

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**Tuesday, 25 June 2024**  
**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A**

**Chair:**

Hon. A. Piccolo

**Members:**

Hon. J.A.W. Gardner  
Mr M.E. Brown  
Mr M.J. Cowdrey  
Mr L.K. Odenwalder  
Mrs R.K. Pearce  
Mr J.B. Teague

*The committee met at 09:00*

*Estimates Vote*

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET, \$469,788,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET,**  
**\$32,176,000**

**Minister:**

Hon. Z.L. Bettison, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr W. Hunter, Chief Operating Officer, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Ms J. Kennedy, Director, Multicultural Affairs, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

**The CHAIR:** Good morning. Welcome to today's hearing of Estimates Committee A. Just for the record, committee A is actually rating twice as well as committee B in the ratings, so this is definitely the A committee, and we need to maintain that rating difference today, please.

I respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to elders both past and present.

The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. I understand the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed an approximate time for questions, which is excellent.

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 Clerk Assistant via the Answers to Questions mailbox no later than Friday 6 September 2024.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements, should they wish to do so, of up to 10 minutes. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions. A member who is not a member of the committee may ask a question at the discretion of the Chair.

All questions need to be directed to the minister, not the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*.

I remind members that the rules of debate in the house apply in committee. Consistent with the rules of the house, photography by members from the chamber floor is not permitted while the committee is sitting.

Ministers and members may not table documents before the committee; however, they can give a copy to the Chair for distribution. The committee's examinations will be broadcast in the same manner as the sittings of the house, through the IPTV system within Parliament House and online via the parliament's website. As I said before, committee A is the leader here.

I now proceed to open the following line for examination: Multicultural Affairs. The minister appearing is the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. I declare the proposed payments open for examination. Minister, I call on you now to make an opening statement if you wish or go straight to introducing your advisers, then I will call on the opposition spokesperson.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Thank you very much, Chair. I do not have an opening statement, but I would like to introduce to my right Justine Kennedy, the Director, Multicultural Affairs, and to my left Wayne Hunter, the Chief Operating Officer of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Morialta, the floor is yours.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will go straight to questions; thank you, minister. There are really two budget papers that will cover most of this session. At Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 28, the 'Explanation of significant movements' identifies \$600,000 for the African community safety program. Can the minister provide some further clarification on this? It is a program to prevent youth violence within the African South Australian community. I understand that it came from a body of work undertaken by the African Communities Council, and it was then funded. Is this funding a direct allocation under the Multicultural Priorities Fund or another grant program, or was it a specific allocation of new money to the budget approved by cabinet?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** It is new money approved by cabinet as part of the budget for 2024-25. I think you were briefed quite extensively about the great work that the African Communities Council did. I have to say it is sometimes challenging for a community to accept that there are areas that need improvement, and I give great attention and recognition for the work of the leadership through Denis Yengi to say that this is something that the community needs help on; and therefore they did six months of consultation and research on that working group on youth violence and crime in the wake of the violent behaviour of a small minority of young African South Australians in early 2022.

The report was established in June 2022 with support from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and also the Department of Human Services. There was quite a dedicated working group with that who had focus groups, surveys and small-group interviews, and they did a lot of community interviews, including with elders, religious leaders, young people, families and women. State government representatives and non-government services were also consulted as well. Can I just recognise the work of Correctional Services within this? They freed up one of their key workers to be part of that review.

Since that time they have produced the report. It had 39 recommendations. Post that report being presented to government we continue to host some roundtable meetings with the African Communities Council of South Australia, with members of the Africans Women's Federation and representatives of the Department of Human Services, the Department for Education, SAPOL and the Department for Correctional Services.

What we wanted to do was have a shared understanding of the challenges that needed to be addressed and that were highlighted in the report. A key outcome of one of the major round tables

was to connect the African Communities Council with the Legal Services Commission, particularly to consider opportunities for legal education and delivery of community information sessions.

This year we have continued to meet regularly with the African Communities Council, state government departments and other services providers to show our commitment. As you mentioned, the state government as part of the budget has now made the decision of \$2.5 million over four years to support the community in many ways in terms of how we can increase that support to young African South Australians to counter African youth violence.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you for that. As the minister said, the opposition was briefed, and I thank Denis Yengi as well along with Dr Yilma Woldgabreal and Billy Siegfried Mends, who were the ones who came and provided that briefing, and the parliament record will record the attention that we drew to it.

So we are pleased that the government has paid attention to the report. I think the minister in her response identified it as \$2.5 million over four years. Can I clarify in relation to that funding: it is \$600,000 this year; is the minister able to identify how that \$600,000 this year is being spent, and is it comprising grants to community groups? If so, which ones and for what purpose?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** The package will include measures aimed at strengthening connections between young African South Australians and their education through improved cultural education support and a community support program. There will also be additional funding available to help community organisations better support young people and their families.

We are also going to be expanding the education and support for those at risk of entering the youth justice system to reduce the chances of reoffending. There will also be additional operational support to the African Communities Council of South Australia. We will announce more of the interventions and investments in the near future.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I just clarify—my hearing is not so great at the moment and I do not have my aid—you said there will be further announcements to come about that?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Nevertheless, seeing as the money is in the budget paper, I might seek to tease out any of it and if you are able to provide some answers that may be helpful. I got the purposes of funding include education, helping young people engage with their education, there will be funding for some committee groups, education for groups at risk, and some support for the African Communities Council. Are you able to put a dollar figure on the support for the African Communities Council or the funding available for community groups?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** There is some specific funding, which is similar to the funding that has been continuing for previous years, for the African Communities Council. We are in final negotiations on that, at a similar level to what was beforehand. I think there is some interest in this. Obviously, we will be working with the Department of Human Services, looking at some of the work that is already provided and the opportunity to expand that work.

I have a particular interest, and as is identified in the report, for people before they enter the justice system who perhaps are showing us that they are getting themselves into challenging situations. I also think the work of the education department is quite strong in their cultural liaison officers. These are things to be worked out. Because this is a four-year program, I also want to acknowledge the work, particularly in the northern region, of many of our African associations that particularly are supporting parents who find there are challenges with intergenerational parenting, and how to support them as well. So it will be quite a comprehensive package, the details of which are still to be negotiated.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Do I take from that, then, that some of the funding is likely to work through supporting the Department of Human Services in delivering new programs, and maybe even the Department for Education as well?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes. What we want to do is recognise the work that is already occurring and look at whether it can be expanded and in greater depth. It is not really to completely reinvent the wheel all over the place but to look at areas where government is already connected to

African South Australians, doing good work, but there could be more emphasis, particularly in prevention—for the children and young people who have some identified challenging behaviours, how we can get in there and support them.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Do you have an idea at this stage of whether there is likely to be funding for any NGOs other than those African community organisations and the African Communities Council that you have described?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Obviously, they were a key part of the report process. Multicultural Youth South Australia (MYSA) do some prevention programs already funded, mostly by the commonwealth. We are having conversations with all of those, I guess, non-government organisations that provide those services, but that has not been determined at this point.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Has the funding included some provision of budget for there to be analysis or review of the effectiveness of the program at some stage over the four years?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** That is something that takes place with all these types of additional funding that come through. We know that this has been recognised as an area of need in South Australia. Once again, I commend the community for putting their hand up, doing the work to say, 'We want to make sure that where we see increasing numbers of incarceration we want to turn that around.' We have done the work to show where those recommendations are and we have now taken a whole-of-government approach to see what we can do to assist.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** If we go to page 27, the third dot point under targets talks about the Ambassador Program. Last year, you will recall, under highlights there was a highlight of introducing the Ambassador Program to activate the Multicultural Charter and embed its principles within organisations and now we have a target to scale up that charter with the same sort of purpose. I understand that the initial one was a six-month pilot. It began in August 2023. Can the minister outline the outcomes of that pilot?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We have not actually finished the pilot at this point. We are near the end of it. I have to say that it is probably one of the programs that we started with the intention to see if we can have individual companies reflect on the diversity in their workplace. I have been incredibly surprised at the passion and the interest of those involved in the pilot program to support it. We are in the final stages of that pilot. We will obviously take that time to reflect on where we go.

The Ambassador Program was launched on 23 November 2023. What it is is an election commitment aimed at enacting the South Australian Multicultural Charter, which was tabled in parliament on 9 March 2023. We want to embed the charter and its principles within the workforce, business practices and service delivery of South Australian organisations. As you said, it was a six-month pilot involving five organisations from the private, not-for-profit and local government sector. The Cancer Council of South Australia, the City of West Torrens, Mitsubishi Motors Australia Limited, PKF Adelaide and the RAA group all participated in the pilot program.

What we wanted to demonstrate is how the charter can be adopted in different types of workplaces and support South Australian organisations to prioritise their cultural diversity. What those participating organisations do is have a self-assessment that they complete themselves, which is designed to identify the baseline of cultural diversity and awareness within their workplace. Each participating organisation is also hosting an activation session to support learning and share insights into that.

We have had several of those activation sessions. Of course, we have taken some feedback from that as well. The City of West Torrens were the first off the mark. They had a presentation from the Multicultural Communities Council about their cultural IQ training. In March, the Cancer Council South Australia had a presentation from Carmen Garcia from Community Corporate. In April of this year, PKF had a presentation from Jane Johnston from StudyAdelaide.

When I say 'they had a presentation', they hosted the event and all the participants came along to those events. In May of this year, the RAA had a panel session involving employers themselves and PKF Adelaide, sharing their lived experience as employers from migrant backgrounds and the opportunities it unlocked for their organisation. I think at the end of this month, Mitsubishi Motors will be holding a round table and then, just after that, the pilot concludes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Has the minister had an indication from those five organisations whether they will continue with the program to be multicultural ambassadors moving forward once the pilot stage is concluded?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** That is the intention we have. Our intention is to call them 'foundation members'. When we do the next round of organisations, they will make sure they come and share their experiences as they continue to implement.

For example, Mitsubishi Motors has conducted a review of their policies through a culturally and linguistically diverse lens. They are now going to offer cultural competence training as part of their leadership training. That will be something that they continue to do ongoing. The RAA are looking to expand their graduate program to international students. They have conducted some internal reviews and consultations, looking at their policies. I am really pleased that they have all offered to continue to be foundation members, to encourage other organisations to participate and to talk about the learnings that they have had.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Given that it is a pilot program, and given what the minister said before about the African community violence program, the expectation being in that program that there would be a review of some sort, is this pilot being reviewed? Is there likely to be a report that is made public at some stage?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** An internal review will take place. Obviously after a pilot program we want to make sure that what we are offering is working. There are some tweaks that we will make for the next program about the time that we are asking organisations to be involved and the attendances at those five events that we have had. We want it to be something that people embrace: they ask questions, they reflect on their own internal processes, but we do not want it to be onerous either.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can the minister advise on the timing; whether there is a date that she expects the pilot to have concluded by and whether there is a date that she expects the full program to be launched by?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I am hosting a reception in August that will launch the next round of the program and then it will start and end the pilot and then it will start again in September.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Do we have a sense of businesses that are approaching the department already seeking to be part of that program? How many businesses or organisations do we expect will be participating in the next expansion of the program?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** So our expectation is the next round, or the first round—that is not the pilot—10 organisations will participate in that. We are looking for a diversity of organisations in the private sector and the not-for-profit-sector and a few local councils as well. We have looked at having a spread within each of the rounds, because people learn from each other.

While I have some names, I am not able to share them with the house because they have not formally agreed. We approach them or they approach us, which we have already had, and that new program will start in September.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is that 10 inclusive of the five foundation members, or 10 additional?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Ten additional.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Do we have a budget specifically for this program on the establishment costs and then the annual business as usual costs going forward?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We did have \$30,000 per annum attached to this because resourcing is done internally.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I might just ask a couple more questions on the same target. Obviously the Multicultural Charter was supported with bipartisan support, coming, as it did, from the new Multicultural Act, which was from the previous Liberal government, so you have our bipartisan support in that charter.

Obviously there is a newly constructed Multicultural Commission which replaced the old SAMEAC. I think the current board members' terms expire within days. Can the minister advise about the selection process for the new board members?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** The selection process was the same as under the previous government. Obviously these current commission members were appointed for three years from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024. We did have some resignations during this time, but I want to thank the current existing membership of the commission. I was able to host them recently here in Parliament House to thank them for the work that they do, and of course now they are waiting to see.

We had expressions of interest open on 16 February 2024 and close on 4 March; 132 submissions were received for positions on the commission for 2024-27 and I will announce that publicly on 1 July.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** You would not like to give us an early sense of whether people are being re-appointed?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** No.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The minister declines to provide advice to the committee, sir.

**The CHAIR:** I am not going to want to be—

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I think the process that was brought to our position post the new legislation was continued and we proceeded that way. Hender Consulting was involved, as they were I think last time as well. I have to say I was absolutely delighted to see that 132 people expressed their interest in being part of the commission. It is actually quite a bit of work to be part of the commission, whether you are on the panels, whether you are attending events and, of course, I have actually asked the commission to be far more engaged with our diverse community through community consultations. This is something we have started up in the last few months, to actually go out there and hold these consultations. The first was with the Hindu community, and the second with the Afghan community. It is to invite people to talk about some of the challenges they have in their community, and what is working well.

I have high expectations of the work of the commission members, and I want to thank the current commission members. They came in at a time when COVID was still very impactful for the community. What was very challenging at that time was that quite a few social events could not take place because of the restrictions, and some community groups have found it hard to continue. Others have completely flourished since that time. I once again thank them for the work that they have done, and I look forward to announcing the new commission in the near future.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I thank the minister for that, and I, too, hope that many of those people have wonderful times on the commission. Hopefully, some of the ones who have served us so well are able to continue doing so.

