families in that situation and, of course, the NDIS is designed to address the kind of care and support that people with disabilities, including children, need and deserve. Unfortunately, there are a lot of children with disabilities who have also been subjected to abuse and neglect and have been removed for that reason. Their care then with us is dictated by their needs associated with their disabilities.

I do not know the figures because in some ways it would be a subjective analysis of how many children are in our care who might be able to stay at home safely, but as we work through with the NDIS each individual child, the kind of support the children need will be much clearer. Also, as the NDIS has come on stream, as we work with the NDIS and children coming into our system, I presume it will be a more straightforward proposition to ensure that the first step for a family that is otherwise caring and protective of their children is receiving all the support they can get from various government and non-government services.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Just on that, will there be a possibility of a top-up? For example, I met a mother who had given up her disabled child because she was not coping. In fact, unfortunately, she was coping better before the NDIS. The NDIS ranked her and measured her in a different manner and gave her fewer hours per week. All she really needed was 15 hours top-up to actually manage her child. However, on the fewer hours under the NDIS, she was not managing at all; and now there is another child with eight-hour shift workers caring for this child because she does have a severe disability. Are you looking at that, because I know of children who are being given up for that reason, before the NDIS and after the NDIS?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** There is a live discussion going across Australia at present at the officer level and also at the ministerial level soon, when we will be having a meeting in the next month, about the way in which disability and child protection interact. The NDIS is an opportunity to have the discussion about how that particular model works. I have no way of knowing how many instances are as you described, nor is it really easy to understand, when parents are dealing with the very difficult challenge of giving up their children, how much actual additional support would be required to take them out of that situation. Subjective reporting is not always necessarily entirely blisteringly accurate.

It is an incredibly emotional and difficult experience, but you are right to talk about that interaction of the extent of support for a child to remain in a safe home versus parents not being able to manage the situation, as opposed to parents who are not safe for their children regardless. As I say, that is a live and fairly earnest discussion at the officer level through the child protection systems across the country, and I will be raising this, as I am sure others will also, at our ministerial meeting soon.

**The CHAIR:** The time has expired. As there is no longer any time for questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments completed. I thank the minister and her advisers, the members of the committee and the table staff, and Hansard suffering at the top, for all their help today.

At 15:01 the committee adjourned to Monday 31 July 2017 at 09:00.