We will go to a different dot point. The first target goes to the work of community language schools. Last year the minister outlined that funding for multicultural affairs was allocated to increase staffing at Community Language Schools SA to provide intensive case management and curriculum development services for new and existing language schools for an initial 12 months. Will funding for this increased staffing continue or are these additional positions coming to an end?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Every year we sit down with community language schools and talk about the next agreement, looking at what has come to fruition and what we need to do going forward. It was a substantial investment of \$4 million over four years that we had as an election commitment to those community language schools and, of course, we work quite closely with the Department for Education and Community Language Schools SA to deliver on this election commitment.

There are currently 88 active and fully accredited community language schools, teaching 46 community languages, and at semester 1, 2024, there were 7,862 enrolments in the program. We executed our funding agreement on 12 July 2023 for this current financial year, and the focus has been around premises, personnel and pathways this year.

The premises continue to top up the funding for government and non-government schools that host our community language schools. Personnel continues supporting additional staffing for Community Language Schools SA and professional development training for community language school leaders. Pathways, which is a new priority added in this past year, is to support Community Language Schools SA to offer vocational and SACE pathways for secondary students who study a language at our community language schools.

Something that I am particularly pleased about is the establishment of community language learning hubs at Regency Park TAFE, Salisbury TAFE, and at Torrens University. The aim is to cluster several of these community language schools together to share learning spaces, materials and equipment. At the moment we have a total of 10 schools offering nine languages to 368 students. As we develop these hubs further, what they will actually be is incubators, so particularly for newer schools that are just starting or very small schools, by hubbing them together with others they have that shared experience about learning and about some of the ways that you support volunteers, and we have had a great response to that.

I am also pleased to say that we have developed through Community Language Schools SA their digital language learning hub to share teaching and learning e-resources in Arabic, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Greek and Farsi. In this past financial year, they have also delivered the infrastructure grants programs, and eight organisations were awarded up to \$100,000 to develop or upgrade their community-owned facilities.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Premises, personnel and pathways was what I took from that. Can the minister advise if any of the additional funding for community language schools is being provided in the per annum grants per student to schools? So I got that premises are supporting where there is a top-up required for the place where the schools are taking place; personnel, which was supporting the central organisation; and the pathways program, so that those three funding streams—or maybe I could reframe the question. Are we able to identify how much is going into each of those three programs: how much for premises, how much for personnel and how much for pathways?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I will break that down for you. It was a total of \$481,270, and increased funding to Catholic and Independent host schools of \$105,270. That was obviously a considerable change that started last year. We are quite agnostic about where these community language schools are held; I think it is something you and I have spoken about before.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes, that was a good decision.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** So we have just had a question about how many schools, and more than a dozen are participating. Of course, some schools have multiple campuses as well. The reflection on that is that that has gone very well.

The community language learning hubs, as I talked about, was \$71,000; staffing, \$100,000; governance and continuous improvement training of \$400,000; school personnel training, \$20,000; the digital learning hub, \$75,000; culturally diverse vocational pathways for SACE and non-SACE students, \$70,000; and \$113,730 has been allocated to the Department for Education to administer the increased funding to government host schools. Of course, in 2023-24 there was funding for those infrastructure grants. I missed governance and continuous improvement training of \$40,000—so the total expenditure for year 2 of this election commitment was \$1.095 million.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Are those figures which the minister just went through going to be replicated in year 3 and year 4 of the program as well?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** In general, we have a continuous funding that goes over the four years. There are two years that are slightly different. We run the infrastructure program every two years.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That infrastructure grants program will not be taking place this year, but is to take place next year?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** In 2025-26, yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In terms of the per student funding that goes to the community language schools, that will continue through education, as it was previously, and is not relevant to this?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** This just adds a multicultural lens to the support. It is something that I think and the government thinks is incredibly important to support these community language schools.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I may have missed it, but was there a reference in one of those funding streams to needs-based funding for community language schools or was that particularly in relation to—when we talk about needs-based funding in this sense—the schools that need extra support for their physical location?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Needs-based funding is part of that larger figure that I mentioned, I just did not break it down in the figures that I gave you.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In the—

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** The figures that I gave you were the new areas that had come into fruition this year.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is the minister able to identify which schools received additional funding identified as being needs-based?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We will have to take that on notice. Obviously, the community languages of South Australia will have that detail.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In terms of the decisions about which schools receive how much money, or how much support, is that also coordinated through Community Language Schools SA or is there another process?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes, it is a per student amount. It is not that one school gets it and one school does not—every school receives that needs-based funding.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is all of this funding covered by that grants and subsidies line on page 28 or is there a different break-up?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** It is all covered under 'Grants and subsidies' on page 28.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** On page 28 again, the \$1 million funding agreement that was announced earlier this month with the University of South Australia and Flinders University for the maintenance and support for Italian language teaching, does that also come from the Multicultural Affairs budget, or does that come from somebody else's budget?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Minister Close is responsible for that funding.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I take one step back to the previous discussion we were having about the ambassador program and the Multicultural Commission? What was the involvement of the Multicultural Commission and its members with that ambassador program? I know that the minister referred to Carmen Garcia as being engaged with one of those, but was there any other engagement with the Multicultural Commission or its members?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes. Obviously, they were very involved in the formation of the charter, and at the beginning of the discussion around the ambassador program they were fully briefed about that and, in fact, have been promoting the ambassador program.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Were there any members other than Carmen Garcia who were directly involved in the program?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Carmen was not involved per se because of her work as a commission member. We recognised the work in her Community Corporate, particularly dealing with the recruitment of people from diverse backgrounds.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So she was involved in a professional sense rather than than a commission sense. Were any members of the commission involved in the ambassador program in a direct sense, and have they provided feedback or review accordingly?



**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Obviously, they are involved in the promotion of the ambassador program. The Chair of the Multicultural Commission, who also works for the City of West Torrens, volunteered for them to be a key part of the pilot program, and I thank her for providing them as an opportunity to be part of the pilot.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I go to dot point 5 under highlights, the Multicultural Women's Micro Business Fund, which we have heard the minister speak about on occasion? How much funding has been allocated to the Multicultural Women's Micro Business Fund?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** There was \$100,000 in the initial year, and it was part of an election commitment to bring back the LaunchMe for multicultural women, and \$108,000, as I am advised, in the second year. This was a program that we engaged with Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand to deliver this Multicultural Women's Micro Business Fund program. We know that when people are starting a business from scratch it is both challenging and exciting. This is an opportunity in a focus around making South Australia a more inclusive, culturally aware place to live, to study, work and thrive.

The program was a pilot from July to December 2023, and 10 culturally and linguistically diverse women in the northern Adelaide region, who had a viable business idea or who had recently established a micro-enterprise, were supported to develop their skills and confidence to start, manage and grow their business. It includes personal business coaching sessions, financial assistance, networking opportunities and access to Good Shepherd wraparound services.

I was really pleased to see the diversity of women who attended. Their diverse cultural backgrounds are from Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Peru, Iraq and Ghana. They have been empowered to establish their businesses here.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** How were those women identified? Were they selected by Good Shepherd, or was there a competitive application process?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** They were approached by Good Shepherd, who have run this program previously for several years—not always with a multicultural lens, but previously they have gone out. Can I just say the current program participants are from Lebanon, Samoa, Venezuela, Burundi, El Salvador, India, the Philippines and Algeria.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Again, in terms of wrapping up the funding side of this one, is this also from this 'Grants and subsidies' budget line on page 28?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes, it is.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is the expectation that Good Shepherd will be maintained for a period of time to come to keep running these programs over the coming years?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We are in negotiations about that right now.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** But there is a budget allocation going forward for it?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** For the full four years?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes. The budget allocation for this year is \$108,000 for 2024-25.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So, if Good Shepherd has approached the 10 women in the original version of the program, is it anticipated that that will be the model that Good Shepherd, through their community engagement, will be aware of opportunities and will approach people directly, or is there an opportunity for women to apply directly for the program in a more transparent way?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes, so the pilot was run initially at the beginning of 2023-24, the second cohort was in the next six months, and then this year it will be spread across the whole of South Australia, not just the northern area. So there is the Facebook page, and of course those participants themselves have been going out and promoting it as well.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Presumably, if it is promoted broadly and people make an application, the selection process is done by—is there an independent assessment panel or is it Good Shepherd or the department?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes, Good Shepherd handles all of that. They go through the process. Obviously, people—even if they have a great idea or they have just started their micro-enterprise—have to be ready to participate in the program. Obviously, one of the key parts about it is that financial assistance and those networking opportunities and the business coach. Even if people are keen to participate, timing of events comes into it, so Good Shepherd talks to them about their ability to participate at that time.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I understand on the Good Shepherd website there is an advertisement for LaunchMe for multicultural women in northern Adelaide. Is that the same program that we are talking about?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes, I understand it is.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can the minister clarify, she talked about the pilot group and then there is another group that has been going through. There were 10 women in the pilot group. How many women in the second group?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Up to 10 as well.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In coming rounds, is it expected to be the same?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Say about 10 people.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Per year?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I think there will be two rounds per year, obviously to keep that intensity of the ability to support the development of that business.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** This program, as the others, will have a review—internal or external? Will it be publicly reported?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Always.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Hang on—internal or external? Publicly reported?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I have to say Good Shepherd are very clear. I think there is a publicly available document looking at LaunchMe because they have used this in other areas. It has been mainstream, the LaunchMe program, and of course it is multicultural and they advertise that and we support that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I will go to the second dot point under targets, regarding working with government agencies and key stakeholders to promote findings of the skills, qualifications and professional experience review, and investigate opportunities to enact the recommendations. Can the minister outline the results of the review of migrant communities' skills, qualifications and professional experiences—undertaken, I understand, by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu in 2023?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Deloitte provided me with the final report in May 2024. It shows the evidence of the current trends of underutilisation of onshore migrants across Australia. Of course, we have just had some recent portfolio changes and the Hon. Susan Close is now the Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy, so we look forward to working with her and across government agencies to address these opportunities that were raised in the report.

I was really pleased with the consultation phase that was done by Deloitte. They met with migrant communities and multicultural community organisations, and diverse public and private sector stakeholders. They received more than 400 responses to their survey to build an evidence base and support the policy development to look at that. The review was informed by the latest quantitative and qualitative data on skilled migration and applies economic modelling using Deloitte's Regional General Equilibrium Model.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is that report going to be made public?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** It will in the future.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Do you have an estimated time frame on that?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** In good time.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** This year?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I think what is most important about this is this was an election commitment. We went to the election with a full and concise policy document. One of the challenges that has been raised with me, particularly by skilled migrants and international students, was some of the barriers they found to participating fully in the South Australian economy. That is why we did this work. It was also based around some of the work done in Queensland in 2018.

Obviously, you have seen our state prosperity plan, but we also have quite a few major infrastructure projects coming up, such as the Torrens to Darlington and, of course, the Women's and Children's Hospital. We are in a time of growth, and we need skills on board. A key focus around this is: given what we want to achieve and particularly with AUKUS coming, how do we maximise the skills of migrants who are already here in South Australia? That was what the work was focused around.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Did this report, which will hopefully be made public this year, include any recommendations?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** The recommendations look at skills recognition, which is something we have looked at before. They were also about networking opportunities here and a few of the other areas as well. To some extent, these are not new things that have been brought up, but what we really want to do is look at a consolidated set of where that opportunity lies, so we will be responding to that in good time.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Given that the report has not yet been made public but the minister has said the government will be responding to those recommendations, is the government in a position to identify when the government will respond to those recommendations?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** In the near future.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** How much did the review cost?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** The total, allocated over two financial years, was \$95,875 in 2022-23 and \$79,829 in 2023-24.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** From the basis of the minister's answer before describing the recommendations, are the Department for Education and the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science, the Deputy Premier's department, both involved in framing the government's response, or is this being led by Multicultural SA?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I think that we have seen more focus on this than ever before. Across the board, the whole of government will reflect on the report and the opportunity that is before us.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is there any budget that is provided towards implementation of the recommendations of this report?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** There is not a specific budget with this. Obviously, with those portfolio changes, we have made it very clear that workforce is a key challenge for our future ambitions. There is no doubt at all that, whether it be through skills or upskilling or talking about maximising the use of all employees, this is a view for the whole of government.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Still on the general expenses line, how much money was spent on hosting the South Australian Multicultural Festival in 2023, and what is the budget for 2024?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** As you may recall, we made the decision through our election commitment to bring on the Multicultural Festival on an annual basis. The aim of it is to strengthen cultural understanding, encourage all South Australians to recognise cultural diversity as a positive

influence in the community and provide a forum to celebrate new, emerging and established cultures. It is also to promote multiculturalism and community harmony.

The first annual festival was held in Victoria Square on Sunday 12 November. We held it from 11am to 5pm. Seventy-four multicultural community groups received grants through the festival grants program to participate in the event, and 55 cultures were represented across 29 performances, 13 activities and 35 stalls. Over 10,200 people attended the festival, and the budget line for that was \$444,000. That includes staff resources, event logistics and operations, and grants to support the communities to participate.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The minister identified some grants—

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I just need to correct, sorry: that was the budget, and the total cost was \$483,500.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you for that. I think the minister identified there were some grants to community groups in amongst that. Was there also, given the involvement of the multicultural affairs program, some of that funding allocated from the employee expenses line and the supplies and services line, or would it all be counted under that grants and subsidies line?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes, it was accounted within salaries and within grants.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So a bit of both. Are you able to identify how much under each?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We might need to take that on notice.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you. In relation to the objective talking about promoting community capacity and harmony and grants to community organisations, as I understand it there are core funding allocations to groups like the Australian Migrant Resource Centre and the Multicultural Communities Council of SA; is the minister able to identify if any of those organisations have received an increase in their core funding allocation in the last two years, or has their funding remained static, or has it declined?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** All core funding receives indexation in multicultural affairs.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am sure that we will have an omnibus question that will give the opportunity to provide the detail of that later. I am mindful of the time. Again we are on page 28, program expenses. I am happy for the minister to take this on notice if she would like; it is up to her, I guess: I am interested in a full reconciliation report of everything under the budget line of grants and subsidies.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** What do you mean by 'reconciliation report'?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Who has got what?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** As you know, all grants are available: all grant recipients are on the website. I am more than happy to read out those who have been successful.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am less interested in their names unless there is also the allocated figure of how much they have all got.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** In general we do not break down for each of the different grant lines, but what we do talk about is how much we have in the budget line. The 2023-24 Multicultural Grants Program was \$6.661 million, and that included all the different types—Celebrate Together Grants, Expand Together Grants, Stronger Together Grants, and the Multicultural Festival was part of that as well.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you. I am just going to go to a different line. Under targets, one of the targets is providing leadership and advice on development, monitoring and reporting of initiatives to enhance culturally and linguistically diverse employment in the public sector. Has the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment undertaken staff surveys to monitor and report on the diversity of people who work for state government, and has Multicultural Affairs been involved in the development of such a project?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes. That survey did take place, and I thank the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment for the ability for us to monitor and report on diversity in the Public Service. This is something that I have been pursuing for quite some time. In fact, in debate on the new South Australian Multicultural Commission legislation I asked for it to be included in that, which was not supported by the government of the day. Nevertheless, we continue to go ahead.

Being the state's largest employer, the South Australian Public Service needs to represent and reflect the diverse and vibrant community it serves. Through part of the existing workforce information reporting and People Matter, the across-government engagement service, we asked questions for the very first time about cultural and linguistic diversity within the public sector.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Will this report be made publicly available? Is there some level of further interface?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes; I am advised this is a report that is made public. I think they are finalising the outcomes of that report at the moment.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** And this will be something that will be regularly done going forward?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes, I intend to encourage and support that. It is published annually, that report, and my intention is that will be part of it. But of course, this is done in conjunction with the commissioner.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Has any funding or other financial support been required by the Commissioner for Multicultural Affairs to support this inclusion?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** The commissioner has done this work within existing resources, but perhaps I might touch on the Ambassador Program. As I said earlier, this is currently being run out of—or the pilot was with—the private sector and the not-for-profit sector. In 2025 it is my intention to start that work within government as well, with government departments. It might be a slightly different format, and we are still going through that process, but it is very much my belief that in order to write the best policy for South Australia the Public Service must reflect the South Australian population. That is why we are taking that survey data and then looking at potential areas.

When we did this through a gender lens, we saw that women were in many different levels within the Public Service but often were not paid the same amount as men. What we will be looking for are things like unconscious bias in recruitment and barriers to entry into the Public Service. We achieved a significant amount of change when we had a gender lens; my intention is to have a multicultural lens on the Public Service.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There is a dot point under highlights on page 27 about the Multicultural Services Directory. Can the minister outline the resources and funding allocated for the development and ongoing maintenance of the Multicultural Resources Directory? I am imagining there was an establishment cost and then an ongoing cost.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes. The multicultural directory, once again, was another election commitment in the comprehensive policy document that we took to the election for multicultural affairs. The Australian Refugee Association (ARA) was engaged to develop this directory. It is a free, user-friendly web app that was launched on 3 April 2024. It was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders, and I want to thank the bicultural staff at ARA, Community Language Schools SA, AMES Australia, MCCSA, the African Women's Federation, and the Muslim Australian Connections of South Australia.

We have 150 organisations across more than 20 service categories that are identified, including health and wellbeing, women's services, employment, education, training and youth. I saw somewhere recently that more than 5,000 people have accessed this application. The expenditure for the directory in 2022-23 was \$78,000 and in 2023-24 was \$20,000. We will continue to work with ARA on how that might continue to develop.

I have to say I am very pleased with the levels of access. I particularly think in regard to health, accessing information in language—a pharmacist who speaks different languages and

knowing where that person might be, whether someone is a new migrant here or has been here for some time, having that access to a one-stop shop for those services—is something people have been asking for for some time. We will continue to monitor that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is there a budget for multicultural communities to be informed about the directory? What sort of promotion are we anticipating?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** It has been part of what ARA was committed to doing with the establishment of the directory; that is why we have had more than 5,000 people go to the site already.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is the government promoting it any further or just allowing ARA to undertake whatever they are doing?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** On a frequent basis we have an e-blast that is sent out from the department with messages from myself about upcoming grant rounds, for example. When the multicultural directory was launched, it was obviously put out on an e-blast and talked about in that.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** What criteria are being used to determine who is listed and who is not? Who is the decision-maker there?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** ARA curates it, but it is actually really open for anyone who would like to register their service on the multicultural services app. They moderate it or curate it, obviously, to make sure that it is appropriate for the time, but it is open for people to put on their services.

**The CHAIR:** The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of Multicultural Affairs complete and refer the further examination of the proposed payments to Estimates Committee B. I thank the minister and her advisers and members of the opposition.

*Sitting suspended from 10:01 to 10:15.*

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM COMMISSION, \$66,625,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE,**  
**\$4,305,351,000**

**Minister:**

Hon. Z.L. Bettison, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms E. Terry, Chief Executive, South Australian Tourism Commission.

Ms S. Rozokos, Chief Operating Officer, South Australian Tourism Commission.

Mr E. De Roos, Executive Director, Marketing, South Australian Tourism Commission.

Mr N. Jones, Executive Director, Destination Development, South Australian Tourism Commission.

Mr M. Radcliffe, Chief Executive Officer, Adelaide Venue Management Authority.

Ms M. Carrall, Chief Financial Officer, Adelaide Venue Management Authority.

Mr C. Burford, Executive Director, Strategic Communications, Adelaide Venue Management Authority.

Ms S. Heading, General Manager, Tourism Acquisition and Development, Adelaide Venue Management Authority.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back to members of the committee. The portfolio we are going to examine is the South Australian Tourism Commission and the Adelaide Venue Management

Authority. The minister appearing is the Minister for Tourism. I declare the proposed payments open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement and to introduce her advisers. Then I will call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if he wishes, or just ask questions. I inform members of the committee that we have had a mid-week ratings slump, unfortunately—both committees. Minister.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Can I introduce my advisers. Next to me is Stephanie Rozokos, Chief Operating Officer for the South Australian Tourism Commission. To my left are Emma Terry, CEO of the South Australian Tourism Commission, and Eric De Roos, Executive Director of Marketing. In our second row, we have Mia Carrall, CFO of the Adelaide Venue Management Authority, and Martin Radcliff, CEO of the Adelaide Venue Management Authority. In the third row, we have Nick Jones, Executive Director, Destination Development, South Australian Tourism Commission; Sally Heading, Acquisition and Development Manager of Major Events; and Chris Burford, Executive Director, Strategic Comms and Engagement.

**The CHAIR:** Go ahead minister. Are you going to make a statement?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes, I have a few words to share. We have been very pleased at how the tourism sector has continued to perform strongly. In many cases, this recovery is outpacing the rest of the nation. It is a key industry for our state and we support approximately 20,000 businesses and more than 40,000 jobs. By the year ending September 2023, our visitor economy smashed through the \$10 billion mark for the very first time.

Obviously, this was always an aspiration for us. By 2030, we intended to get our visitor economy to \$12.3 billion, so we are very ahead of that plan. The latest data shows that total visitor expenditure in SA was worth \$10.1 billion. This is up about 20 per cent from pre-COVID levels. Particularly, we have seen international tourism come back more strongly and we have had a record high of \$1.3 billion.

I particularly want to recognise the hard work of our tourism operators who have gone above and beyond to provide their unique South Australian products to local, interstate and overseas customers. It is an opportunity for me to recognise that trying to understand in business what the new normal is has been challenging. I just really want to and recognise that we went through COVID when we were severely restricted, particularly in relation to international, to then people discovering their own backyard and with a lot of people coming from interstate. Of course, traditionally, winter is a quieter month and how we deal with that. I want to recognise their hard work.

Obviously, events have been something that we are developing a great reputation for here, with our successful major events. I hear time and time again about the immersive way that we do events, particularly in the CBD. It is something that impresses time and time again. We showcase on the global stage the Santos Tour Down Under, WOMADelaide, the Fringe and Tasting Australia presented by RAA Travel. For the second year running, we delivered both the AFL Gather Round and the LIV Golf.

It was a special moment when we saw in April that Adelaide topped the hotel occupancy charts across 17 major cities in Australia and New Zealand—something that we have never achieved before. Of course, an absolute highlight was us presenting the CommBank Matildas as they took on China in the lead-up to the Paris Olympics. The tickets sold out so incredibly fast. What I absolutely loved about it was the young women and girls who attended; it was fantastic.

Coming up we have Illuminate Adelaide. I just talked about the Suncorp Super Netball Grand Final, but I am particularly excited about Chihuly in the Gardens in September. That will run for seven months. That will be a free event for people to attend during the daylight in the Botanic Gardens; a gift to the city, some might say. It will be an exceptional opportunity to see the best glass artist in the world with these large sculptures. We will run some ticketed events at night, but during the day it will be free. We are proud to support 30 events across our state in the last financial year through the Regional Event Fund as well.

Marketing, of course, is incredibly important, which is why we launched our Travel. Our Way. campaign. We debuted it during the AFL Grand Final broadcast. It talks a lot of iconic South Australian experiences regionally as well as here in Adelaide. Just recently, during the quieter

winter months, we have launched the Winter. Our Way. campaign, expanding on that. We are promoting particularly unique winter experiences, like the cuttlefish on the Eyre Peninsula, something I got to do last year. It is something uniquely South Australian. The state budget announced an additional \$20 million for marketing, so we are very excited about that next campaign.

I just want to touch briefly on some of the really important work around the Murray River communities and the River Revival Voucher program. We used a very similar voucher program to what we used during COVID, and also previously after those significant bushfires on Kangaroo Island and in the Adelaide Hills. The third and final round is currently underway.

Obviously, I have been delighted to announce the reinstatement of some of the airlines that flew here prior to COVID, particularly Emirates was a big announcement, and they will start flying here from 28 October. That will connect us to many hundreds of destinations throughout the world. The Southern Ocean Lodge reopened on KI last year, which was fantastic and, of course, the new Marriott hotel is about to open.

I was also pleased to announce the appointment of David Koch as the chair of the tourism commission, effective from 2 July. I particularly want to thank outgoing chair Andrew Bullock for his service to the SATC, particularly his time during the most difficult times during COVID, and also the participation in the ability for us to rebound in tourism as well.

Of course it is always good to talk about those exceptional times for our state. In October last year Adelaide was named Australia's coolest city by that *The Wall Street Journal* and Kangaroo Island was named as one of *Lonely Planet's* must-see global destinations for 2024. Just this month, Stokes Bay was named the world's second-best beach by Big 7 Travel. It has been quite a big year. Let me also thank the tourism commission for their dedication and their hard work.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you, minister, and thank you to the staff and advisers and officers of the tourism commission. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 93. There is a key agency output that talks about engaging and communicating with key stakeholders to 'build the corporate brand and promote the value of the visitor economy to South Australia'. Is it under this basis that I understand the government told people not to call Adelaide 'Radelaide' or the 'City of Churches', and how did that go?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We do not mind what people call us, as long as they are coming to South Australia, and I think you have seen from my conversation that that has certainly been a success, and will continue to be so.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** As I understand it, the government told people that they were not to be referring to Adelaide as 'Radelaide' or the 'City of Churches'. On what basis was that done?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** There was some communication that was sent to the partners, as we were, for the AFL. But we have made it very clear that that is not something that the state government is supporting. My key thing is that people are talking about us, and they have been talking about us more than they have for a decade, and that is how we will go on.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In regard to the commitment that I understand the minister gave last year, that the government was not going to be pursuing influencer-led tourism anymore, can the minister confirm that that has been maintained as the policy this year? Have there been any expenses spent on influencer-type projects over the last 12 months?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We obviously will continue our PR strategy, as do all state tourism bodies, and so does Tourism Australia. There is no doubt at all that we took some time to reflect and focus on a much more traditional mix of PR activities.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** As I recall—and I cannot remember the exact term that was provided last year; the minister or otherwise the officers might recall—there is a traditional form of providing an opportunity for tourism operators to come to Adelaide or South Australia for free, and I think it was under that context that it was expanded to include influencers. Can the minister confirm that the government remains, as she was last year, of the view that we will not be using influencers and promoting them to come to South Australia and to put South Australia on their Instagram? Going forward, is that still the government's position?



**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I think I made it clear last year that we reflected, and we wanted to be more traditional, but when we think about our PR strategy we think about media famils, which is—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Famils, that is the one.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** —as old as time, generating positive coverage about South Australia. That is including traditional media outlets and publications. I think you are probably touching on the use of brand advocates, and we have been very clear about our focus about their relevance, audience reach and engagement, their diversity and storytelling capability. We very much look for a balance of that. Those traditional media famils is something that has been incredibly important for some of those great announcements about what we heard in New York and about Lonely Planet—that is how they happen—and that has been our area of focus.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Morialta, before you ask your next question can you tell us which line you are looking at?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We are looking at 'Key agency outputs', engagement and communication with key stakeholders on page 93. In relation to famils, is the minister able to provide a breakdown of the expenditure on famils in the last 12 months, and budgeted for the next 12 months, and whether they are—however she likes to categorise them—traditional, non-traditional or whatever form she would like to use.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Sure. The budget allocation was \$590,000 for famil costs.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is she able to provide a breakdown or are they all traditional famils?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** That is both of those groups.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** How much for each?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I will have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you. I turn to page 97, program summary for tourism events. In relation to intragovernment transfers on the income side, in last year's budget there was an allocation of \$10 million; however, the estimated result reflects an increase of more than \$47 million. The explanation of significant movements talks about a range of things, including a Major Events Fund for major event sponsorship and operations. Can I confirm that all of the increase from \$10 million to \$57 million that is identified in that top line is all from funding from the Major Events Fund under DPC, or are there other incomes as well?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Predominantly, that intragovernment transfer income of \$47.2 million is from the Major Events Fund. Obviously, you have identified that there was a fluctuation there. It is associated with those sporting events through event sponsorship, including funding received from the Major Events Fund. As we know, that funding is to develop new and homegrown events, to grow our existing and owned and managed events, and secure major and international business events.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Are we talking about Gather Round and LIV Golf, or are there other events as well?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** There are significant events, as we said, including the AFL Gather Round, LIV Golf Adelaide, Harvest Rock, Illuminate Adelaide, the Beach Volleyball World Championships, the PGA Players Series, the Wheelchair Rugby National Championship, the 2024 UCI Track Nations Cup, WOMADelaide, Adelaide Festival (there was additional funding to bolster their program over the next three years), the Dale Chihuly event (or the exhibition that is coming up), the Adelaide Equestrian Festival, the Matildas' game (which was an absolute sellout), the British and Irish Lions in 2024, and the 2024 netball final.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Are all of those allocations, given that they are intragovernment transfers from Major Events to Tourism, and then presumably expended as grants and subsidies from Tourism to those operators—can I clarify: is Major Events then the decision-maker in allocating that funding and not Tourism?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We provide significant advice to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet about those major events, and of course many times we are also then providing different roles as either a major sponsor (a sponsorship) or of course in other activities we are actually managing the event.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Tourism is operating as a partner once the event is here and you are providing advice to Major Events, who is the decision-maker, and then the funding comes from Major Events to you to disburse to the organisations. Are there any examples where Tourism has provided advice to Major Events for projects that Tourism thinks should be funded, but Major Events has declined to do the funding?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Not that I am aware of within that situation. Obviously, we all have bright ideas—all of us—and we want the best for the state and we want great events that have great return on investments and what we do. It is commercial-in-confidence obviously because we get approached by lots of different groups for potential opportunities.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Are there any examples of projects that Tourism's advice to DPC, to Major Events, was that the project should not be funded but Major Events has decided to proceed?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Not that I am aware of. We provide the facts and the analysis and that decision is made then through Major Events.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The funding allocated for the 2024-25 budget in intragovernment transfers is \$13.6 million, which is a fairly significant drop from the \$57 million that was provided this year. This \$13.6 million, by my reading, represents what your expectation is of Major Events or others coming into Tourism. Noting that the actuals for the last two years have been so much more than that, on what basis has this \$13.6 million figure been arrived at?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** There are fluctuations in income and expenditure through the intragovernment transfers year on year related to this event's sponsorship. Of course, as we are aware, the transfer of funds to the SATC comes from the Major Events Fund which sits within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The purpose of this funding is to develop new homegrown events, grow our existing and managed events and, of course, secure those major national and international events. Funding is approved on a year-by-year basis and that is why we have significant fluctuations in income and expenditure through those intragovernment transfers.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** My understanding is that \$57 million would reflect the expenditure that was undertaken in 2023-24, so if there were events that were scheduled for the years ahead, then presumably there is an understanding that that budget would still need to come. Is there therefore a reasonable expectation that we will see that \$13.6 million grow substantially in order to fulfil—whether it's LIV Golf, or Gather Round or other things, or is it just that Major Events has not decided whether to use Tourism as the channel through which that funding will flow yet?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** One imagines, assuming Tourism retains this role as the channel, then that will go up again. Is the minister able to outline what that \$13.6 million comprises?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I will get some clear definitions. One of the key things to remember with these upcoming events is often the money is not just expended in one financial year. For example, I can think of the British and Irish Lions in 2025. There would have been payments under the previous government, I think, and then our government leading up to that, so it is not often just in one financial year, but I will get some details about it. The \$13.6 million funding is predominantly from the Major Events Fund.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We will have omnibus questions in a little while. There might be some detail there, so I will move on at the moment. The grants and subsidies on the same page—we are on page 97—identify a significant difference not just from the actuals. The actual was \$46 million last year on a budget of \$21 million, but I assume that that would be explained by the same explanation as we have just gone through on the income side. The budget for grants and

subsidies has dropped from last year's budget of \$21 million to, this year, \$14 million. Is the minister able to explain why it appears that this is a cut of \$7 million compared to last year's budget?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Just like my previous answer in regard to the intragovernment transfers, the same thing happens for grants and subsidies; there are some fluctuations there. Once again, it is to do with event sponsorship, including money received from major events, partially offset of course by a reallocation of expenses from grants and subsidies, supplies and services, and a carryover of major events sponsorship for 2023-24.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Minister, forgive me if I missed something there, but I would imagine that the Major Events Fund decisions would explain the difference between the budget and the estimated result in each year. The figures I am talking about are the difference between the 2023-24 budget of \$21 million and the 2024-25 budget of \$14 million. Is the minister saying that that \$21 million figure was inflated by carryover from the previous year? Is that the explanation, or is there actually a drop in the amount of partnership sports sponsorship and so forth that is anticipated in the 2024-25 year compared to the 2023-24 year? It is a drop in the budget of \$7 million, so I would have thought that would have been of some significance.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** It is what I said previously: there is a fluctuation in regard to the Major Events Fund money coming in. The carryover was less; it was \$2.5 million.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Does the minister care to take this opportunity to let the people of South Australia know how much we are spending on LIV Golf and the Gather Round?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** That would be commercial-in-confidence, and also it is best directed to the Premier.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I appreciate the Premier has a role, but it turns out that SA Tourism actually pays them, according to this budget line. But it is I think the law that the shadow minister for tourism or their representative has to ask that every year in the parliament.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** As they did under the previous government.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes—also the law. Can the minister outline which of the major events supported in 2023-24 will receive continued support in 2024-25 and going forward from there?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Are you asking in regard to the Major Events Fund, or are you asking in regard to our sponsorships and partnerships?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Both.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** As you may remember, in a previous question you asked what that intragovernment transfer related to. Obviously, the question that you are asking now is: from that, what continues into multiple years?

There is significant additional funding for the Tour Down Under; that is a key part of the additional money in the state budget. Obviously, we are very proud of being able to deliver women at the absolute elite level with the UCI, and that supports that development of that event. Of course, it is our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, so that support will go in this financial year and into the forward estimates for Tour Down Under.

The British and Irish Lions in 2025: that continues across the forward estimates for 2024-25 and 2025-26. Illuminate Adelaide has been an incredible addition to our winter program. I am particularly fond of the City Lights, the free program that invites South Australians and other visitors to enjoy that. What I particularly find with Illuminate is the opportunity to look at arts, technology and music and to inspire our younger people to be involved in those STEAM subjects to be attracted to the opportunity between coding but using creative arts as well. In the previous budget, we continued that funding for a further four years.

Volleyball Australia goes on for three more years. The 2024 netball final is over two periods. We have the PGA, the Players season; national rugby wheelchair championships over three financial years. WOMADelaide: we are very pleased to continue over another five years our relationship with WOMADelaide, which continues to be one of the biggest drawcards for interstate guests, which is absolutely fantastic that they do that. The Adelaide Festival, of course, to which we have applied

some additional support; and the Dale Chihuly exhibition over two financial years will start at the end of September going through to April. Of course, we are doing some additional work with Football Australia. We also have Harvest Rock.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Were there any new events in the last year that received funding for the first time?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** You were asking which events were funded for the very first time in 2023-24?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I was reflecting, minister. Illuminate is an excellent program, which we remember Steven Marshall very fondly for, and Tour Down Under is a legacy of Joan Hall during her time as tourism minister as well. I am very pleased that they continue to get support from you as minister and this government, as I assume they will for many years to come. I am just wondering if there are any new ones this year.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Particularly, I have talked already about the Dale Chihuly exhibition, which is the very first time in the Southern Hemisphere this exhibition will be held. Once again, you have this amazing connection between engineering and art. Dale Chihuly is seen as the most significant glass artist in the world. He has a significant international following. I think that will be an excellent addition. Also, the Matildas event is new this year, and it is the first time we have funded the British and Irish Lions, which came in 2023-24 for the first time.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is there a definition of what dollar value is required for something to be classified as a major event?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** There is a definition in the Major Events Act, which is the responsibility of the Premier.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We will move to Budget Paper 5, page 61, 'Building a South Australian destination brand'. This is \$5 million of operating expenses. Can the minister provide a breakdown of how the \$5 million will be spent? How much will be for interstate marketing and advertising? How much will be for international?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Can I talk a little bit about the 'place' brand? This is a significant amount of work that has been done with a very small team, not just with the South Australian Tourism Commission but with Brand SA as well as Trade and Investment. We think we have an opportunity here. We have people's attention; now we wish to keep it in what is a very competitive world.

So we have been doing some work in regard to this about the acceleration and adoption of a consumer awareness of a distinct South Australian destination brand. We want to lift our state's appeal and awareness both interstate and internationally, at the same time supporting our regions. This additional marketing funding will predominantly be paid directly to media activity to help generate that reach and the marketing messages and increase those digital leads.

Most importantly, we are looking to support the launch of a new destination brand. A key part of this is we have the South Australian logo that is used by more than 8,000 businesses. It has been really taken on and embraced. What we did not have was a proposition to go with it, and that is a key thing that we will be working on through that launch and through that destination. It is building our South Australian destination brand.

A key part of that is to be embraced not just for tourism. Obviously, for international students, we are competitive. We want to be going out there, being clear about what we do. To some extent, we are influenced by other very successful campaigns, including New Zealand's '100 per cent pure' and, more recently, in Tasmania, 'Come down for air', which has clarified the proposition and lifted the attraction, and that is our intention here.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** How much will be spent for interstate and international?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I am sorry?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The question was about how much money for interstate—

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** That has not been determined at this point.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can the minister identify if influencers will be used as part of this?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** As I identified before, we have PR activity with the media famils and, of course, these brand advocates. I suspect they will be part of the package but a very small part. As I indicated, the activity will be about increasing those digital leads to South Australian tourism operators. This is an opportunity. The momentum is now. We have people's attention. We want to keep it, and we will do that in the best way possible.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Does this additional \$5 million include funding for the Regional Tourism Alignment Initiative, or is that funded separately?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** It is all together in that significant state budget increase. There is additional support for regional tourism alignment to bolster regional tourism, industry capability and product development. This has been a particular area of focus for myself. I think we have enormous capacities within the regions. We saw a significant change post COVID of where money in the dollar was spent in the visitor economy. While we have seen a little bit of a shave back—it is about 46¢ in the dollar now—what we want to do is build the regional structure, promoting the regions' product development and industry capability building.

That continues to be rolled out. We have taken quite a considerable amount of time to do consultation. We have been talking to local government and our regional tourism managers. There are unique ways that these regional tourism managers are supported while they are our local contact managers. I am very pleased to announce that money that goes to them directly has increased now to \$80,000 allocated to each region for next year, so a significant increase, but we are also going to work on our long-term plans for review.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** How much funding has been allocated overall for the Regional Tourism Alignment Initiative in 2024-25?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** As I indicated already, there has been a lift; there will be a lift in 2024-25, and that increases substantially the use of that money. When we consider how we support the regions obviously the visitor information centres are something that, although we do not run them, we support through \$15,000. Each of the regions had their visitors guides, and we support that by storage and distribution as well. The other thing that we will be looking at, of course, is the two-year funding agreement for our regional tourism organisations, and that has been something that is important to do over those two years.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Did I miss it somewhere in there—was there a dollar figure for the regional alignment initiative in 2024-25, a total figure? I heard 'uplift'.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** There is additional money of \$500,000. It is part of the state budget, yes.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Just while we are on the broader branding issue and the use of influencers, has the department or SATC been contacted by the Australian Taxation Office regarding the influencers' tax liabilities since they announced a crackdown last year?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** No.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** It probably would have been best asked in the previous line, so I will refer back to the previous line—let us go with grants and subsidies, if you like: was any effort made by SATC or the government or the minister to get Taylor Swift to perform in Adelaide rather than having all of our South Australians buying tickets to go to Sydney and Melbourne?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** What is your reference in the—

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We have a budget allocation of \$30 million in the 2023-24 budget, \$27 million spent, and one of the key outputs for that is, of course, to grow domestic awareness of South Australia and international awareness. Under that output and with the vast resources the minister has at her disposal, did anyone get on the telephone to Taylor Swift's management team to encourage them to South Australia?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I think the best way to answer that is that at all times we are ambitious and aspirational, and when opportunities present at all times we are out there talking to people about what that potential might be. It is inappropriate given the commercial-in-confidence nature of these negotiations, but I am sure you ask this question as someone who wants to grow the state and who may be a Swiftly, a fan. You are the father of young children who may find her someone they look up to, and of course she has had an incredibly successful career. I can assure you that at all times we are looking for those opportunities.

What we do see, however—and perhaps there are others that can answer this, particularly Martin who might be able to come through from an AVM perspective—is that the amount of movement for the staging etc., particularly with these very well-known artists, is considerable, and they tend to stick to the East Coast. But we are always ambitious.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** For the record I quite like Taylor Swift, but I consider myself more Swiftly adjacent rather than a Swiftly myself.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** That is important.

*Mr Brown interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** There are at least three members of my household who would consider themselves Swifties, and I am on the path. I might ask the member for Colton to do the omnibus—

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Before we move on I just wanted to seek clarification. I am the minister responsible for the Major Events Act and, of course, that is often talked about—how we control the commercialisation and protect that act; however, the fund is the responsibility of the Premier. Just to clarify.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I appreciate that, but there is a budget line here saying that once they have decided what to do with that fund it flows through tourism, and I think that is what the intragovernment transfers were.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** That is correct.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Can I suggest we go to the omnibus questions. The member for Colton has the set.

**Mr COWDREY:** Minister, the omnibus questions are:

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive appointments have been made since 1 July 2023 and what is the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?

2. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive positions have been abolished since 1 July 2023 and what was the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?

3. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what has been the total cost of executive position terminations since 1 July 2023?

4. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide a breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000 engaged since 1 July 2023, listing the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier, the method of appointment, the reason for the engagement and the estimated total cost of the work?

5. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide an estimate of the total cost to be incurred in 2024-25 for consultants and contractors, and for each case in which a consultant or contractor has already been engaged at a total estimated cost above \$10,000, the name of the consultant or contractor, the method of appointment, the reason for the engagement and the total estimated cost?

6. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many surplus employees are there in June 2024, and for each surplus employee, what is the title or classification of the position and the total annual employment cost?

7. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the number of executive staff to be cut to meet the government's commitment to reduce spending on the employment of executive staff and, for each position to be cut, its classification, total remuneration cost and the date by which the position will be cut?

8. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:

- What savings targets have been set for 2024-25 and each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

9. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:

- What was the actual FTE count at June 2024 and what is the projected actual FTE account for the end of each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the budgeted total employment cost for each year of the forward estimates; and
- How many targeted voluntary separation packages are estimated to be required to meet budget targets over the forward estimates and what is their estimated cost?

10. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how much is budgeted to be spent on goods and services for 2024-25 and for each year of the forward estimates?

11. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2024-25 and each year of the forward estimates and what is their estimated employment cost?

12. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total budgeted cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2024-25?

13. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, please provide for each individual investing expenditure project administered, the name, total estimated expenditure, actual expenditure incurred to June 2023 and budgeted expenditure for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27?

14. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for, please provide the following information for the 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years:

- Name of the program or fund;
- The purpose of the program or fund;
- Budgeted payments into the program or fund;
- Budgeted expenditure from the program or fund; and
- Details, including the value and beneficiary, or any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund.

15. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:

- Is the agency confident that you will meet your expenditure targets in 2024-25?
- Have any budget decisions been made between the delivery of the budget on 6 June 2024 and today that might impact on the numbers presented in the budget papers which we are examining today?
- Are you expecting any reallocations across your agencies' budget lines during 2024-25; if so, what is the nature of the reallocation?

16. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:

- What South Australian businesses will be used in procurement for your agencies in 2024-25?
- What percentage of total procurement spend for your agency does this represent?

- How does this compare to last year?

17. What protocols and monitoring systems has the department implemented to ensure that the productivity, efficiency and quality of service delivery is maintained while employees work from home?

18. What percentage of your department's budget has been allocated for the management of remote work infrastructure, including digital tools, cybersecurity, and support services, and how does this compare with previous years?

19. How many procurements have been undertaken by the department this FY, how many have been awarded to interstate businesses? How many of those were signed off by the CE?

20. How many contractor invoices were paid by the department directly this FY? How many and what percentage were paid within 15 days, and how many and what percentage were paid outside of 15 days?

21. How many and what percentage of staff who undertake procurement activities have undertaken training on participation policies and local industry participants this FY?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Is the minister happy to take those on notice?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** I will take those on notice.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Thank you very much. I go to page 94. There is a target, dot point 3: 'Increase cruise ship visits to South Australia and homeport itineraries to drive overnight stays, regional dispersal, and visitor expenditure to the state.' I understand that there has been an announcement recently that P&O Cruises Australia will cease operations next year and its flagship *Pacific Explorer* will be retired. What action has the minister and the government taken to fill the gap left by P&O's departure from the market?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Cruising has been incredibly successful for South Australia. In this last year, we had 122 ship visits. We have grown the sector by 48 per cent. In 2022-23, we had a record year of \$215 million that was generated from cruise ships.

What is particularly exceptional about cruise ships is their ability to disperse around the state. During that time we had visits to Port Adelaide, which is the main terminal, to Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln. We also have significant ship visits to expedition landing sites and anchorages in unique and remote coastal locations. They are much smaller ships as well. They go to Wallaroo, Robe and different places like that. It has been quite successful.

Obviously, across Australia and the Pacific it was disappointing news that Carnival made this decision to retire the P&O brand. As I understand it, they have actually owned P&O for quite some time, but they have made that change. We were really pleased when the *Pacific Explorer* home ported here in South Australia. That was quite significant because of the products that they buy here from our producers and it is worth a considerable amount of money.

We will continue to talk to Carnival. SATC has a very longstanding relationship with them and we continue to talk to them about different opportunities that this represents. Obviously, with the increasing cruise ship visits we have been getting quite a good reputation. Particularly Kangaroo Island is an incredible drawcard for those ships. What we would like to do, of course, is have the more international ships with a higher proportion of international passengers who spend more money and like to stay here for longer.

We have diversified the number of cruise lines and ships over this period of time, so we are focusing on those high-yield visitors on the luxury cruises. In this most recent season, for the first time we had the Royal Caribbean's *Brilliance of the Seas*, Ambassador's *Ambience*, AIDA Cruises, AIDAsol and Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Edge*. That was the first time we had one of those Celebrity Cruises align. Kangaroo Island welcomed for the first time the Royal Caribbean ship and Port Lincoln had Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth* for the first time ever.

It is my intention to have some deep conversations with these head office groups to talk to them about what we have. We have already been in contact with them quite extensively. This will



have an impact across Australia and the Pacific. We do see that there are opportunities, given the recognition to us with the great drawcard of KI.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Given the Pacific Explorer ship particularly engaged between Outer Harbor and Port Lincoln, my understanding is cruises planned beyond February 2025 are being cancelled and refunded. Has the minister had a chance to speak to Port Lincoln council, the Chamber of Commerce or tourism operators in Port Lincoln to discuss how they are going to fill this gap in their local market?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** We are constantly in contact, particularly because Port Lincoln council provides the welcome program and therefore we have a long-term relationship with them. Every single season there are fluctuations in ship visits. Of course, on occasions when the weather is rough, a predicted visit is not able to happen. We recognise this will be a challenge. We recognise that P&O has been a great supporter here and we will continue to work with Carnival and other cruise lines to see what those opportunities are.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Obviously, we appreciate the financial benefit of cruise ships to South Australia, which for very obvious reasons we did not have between 2020 and 2022. With this focus, and it has been identified as a target in the budget papers, are these relationships managed within SATC or by you as the minister? Is there a directorate within SATC focused on cruise ships? Who is responsible for managing this relationship?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Destination Development within the South Australian Tourism Commission. Of course, I am not afraid to pick up the phone when having those conversations. Obviously, Flinders Ports plays a very big role in this as well because that is the port all the cruise ships come to. The season will commence in October of this year, and in 2024-25 we are expecting 118 cruise ship visits, which are scheduled across 17 different cruise lines. This year will be very similar to the previous year. It is the following year that there may be some more challenges. I am pleased to say, from a regional point of view, that there is an estimated 40 visits to Port Adelaide, 10 visits to Port Lincoln and 30 visits to Kangaroo Island. We will also be hosting the Australia Cruise Association annual conference here in Adelaide in September 2024.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** What is the quantum of the budget that is allocated to this cruise strategy?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** In 2024-25 the allocated budget is \$621,503 for all cruise-related activity.

**The CHAIR:** The member for MacKillop.

**Mr McBRIDE:** My question to the minister is regarding Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 92. It quotes \$27 million for tourism events and \$33 million for tourism marketing. My question is: what proportion of that will be spent in the Limestone Coast and, going on, is there consideration in the budget to work collaboratively with the Department for Environment and Water to initiate a master plan for the Naracoorte Caves?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Thank you very much for your question, and it was only two weeks ago that you joined my regional visit across the whole of the Limestone Coast. Regional events is an area that has been supported for quite some time. Thirty events were supported over the last year, and there is a budget of \$500,000 for that. We certainly know that the cost of running events have increased for everyone, whether it be a tourism event, a major event or, even in my other portfolio, a multicultural event; all events have increased. We continue to sponsor that, and we have just run around for those regional events that will be staged between September and August of the following year. Obviously we do it advance, so people know what they will be doing.

The Limestone Coast is incredibly important to us. It actually has this great unique selling point of its proximity to the Victorian border, and so, compared to other regions, it has this ability to pull particularly international tourists travelling the Great Ocean Road into the Limestone Coast. I was reminded during my trip of how many people go through the Limestone Coast to Kangaroo Island, and one of our key ambitions is for them to not just stay one night but stay two nights, particularly to increase the activities around that area. I think there is a great opportunity there.

Through the election campaign there was a commitment to increase the profile of the Limestone Coast, and a new campaign will promote the region and its marketing efforts. We will feature the area in key advertising campaigns, as well as include it in digital, social media, PR and cooperative campaigns. We have actually seen quite a bit of lift there.

Can I just say, we had a conversation about when we have major events here in Adelaide and the opportunity for regions to benefit from that, and particularly in the AFL Gather Round. The Mount Gambier council had a supportive campaign from the SATC, Before the Bounce. Taking on the opportunity of that travelling component, and 50 per cent of people who came to the Gather Round did drive to it, they had lots of different things—community activations, visits by former players, and I think different games—that happened.

What I heard from my regional trip is that the whole of the Limestone Coast would like to be included in those Before the Bounce programs, and not just Before the Bounce, but after the event as well. Gather Round this year was held in the middle of the Victorian school holidays, so we promoted travel before and after the Gather Round.

We were absolutely delighted to see the length of stay for people coming. It really shifted from those two nights to at least four nights for people coming, really making it quite a significant period to discover South Australia. Of course, what we want people to do is to look at our regions, and the Limestone Coast is a key part of that. All regions can be considered when we have such a high proportion of people with their eyes on South Australia—and not just their eyes, but are actually travelling here as well.

I will touch on another area. Although the Minister for Environment is responsible for the Naracoorte Caves, it is a huge catalyst for the area. In fact, it had 97,000 visitors just last year. What I heard from people there is they would like it to be a key area to display all positive things that are happening there, particularly in the arts community and, of course, the wine that the Coonawarra is very famous for in the Limestone Coast. Within that area we have the potential, and a master plan is, I think, due—probably the last master plan was some time ago—and I will continue to work with the relevant minister to see that happen.

Of course, we were really pleased in the SA budget to see Generations in Jazz. I know it is not your electorate, but it is in the area. We have a sponsorship agreement for that, but it also includes \$720,000 to construct four permanent structured pavilions in Mount Gambier for that annual weekend jazz festival. I think there is a lot of potential for the regions. Someone has called it the five Cs—I am talking about craters and caves. Potentially, I think we could see it as a real drawcard for activities for people to participate in.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** We will go to page 95: the explanation of significant movements includes funding received from the Economic Recovery Fund for financial assistance packages to grow the South Australian visitor economy. Can the minister outline what support will be provided through the \$2.5 million from the Economic Recovery Fund?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** You are just asking about the current payments that are shown in the budget?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes, the explanation of significant movements.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** That is in regard to aviation marketing.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** In regard to—

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Aviation marketing—sorry, aviation as a whole.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** So the Economic Recovery Fund moved \$2.5 million to Tourism between last year's estimated result and this year's budget for aviation marketing; is that correct?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** No, just marketing. It was also Destination Development. To clarify, these are financial assistance packages for our ambition to reinstate those airlines and attract new airlines.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am just trying to unpack what the minister has just said. These are packages to attract international airlines.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** This is something that has always been used within government; this is not new at all.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I am not disputing that, I am just trying to unpack what the \$2.5 million was for. So when we move to the \$2.5 million, it is from the Economic Recovery Fund. That is the bit that is troubling me.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Well, it is entirely about economic recovery. Aviation and direct aviation links are incredibly important, not just for tourism but for trade and investment and, of course, for international students as well. We have always been ambitious about recovering what we lost in COVID.

Just to clarify, the Economic Recovery Fund aims to assist business and industry in key areas to grow secure, well-paid jobs, improve productivity, increase exports and support innovative value-adding technologies in South Australia—so it is quite wide in what it does. We were really delighted when the Economic Recovery Fund in its first round included regional tourism projects as well, but it is very much about economic recovery post COVID.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Just a follow-up from that—and I appreciate the member for Narungga has one—when you talked about the regional tourism projects, that was the previous year and not for this one; is that the way I take it?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Regional tourism is related to new money in the budget.

**Mr ELLIS:** I apologise; I have just walked in, so if you are repeating information, let me know and I will check the *Hansard* directly. I am looking at Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 94. The highlight for 2023-24 was the Recreational Fishing Tourism Strategy and increasing the contribution of the sector to \$468 million. If you have not already, can you outline how you intend to increase the rec fishing contribution? Are we going to start charging them more in some way? How do we envisage their contribution increasing? Are there going to be more fishers on the water?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** Thank you very much for your interest in this area. This was an election commitment. The Recreational Fishing Tourism Strategy was released in February 2024. We developed this in partnership with RecFish SA to grow that recreational fishing tourism. We are quite ambitious about that growth. In order to achieve the strategy, we talked with industry and had public consultations, meetings with government and industry stakeholders, public and industry surveys, and provided the opportunity for written feedback. It was co-authored and endorsed by the industry peak body, RecFish SA.

I think, particularly in the region that you represent, charter fishing has been an attractive tourism component. People come over specifically to go out with an operator to do charter fishing, but we know that people often enjoy coming out and doing a whole range of activities. We felt that it could be marketed in a better way, and that is obviously what the election commitment was around, to see it as a drawcard for people coming here to South Australia.

As we talked about before, we know that we have their attention. They are coming here for those catalyst events that we have put on. They are coming here because they want to get out and see our beautiful regions. We are still number one in food and fine, but we wanted to also be clear that there are other activities that you can do. If you are going out to Streaky Bay and having a beautiful time there, or maybe you are going out to Boston Bay on Eyre Peninsula, these are opportunities to understand how much fishing is part of the economy, which people are quite interested in. They want to taste and feel, but they also want to have that opportunity to go out on a boat and experience it themselves.

In fact, I have a great interest in agritourism and particularly aquatourism. We have seen how new product that comes in is really interesting to people. One of the areas that I would love to develop is the crayfish experience. This is something that was re-emphasised to me in the Limestone Coast. There are some barriers at the moment, according to some regulations. We are working out how we can work our way through them, particularly for the Chinese market, who loves

to see the crayfish come out of the sea but would love to then see it being cooked and be able to eat it. We would love to be able to do that. Fishing, in many of its forms, and any of that connectivity are a key part of value-adding to what we have here in South Australia.

**The CHAIR:** The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the South Australian Tourism Commission and the Adelaide Venue Management Authority complete. Further examination of the proposed payments for the administered items for the Department of Treasury and Finance will continue after the break. Thank you to the minister and her advisers.

*Sitting suspended from 11:18 to 11:30.*

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSION, \$500,000**

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE, \$3,525,000**

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE, \$100,000**

**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE,  
\$4,305,351,000**

**Membership:**

Hon. V.A. Tarzia substituted for Mr Cowdrey.

Mr Pederick substituted for Mr Teague.

Ms Hutchesson substituted for Mrs Pearce.

S.E. Andrews substituted for Mr Odenwalder.

**Minister:**

Hon. D.R. Cregan, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Special Minister of State.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms J. Waddington-Powell, Chief Executive, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Ms J. Best, Chief Financial Officer, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Mr B. Loughlin, Chief Officer, Country Fire Service.

Mr J. Swann, Chief Officer, South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service.

Mr C. Beattie, Chief Officer, State Emergency Service.

Ms A. Tajnikar, Business Manager, Country Fire Service.

Mr M. Fernando, Business Manager, South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service.

Mr G. Tudini, Business Manager, State Emergency Service.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back to today's Estimates Committee hearing. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed on an approximate time for the consideration of the proposed payments.

I remind members that all questions are to be directed to the minister, not the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced.

If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the Clerk Assistant via the Answers to Questions mailbox no later than Friday 6 September 2024. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the assembly *Notice Paper*.

The rules of debate in the house apply in the committee. That is with asking questions, not commentary. Ministers and members may not table documents before the committee; however, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution.

I will allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements, should they wish to do so, of up to 10 minutes. If not, they can proceed to naming their advisers. Also, the members for the opposition can go straight into their question time. I have noticed that we have started a couple of minutes late. I will add that time to the end of the session.

The portfolios we are dealing with now are SAFECOM, Country Fire Service, Metropolitan Fire Service and State Emergency Service. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I declare the proposed payments open for examination. Minister, the floor is yours.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Thank you, Chair. By way of introduction, I am accompanied by Ms Julia Waddington-Powell, the Chief Executive of the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission; Ms Julie Best, the chief financial officer and director of finance; Mr Brett Loughlin, the Chief Officer of the South Australian Country Fire Service; and Mr Jeff Swann, the Chief Officer of the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service. Also joining me is Mr Chris Beattie, the Chief Officer of the South Australian State Emergency Service.

I would like to start by acknowledging the very hard work of the many staff and volunteers across the emergency services sector. I thank each and every one for their ongoing commitment to serve the community and to support the preservation of life, property and the safety of all South Australians.

As the Chair is aware, as the member for Kavel, I have experienced firsthand the impacts that emergency disasters have on the community. The 2019-20 Black Summer fires impacted many people, their families, their businesses and the natural environment. As the Minister for Emergency Services, I acknowledge the collegiate nature of the response efforts of the CFS, MFS and SES, with strong support from SAFECOM and other organisations such as the South Australia Police, the South Australian Ambulance Service, the Department for Environment and Water, ForestrySA and local government.

This year, the government has invested \$19.602 million for the 2024-25 state budget in the emergency services sector. I would like to highlight that this includes \$10.1 million for the cost of extraordinary events that occurred in the 2023-24 period. This provides for an extension of aerial firefighting capability to support the CFS with the cost of responding to significant fires, including those caused by the December lightning events across Eyre Peninsula, Mambray Creek, Fisher, Naracoorte, Keilira, Gluepot, Kapinnie and Bundaleer North.

I also acknowledge the additional contribution of \$385,000 in 2023-24 from the Australian government towards aircraft costs received in the National Aerial Firefighting Centre. I am pleased with the additional \$450,000 to enable the CFS to purchase two additional four-wheel drive quick response vehicles that can carry approximately 500 litres of water for ground-based firefighting. This initiative is funded by the Australian government under the Protecting Our Communities (Disaster Resilience) Program.

The 2024-25 state budget included an additional \$5 million over two years to the Metropolitan Fire Service and the Country Fire Service to undertake PFAS testing and remediation of their fire stations and other facilities and to undertake further assessment to determine future remediation requirements. While PFAS has been banned since 2018, the potential impacts on human health and the environment remain at some sites where PFAS was used in training and exercises. This funding will support the CFS and MFS to identify residual contamination from the historical use of PFAS.

As members are aware, \$435,000 has been allocated over two years from 2024-25 for the state's volunteer marine rescue associations to maintain their rescue capability, including support to

replace vessels at Wallaroo and Lonsdale. This initiative will supplement funding provided through the 2023-24 financial year to bolster the funding to the South Australian Sea Rescue Squadron at Wallaroo for the vessel and tow vehicle replacement program. It will also support the South Australian Sea Rescue Squadron at Lonsdale with a new rescue vessel and operating costs. This will add to South Australia's marine rescue capabilities and, of course, our overall response to marine incidents and emergencies along our South Australian coastline.

An additional \$2.4 million is being invested in 2025-26 to relocate the Prospect SES unit to a new facility at Angle Park, taking total funding for the new facility to \$6.6 million. The new facility is expected to be completed in 2026. I understand it will provide volunteers a very modern operating building, of course, with space for appliances, a sandbagging area and a hard stand for training and car parking. This initiative provides \$429,000 of operating expenses over three years from 2024-25 for short-term leasing of a temporary site while the new facility is being constructed. This project is funded through the emergency services levy.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about some of the targets that SAFECOM has set for the 2024-25 financial year. In the 2023-24 state budget an ongoing funding course was provided to SAFECOM to invest in additional programs and support services to strengthen mental health and wellbeing resources for staff, volunteers and families. The funding has provided additional staff resources to develop, implement and monitor a three-year mental health and wellbeing strategy for the emergency services sector and to develop and implement a four-year suicide prevention action plan. This investment will support volunteers, their families and workers to build resilience and their support networks. I cannot stress enough how important this measure is to our communities and volunteers.

SAFECOM are working on the delivery of the enhanced Alert SA application which will provide South Australians with additional information and real-time updates on emergencies. Together, these measures will support the emergency services sector to prepare for, respond to and assist community in their recovery efforts. I thank all volunteers, staff and families for their continued dedication to emergency services in South Australia.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I will just go straight to questions. Minister, I go to Budget Paper 1, Budget Overview, page 30. In regard to the PFAS remediation and testing of MFS and CFS facilities, how many sites have been tested so far?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I might invite the MFS chief officer to address the question.

**Mr SWANN:** Thank you very much. Just in relation to PFAS the MFS is risk-assessing all of our current sites and former sites for PFAS. We are in the process of risk-assessing those. Sites assessed as the highest risk have been tested, and that equates to eight sites in total that have been tested. All the others have been risk-assessed for MFS.

**Mr PEDERICK:** And in regard to the CFS?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I invite the chief officer to contribute.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you for the question. At this stage the CFS has tested four sites, and we are working with the EPA to test and work out a risk assessment process for the remainder of our sites.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Thank you. So when do both the CFS and the MFS expect all sites to be tested by?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I will turn to the MFS first and then we will go to the CFS.

**Mr SWANN:** Thank you very much for the question. The MFS is expecting to have all sites triaged and risk-assessed within the next 12 months. The testing will be completed on a basis in consultation with the EPA. At this stage there is no guarantee we will be testing all sites; that will be done in consultation with the EPA and the relevant risk assessing. So I could not give a timeline for when they would all be tested.

**Mr PEDERICK:** And the CFS? What other sites do you think need to be tested or how many and when will they be tested by?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I will turn to the CFS chief.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you, minister, and thank you for the question, Mr Pederick. I have a very similar answer to that of the Metropolitan Fire Service. We will work through with the EPA to determine the risk assessment and then we will start the testing process. The testing process will vary from site to site—that has been our experience so far—so it is a difficult one to quantify at this stage. The opportunity for both fire services to work together and ensure we have a joined-up, seamless approach to this is, I think, a benefit that will come from this process.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Out of the sites that have been tested, how many have been identified as having a level of PFAS that is of concern to the MFS and the CFS?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We might again turn to the chief officers.

**Mr SWANN:** There is a range of issues relating to PFAS that is changing and evolving. There are levels relating to the human health impact and there are levels relating to the environmental impact that all differ, so to actually give a definitive answer as to which ones have been risk assessed as 'of concern' is challenging, because even the standards for environmental impact are changing. Of the eight that we have tested, all eight have some small levels of PFAS in the soil that certainly represents potential for environmental impact, but we are working with the EPA to address that.

**Mr PEDERICK:** And the CFS?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I will go to the CFS chief.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you. The ongoing investigations are focused on our State Training Centre at Brukunga, our Region 5 Training Centre based out of Naracoorte, and our site at Cherry Gardens at this point in time. We are also in some preliminary stages of doing some investigating of a site at Millicent and, as I said, we will continue to work through. As Chief Officer Swann has highlighted, there are differences between levels for environmental impact and levels for human health impacts, so it is very much a case-by-case, site-by-site basis.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Has remediation work commenced at any of the sites of concern, or has there been remediation work recommended to be done on these sites?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think, again, we might turn to both agencies. Following their contributions I will provide a bit more of an overview to members present in relation to the government-funded program. I turn to the MFS chief officer first, who has lead responsibility in relation to management of PFAS as between these two agencies.

**Mr SWANN:** Thank you very much for the question again. Of the sites that we have tested, one has undergone remediation works and the others are still in consultation with the EPA as to the appropriate level of works. Depending on the zoning of those parcels of land, there is a different standard, depending on residential and commercial and if it is a fire station. It is based on the use around it. We are in consultation with the EPA for any works moving forward. Only one station has had remediation works to this point for the MFS.

**Mr PEDERICK:** And the CFS?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Through the Chair, to the CFS chief before I make a short contribution.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you. At this stage we have undertaken remediation works at our Brukunga site, which is the State Training Centre. That has included the installation of a water filtration plant that has improved the water quality for the area, and just recently we held a community consultation meeting there with the EPA and our specialist contractors who are doing the testing to keep the community up to date with the progress that we have made at that site.

There are some minor remediation works that have occurred at Cherry Gardens and also some minor remediation works that have occurred at Naracoorte. At the Naracoorte site we have the space that we can avoid using the area where there are levels of PFAS recorded in the soil, so that site requires a lot less remediation work at this time.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As earlier indicated, the Metropolitan Fire Service is the lead agency assisting in the identification of sites—assisted, of course, by the Environment Protection Authority. The MFS, as earlier indicated, are proactive in investigating and reducing their contamination of the environment. It is right to say, too, that the CFS have a considerable focus on these matters.

In terms of MFS stations, those stations may require a preliminary site investigation. Of course, there is sampling and analysis, and a quality plan and detailed site investigation may be necessary. Those investigations may then require remediation or ongoing groundwater monitoring for a set number of years; the number of years is usually determined by consultation with the SA Environment Protection Authority, as earlier foreshadowed. The costs of remediation are informed by the EPA's requirement for each station. The EPA's expertise, of course, is considerable with respect to these matters, as is the expertise of the Metropolitan Fire Service and the CFS.

Prior funding from 2019 allowed the Metropolitan Fire Service to provide medical testing for firefighters exposed to PFAS substances, addressing what had been identified as a human health risk, and funding provided over two years from 2024-25 relates to another successful budget measure to undertake PFAS testing and, of course, environmental remediation of fire stations and other facilities and to undertake further assessment to determine potential future remediation requirements, as we have explored.

I think it is important for me to inform members that, historically, the Metropolitan Fire Service in particular used class B aqueous film forming foams (AFFFs) containing the PFAS substances. The Metropolitan Fire Service, as I understand it, proactively phased out the use of these products, I am advised, by 2016 following consultation and liaison with the Australasian fire and emergency services council and the EPA, which has maintained ongoing support.

The Metropolitan Fire Service has also worked closely with the United Fire Fighters Union of South Australia (UFUSA) to implement voluntary PFAS blood testing. The Metropolitan Fire Service, I am also advised, instigated a blood reduction program in conjunction with a general practitioner for those staff who wished to reduce PFAS in their bloodstream. The program has had positive results, I am advised, and the Metropolitan Fire Service and SA Health are preparing a paper to ensure that the results of that program can be more widely shared with other general practitioners, medical practitioners and those who are conducting research and monitoring of this important issue.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I switch to an SES question. In regard to the relocation of the Prospect SES unit, have negotiations for the interim site in Dudley Park been finalised?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am informed that the terms have been agreed and that advice is being sought from a Crown lawyer as to the terms of an appropriate lease arrangement.

**Mr ELLIS:** On the SES topic, minister, my annual question: on Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 93, under targets it lists the provision of one rescue vessel. If I can weave a couple of questions in: where is that vessel scheduled, is there one planned for Point Turton and, if not, does the agency consider it a strategic gap that there are currently limited VMR services in Turton?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the member for Narungga for the question. I should emphasise that the member for Narungga has been a determined local member, not only in relation to marine rescue resources but also with respect to emergency services resources more generally in his community. He is fierce and direct with ministers, as he should rightly be, he has a command of the matters that are of concern to his community and he has had quite some success, I should say, in ensuring that there are additional marine rescue resources now being provided to Wallaroo.

He has also, over a number of years, emphasised the importance to his community of additional investment at Point Turton and he has also emphasised the importance of additional resources and investment in Country Fire Services throughout his community. I will seek some additional advice momentarily. I am informed by the SES chief that any provision for Point Turton is sitting outside the current funding cycle. However, the matters that the member for Narungga has raised are important and I undertake to come back to him with a more detailed answer on notice.

Additional resources for marine rescue, however, have been informed by the contributions that the member for Narungga has made to the house; contributions he has made by representations



to me and contributions he has made through representations to previous ministers, and some of those representations have been very important in local decision-making in ensuring that marine rescue in South Australia and across his community is never outside the focus and concentration of the relevant minister, and also, of course, the relevant service chief.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Same budget line, Budget Overview, Budget Paper 1, page 30: which CFS units received the new four-wheel-drive quick-response vehicles that were purchased in 2023-24?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the shadow minister for the question. I am informed that the vehicles are in the build phase. I understand that across the country there has been difficulty in obtaining the appropriate chassis; however, all efforts are being made to build and procure these important vehicles for the Country Fire Service.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Just as a bit of an offline question to that, are they Toyota chassis, or is there a particular brand that is being sought?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The chassis are Toyota chassis. The build is being completed in New South Wales. We have had access to a national contracting arrangement through the support of AFAC. We understand that there are a number of vehicles already in service and they have been welcomed by volunteers. I am advised that they are very capable vehicles.

**Mr PEDERICK:** The same budget line: has the CFS facilities audit commenced and, if not, when is it due to commence?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I will turn to the CFS chief in relation to this matter.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you minister and thank you for the question. We appreciate the support of parliament in raising the issues pertaining to CFS facilities and welcome the facilities audit as a way to take meaningful steps towards improving our sites and meeting the community in volunteer expectations. Since the announcement has been made, we have drawn up the required procurement documents and they are going through that process now so that we can go to market and procure a company to undertake this important work on behalf of the agency.

**Mr PEDERICK:** In light of that answer, can you identify which CFS sites you are already aware of that are not up to standard?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think it is important to observe that there are more than 450 property assets within the CFS portfolio. The number of stations is 425, and accordingly it is a significant task to conduct this audit. But the CFS, of course, has a reasonable understanding of the condition of its assets. A number of these assets are legacy assets that have come from councils in the 1990s. This initiative is an important one. It allows for the CFS to scope out and produce a detailed record or ensure it has a detailed understanding of the current state of all those assets.

As members are aware, the initiative provides \$817,000 over two years, from 2024-25 to the CFS to ensure that they can conduct that audit and establish an additional facilities maintenance program and also develop a standard facilities benchmark. Importantly, members may be aware that the measure also includes two temporary fulltime equivalent staff likely to be contracted to achieve the project timeline. No doubt, those staff will be engaged and commence the audit once they are engaged by the agency.

**Mr PEDERICK:** In regard to the need for a facilities audit, why is a facilities audit required for an organisation that receives millions of dollars through the Emergency Services Levy and should already have a running inventory of the state of facilities and vehicles?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The CFS already has a reasonably good understanding of the condition of its assets, but it is important for there to be additional resources to support the CFS in scoping out, as I have earlier indicated, works that may be necessary to bring these assets further up to standard. As I have earlier indicated, a large number of these assets were legacy assets that were not purpose-built by or for the CFS. They remain in the CFS asset pool and it is very, very important that additional money be provided from government for an overall position to be determined. I understand that the CFS is very keen to know the outcome, of course, of the audit, so that it can direct additional funding or build business cases for additional funding. I might turn to the CFS chief as well to contribute on this point.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you, minister. One of the outcomes we are keen to achieve is to have that detailed replacement schedule across all 455 sites, so that volunteers can see where their station is in order of the priority that is identified. We know that will help provide some certainty for our members, and we know that transparency around replacement schedules is something that our volunteers have long called for improvement in. The results of the audit will help inform that. It will also help us inform a better program of maintenance work, so we can look at bigger ticket preventative items that will extend the life of many of our current facilities, so beyond doing repairs and maintenance into programs of preventative maintenance. It will be an important snapshot in time of where our 455 sites are up to, and how that schedule for replacement can be prioritised.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Prior to this audit, minister, has there not been a self-reporting process from brigades into headquarters on the status of facilities in the CFS?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The answer is yes, brigades are providing information to the CFS, and have done so historically.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Again, if there has been a regular input of reporting from brigades, I am a bit stunned why there needs to be another audit done of an organisation of 13,500 volunteers and hundreds of paid staff to find out exactly what is going on with facilities.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As the shadow minister will appreciate, the volunteers are not all engineers, not all builders and not all carpenters. The skill set available to different stations in terms of volunteers is different. There is considerable capacity within the organisation to identify defects or legacy issues within property assets, but to ensure that there is a complete picture, for the reasons that I have outlined, and the chief has outlined, for the purposes that have been outlined, it is important that this work be undertaken.

As a shadow minister will appreciate, the dilapidation of assets or damage to assets can occur in different ways. It is not just the effluxion of time. It might be damage through weather events. It might be matters that relate to the condition of different materials that have been used across these assets. We have earlier indicated or explored the idea that not all of these assets were purpose built for the CFS. They have come in as legacy assets into the property portfolio, and now is an opportune time to advance the investigation, as we have outlined and for the purposes outlined, and through you, Mr Chair, I might invite the CFS chief to add any additional or further matters that he may wish.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you, minister, and you have certainly covered the issue well. All our volunteers are obviously incredibly important across the state, and this prioritisation, though, of which stations are in the most need will help us make evidence-based decisions around that investment as we move forward. This work is combined then with the improvements to our standard station design program that we have been implementing, which is a volunteer-led program to make sure that our fire stations meet the requirements and the needs of our volunteers into the future, and that has been a very successful project that is in its final stages at the moment. We will be able to combine the results of the audit with the standard station designs, and be able to greatly advance the number of stations we build, the transparency we provide our volunteers, and the evidence-based decisions that we make around this important topic.

**Mr PEDERICK:** So the findings of the audit will be released to the public?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The CFS chief has indicated to me his intention to ensure that information with respect to the condition of different brigades is shared with those brigades, I anticipate in the first instance, and decisions can be made from there.

**Mr PEDERICK:** But not in a general public sense is what I am asking.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** That would be a question for government at the time in possession of the audit. The audit is yet to commence; the staff are yet to be engaged and the funding has only just been provided.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 34, investing expenditure summary, existing projects. In regard to lines 2 and 4, why is the 2024-25 budget allocation for the high and bulk capacity fleet renewal and mid-capacity fleet renewal projects yet to be determined?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Funding is still in the program stage; it is yet to be allocated.

**Mr PEDERICK:** So you believe sufficient funding will be found to replace the vehicles that need replacing?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the shadow minister for the question and I will turn to the CFS chief.

**Mr LOUGHLIN:** Thank you, minister, and thank you for the question. As the member would be well aware, the CFS is very proud of our fleet and the quality and calibre of the vehicles that we put on the road are some of the best in the country. We are confident that the money that has been provided and allocated in draft at this point is sufficient to replace those vehicles that need replacing as part of our appliance replacement schedule and noting, too, that our fleet has gone through that mid-life safety systems retrofit process, and so the fleet is in a good position. Notwithstanding that, due to the nature of the work that the vehicles undertake there are always going to be unplanned issues that may arise, and those plans that we have do need to remain agile as things change and occur.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I refer to page 37, activity indicators. Does the CFS have a high turnover of volunteer members?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The brief answer is no. The advice I have is that the CFS has had a plus or minus 2 per cent staffing change over a considerable period. I want to, though, for the assistance of members, discuss separations. To do that, it is important in context to address SAFECOM, perhaps the CFS and the SES as well, if the shadow minister would wish me to do that now. Otherwise, we can address the CFS standalone. But if it is a matter that the shadow minister would wish to explore across the different agencies—

**Mr PEDERICK:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I understand that the answer from the shadow minister is yes.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Yes.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Separations, of course, describe staff and volunteers who have left their individual agency due to resignation, retirement, expiration of contract, transfer to another agency or termination. Exit reasons for volunteers can be categorised into different categories, including change of address, lack of time because of a change in circumstances, for example, or for other personal reasons. Staff and volunteers do not always provide a reason for separation. In terms of the 2023-24 financial year staff separations for the emergency services sector, for SAFECOM they stand at 21; for the CFS, 31; for the SES, 16; and for the Metropolitan Fire Service, 65; for a total from the emergency services sector of 133.

In terms of the volunteers for the same period, the CFS recruited, I am advised, 1,220 volunteers, and 824 separated. The net gain there is approximately 396, for the benefit of members. Let me emphasise that: that is a net gain of 396. The State Emergency Service recruited, I am advised, 412. There were 182 separations, and the netting out there is approximately 230. Allow me just for a moment to confirm that figure.

I have taken additional advice. The State Emergency Service numbers have been particularly stable. I am informed that there may have been a gain or loss of only 10, so the variance over about a decade. It is very important for me to emphasise that the stability of our volunteer figures is something that is particularly significant when measured against the experience of other jurisdictions across Australia, and it is a matter that ought be emphasised.

The other matter that I should reflect on is that the data provided does not include casual employees employed for short periods, as you would expect, or where they are engaged for operational purposes—for example, during 2022-23 River Murray flood event. Recruitment processes are constantly underway, of course. The government level to fill vacancies arising from separations or to ensure that there are staff accepted into newly created roles. That might assist members present for the moment.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Thank you. I go to page 28, sub-program 1.2 and targets 2024-25, dot point 4. When was the CFS first alerted to issues with its disciplinary process?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the shadow minister for the question. There have been concerns raised in relation to disciplinary processes by volunteers in different ways for some time. I think it is important to relay to members that in August 2023 an examination of disciplinary processes in the South Australian emergency services sector as a whole was announced by the government.

An emergency services misconduct case project review group has been established and is sponsored, as members may be aware, by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment. The group is working to identify improvements in the timeliness of misconduct processes and, as members are aware, that process has reached the point at which consultation has commenced on certain new regulations as well certain policies that have been developed to provide a process that is faster, fairer and safer. That is the intention.

It is important as well, in the CFS context, for me to inform members that CFS has 20 volunteer members who are currently subject to an active regulation 21 disciplinary process; 19 of whom are suspended, with 15 relating to criminal offending external to CFS and five relating to behavioural misconduct such as bullying or financial impropriety. It is important for me to emphasise too that webinars with volunteers and staff on a proposed new process have been, and are still being, undertaken to obtain feedback. It is an important process, one that this government is very keen to receive feedback on, and that feedback process is underway.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I will go to the MFS workforce summary on page 57, Targets 2024-25, dot point 3. Is the direct entry framework being developed due to recruitment struggles here in South Australia?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I invite Chief Officer Jeff Swann to respond.

**Mr SWANN:** The MFS is not having any recruitment issues that we are concerned about; however, we are losing skilled workers to interstate jurisdictions through a lateral or direct entry program. There is a significant cost associated with training and upskilling someone to the level of a firefighter that we would need to undertake. To help mitigate some of those costs and to actually allow some of those skilled workers to come back to South Australia, we are implementing a direct entry or lateral entry framework. That is still in the final stages of consultation to actually mitigate that cost and to allow those skilled workers to come back to South Australia.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I will go to page 59, Targets 2024-25, dot point 3. This is to do with the MFS, obviously. When will the review of regional stations and staffing models commence?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In answer to the shadow minister's question, the program has commenced.

**Mr PEDERICK:** It has commenced, thank you. I will go to SAFECOM, before I run out of time: page 73, sub-program 1.1, description/objective. Noting that SAFECOM is responsible for providing support to the operational agencies, how many people utilised SAFECOM's Stress Prevention and Management program in 2023-24?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As members are aware, the mental health and wellbeing program provides CFS, SES and VMR staff, volunteers and their families with support, services and programs. There has been a surge in demand for support services after the 2019-20 bushfires. The program is also known as the Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM) program, to which the shadow minister referred, and includes the 24/7 SPAM helpline for personnel and volunteer-related challenges and issues.

The 2023-24 state budget provided additional funding and an increase of 3.5 full-time equivalent employees, bringing the dedicated team to 5.5 full-time employees, and recruiting has been finalised for two of the positions. The additional resources have enabled the program to develop a proactive and early interventionist strategy to increase education, training and promotion online and face to face. Answering the Call 2018 revealed that suicidal ideation was twice as prevalent amongst first responders, and the completion of the emergency services sector suicide prevention plan by December 2024 aims to reduce suicide related to stress and death by suicide.

In terms of members seeking to access the program, in the 2023-24 financial year, the employee assistance program (EAP) referrals have increased by approximately 17 per cent. This

underscores a trend that the staff and volunteers are actively engaging in mental health literacy programs. They are reducing stigma, of course, with respect to seeking assistance for mental health support and also creating a culture in which seeking early help is encouraged and normalised.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I will go to page 73, targets 2024-25, dot point 4: what has prompted the need for SAFECOM to develop an emergency services volunteer sustainability strategy?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** SAFECOM is actively turning its mind to ensuring that there is a strategy for the retention of very skilled volunteers over time. We are mindful of changing demographics. We are mindful of the experience of similar agencies in other jurisdictions, and it is prudent and very useful for SAFECOM to be focused on these types of matters.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I will go to an SES volunteer marine rescue question, Budget Paper 1, Budget Overview, page 30. In relation to support for volunteer marine rescue associations, when will the current vessels at Wallaroo and Lonsdale be decommissioned, and when will the replacement vessels be operational?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I will seek some specific advice in relation to decommissioning and commissioning. I thank the shadow minister for the question; it is an important one. I am advised that through the program that is in place a vessel has been delivered every year, but in terms of the specific dates for decommissioning and commissioning, we will take that question on notice.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I will go back to page 93, Program 1: State Emergency Service, Highlights 2023-24, dot point 3. Has the state flood mitigation cache been fully established, and has it been utilised at all since its establishment?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** That is an excellent question. I will seek advice. The full cache is yet to be commissioned; however, there has been significant work towards building up available equipment and assets, and I understand certain of those available materials have been deployed.

**Mr PEDERICK:** And it is fully established?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** My advice is, not for the moment. I understand that considerable work has gone towards its establishment; however, it is not fully commissioned.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I go to page 74, subprogram 1.2, Highlights 2023-24 and, I think this is under the SAFECOM line, dot point 2. Was the pilot 30 Days 30 Ways campaign successful and, if so, will it be run again?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The 30 Days 30 Ways campaign was piloted by SAFECOM throughout September 2023. The campaign presented an opportunity to enhance the resilience of the South Australian community to ensure preparedness for a multitude of emergencies and disasters. The social media-based campaign reached over 207,000 people in 2023, with a significant number of reactions, engagements and information-sharing. The campaign shared key messages from over 20 agencies, departments and organisations.

It is important for members to be aware that the program was first launched in 2010. It was initiated by the Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency in Vancouver, Washington. It was later replicated in the United Kingdom and then piloted in South Australia in 2023. The campaign was funded via round one of the Disaster Risk Reduction Grants to the value of \$180,000 and, when combined with SAFECOM in-kind co-contributions, the total campaign equated to \$260,000.

Each day throughout September, a different key message and activity was shared to the community. That aimed to assist in preparing for disasters and emergencies and for the community to become more resilient. The campaign was promoted, as earlier indicated, through social media, through websites, media and through public events such as the Royal Adelaide Show. SAFECOM has applied for Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) funding round two and, if successful, this will provide funding to execute the campaign for three years from 2026.

**Mr PEDERICK:** I just want to acknowledge the work of the emergency services and what the chief officers and their staff do for this state and what they have done in preparation for estimates. Just from an opposition point of view, and especially in light of the recent floods, I appreciated the close collaboration between the emergency services. Thank you.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Thank you. The shadow minister's comments are appreciated.

**The CHAIR:** The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for SAFECOM, Country Fire Service, the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service and the State Emergency Service complete. The further examination of the proposed payments for the Administered Items for the Department of Treasury and Finance are referred to Estimates Committee B. I thank the minister and his advisers.

*Sitting suspended from 12:33 to 13:30.*

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$1,102,103,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$71,000**

**Membership:**

Mr Telfer substituted for Hon. J.A.W. Gardner.

Mr Fulbrook substituted for Mr Brown.

**Minister:**

Hon. D.R. Cregan, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Special Minister of State.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr G. Stevens, Commissioner of Police, South Australia Police.

Mr S. Johnke, Executive Director, Business Service, South Australia Police.

Mr B. Cagialis, Director, Finance and Procurement, South Australia Police.

Mr C. Hill, Superintendent, Commissioner's Support Branch, South Australia Police.

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back, members of the committee. I open up the portfolio of South Australia Police. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I declare the proposed payments open for examination. I invite the minister to make some introductory remarks of up to 10 minutes, if he wishes, and then introduce his advisers. I then invite the member for Flinders to make some remarks or go straight to questions.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I would like to commence with the introduction of the officers I have in the room with me, followed by a brief opening statement. To my left is Commissioner of Police, Grant Stevens; to my right is Executive Director, Business Services, Stephen Johnke; also to my left is Director, Finance and Procurement, Bill Cagialis; and to the rear is Commissioner's Support Branch Superintendent Campbell Hill.

As the new Minister for Police, I begin by outlining some key issues of importance to the government, some of which require specific funding, of course, which is contemplated by the budget items now under examination.

SAPOL has implemented many initiatives to recruit police officers. A labour agreement was executed by the Department of Home Affairs on 21 December 2023 allowing SAPOL to recruit experienced police officers from the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. As well, of course, activities have been held in New Zealand, and this initiative has been advertised on and from December 2023. I should say in relation to the Northern Hemisphere that as at 31 May 2024, SAPOL has received 283 applications from experienced international police officers.

SAPOL is aiming to commence international recruit training courses early in the new financial year. In March 2024, SAPOL attended recruitment expos in Glasgow, Dublin, Birmingham and

London. The expos were successful, with more than 740 officers attending to ask questions about living and working in South Australia.

SAPOL is partnering with Thebarton Senior College in another initiative to deliver a pilot Pathway to Policing program to year 12 students in 2024. A pilot commenced in January 2024 and includes 13 to 15 year 12 students completing five SACE-accredited policing subjects, preparing them for entry into SAPOL's recruitment process. To reach establishment over the next two years, the SAPOL course will need to deliver a blend of up to 11 constable development programs and eight international transition courses. As well, SAPOL will be delivering police security officer courses and development programs over that period. SAPOL has approved to redesign the CDP to deliver a contemporary and generationally relevant training program.

As members present are aware, SAPOL is committed to offering a learning environment that is attractive, flexible and efficient, and this includes efforts to make recruitment more accessible to suitable candidates from regional areas. On 6 to 8 December 2023, SAPOL travelled to Whyalla and piloted the first recruitment assessment centre across three days. This was followed by Mount Gambier and Berri. A team administered recruitment testing, panel interviews and a recruitment information seminar. Barriers are being removed for regionally-based trainees by SAPOL offering cost-of-living allowance and access to Police Academy accommodation.

In September 2023, SAPOL's new You Belong in Blue recruitment marketing campaign was launched. Creatives across social media, print TV and radio platforms showcase SAPOL careers and have been positively received. SAPOL has also increased external engagement efforts through multiple channels to broaden its reach. A mobile recruitment van is now used to enhance presence at career expos, schools and community events. Further, SAPOL has established formal partnerships with external bodies, such as Football SA and Adelaide Footy League to promote policing careers and safer communities at sporting events.

In August and December 2023, SAPOL conducted two professional development days at the Police Academy. These days were designed to engage with career counsellors from over 100 schools to showcase career paths into South Australia Police and, in turn, raise awareness across schools. Attendees received a video to screen in high schools, which was also promoted on social media.

SAPOL has also launched the Discover SAPOL work experience program, with two courses being conducted for metropolitan and regional students. The program targets students in years 10 to 12 who are interested in a policing career. This program will continue throughout the year, with four courses scheduled.

It is also important for me to emphasise to members the work being undertaken through the multiagency domestic violence hub. The multiagency DV hub concept has been an effective service enhancement for victims of domestic violence in South Australia. SAPOL has embedded DV specialist police officers within Women's Safety Services to assist victims of domestic violence. SAPOL has committed to working with Women's Safety Services SA and other agencies and has delivered an extension of this initiative to the northern areas of Adelaide. South Australia Police believes that working with other agencies leads to effective early intervention and prevention.

It is important for me also to emphasise that two police officers are posted to the Northern Multi-Agency Hub, which was launched on 22 May 2024. Their role in the Northern Multi-Agency Hub is to facilitate information-sharing between partner agencies to ensure that an informed and comprehensive response can be provided to victims of domestic violence and their children, and deliver disclosures under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme for northern metropolitan and Barossa regions and facilitate the taking of reports, statements and intervention order applications for referred clients in an effort to ensure that victims have a one-stop shop service so far as can be reasonably achieved.

In addition, police at the Northern Multi-Agency Hub will facilitate referrals to the pilot risk and safety support scheme commencing shortly. The risk and safety support scheme will support victims as needed and help ensure they have access to appropriate safety planning and support for themselves and their children.

I also make some remarks in relation to the Thebarton barracks relocation. South Australia Police is working with the government to relocate 15 business units from Thebarton barracks, providing space for the new Women's and Children's Hospital. The program is significant and requires facilities for STAR Group and police dogs. The relocation project is being overseen by the Treasurer as Chair of the Budget Cabinet Committee subcommittee.

The course of these deliberations are cabinet-in-confidence and details cannot be discussed; however, what I can say is that construction and fit-out works across five sites, including Gepps Cross, West Beach and the Adelaide CBD, accommodating seven business units, is now underway. The Department of Treasury and Finance is the lead agency with the support of the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and, of course, South Australia Police. The government is committed to providing alternative accommodation to a suitable standard.

In terms of Closing the Gap, South Australia Police is committed to working with community, government and relevant stakeholders to progress the recommendations from the national Closing the Gap agreement. South Australia Police is represented at executive level on several committees, including the senior officials working group on Closing the Gap. It has also commenced a specific project to develop a First Nations strategy and action plan to further enhance their approach to the Closing the Gap recommendations. SAPOL continues to contribute to the Closing the Gap implementation plan.

With respect to the APY lands implementation project—noting that there are just a number of minutes remaining—the APY lands project has an approved budget of \$10.4 million in 2023-24 to construct new police facilities at Fregon, Indulkana and Pipalyatjara. These facilities will be a police post each comprising an office with an interview room, four bedrooms and a living area. They will provide fit-for-purpose facilities for police to regularly visit these communities and remain on site for short periods.

With respect to organisational reform, and noting the remaining time, police security officers play an important role in supporting the frontline. It is important to note that police security officers are now in place as cell guards across four metropolitan police custody facilities, with the result that 45 police have been released from cell duties. This marks the full implementation of stage 1 of that transition project.

As of 31 May 2024, the district support section provided support to frontline policing by undertaking 6,417 tasks, returning over 43,000 work hours to operational police. Stage 2 training is currently being undertaken with respect to that important transition project. Of course, the full implementation of the model is subject to achieving full PSO staffing.

I will make some brief remarks in relation to Operation Measure before we turn to questions. Operation Measure commenced in March 2022 to address and reduce shop theft offences and target recidivist high-value shop theft offenders. The operation has a prevention-first focus and seeks to build collaboration and partnerships between police and retail operators. I am sure that this is a matter that we will explore today.

Operation Paragon, as well, addresses antisocial behaviour, specifically as it relates to alcohol and drug misuse associated with vulnerable persons and rough sleepers within the CBD and its Parklands. I emphasise, too, the work of the Serious and Organised Crime Branch, and the South Australia Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team, and these are matters, too, that we may examine as part of the budget line items today.

SAPOL's work on road safety needs to be emphasised, and SAPOL should be congratulated on its significant work in this field. As members present know, there were 117 lives lost last year, and this year 42 lives have been lost on our roads. The government's perspective, naturally, is that any life lost is a significant tragedy and has an impact not only on the person's family and their community but also on regional communities as it can rob those communities of a significant volunteer or contributor. It has devastating long-term impacts. I am mindful of our need to turn to the budget items. The time for explanatory remarks being close to expiring, I will turn to the shadow minister, through you, Mr Chair.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Flinders, the floor is yours.



**Mr TELFER:** I will not do an extensive opening statement after that extensive one, but can I just thank the police for the work that has been done in the background and for the process that we go through, through estimates. As I have said previously, as we go through this I never criticise the work that officers do on the ground because it is a hard job, and one which I give the utmost respect to those who are involved in it. This process is about dissecting some of the numbers and understanding what the impacts are on the community of South Australia.

We will start with Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 178, a logical area to start when we are looking at the breakdown of the FTE component, which is significant. I note that the 2023-24 estimated result is 5,983.9 and budgeted is 6,147.4. How many of the FTEs were/are operational officers? I am happy to work on the 2023-24 numbers rather than try to project the end point of 2024-25.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** It might be useful for me to make some opening remarks in relation to recruitment, and then we can drill down specifically with respect to the matters that the shadow minister wishes to examine. There will be sufficient time for us to ensure that we are—

**Mr TELFER:** Let's hope so.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** —very closely focused on the matters that the shadow minister is rightly raising. At the outset, I should make the observation that police forces around Australia and, indeed, in comparable jurisdictions are operating in different markets, but it is a characteristic of the markets in which we are operating in Australia that we have full or near to full employment. That is certainly the case in South Australia.

In fact, for the first time in my lifetime we have full employment. That, in and of itself, is to be celebrated, but it does have consequences in terms of other opportunities available for very experienced and capable officers, which, of course, police officers are. They are highly sought after by alternative employers, and the skill set that they develop through the Police Academy training process and the experiences that they are exposed to as part of policing mean that they will continue to be highly sought after.

In terms of the overall recruitment position for this year, it is important for me to update members on the latest available information that I have to hand. I am advised that, in terms of the number of cadets who have been sworn in, at the point at which this note was provided to me, there were 242. At that same time, contemporaneous with that information so that it is a point in time, the number of separations were 226.

In terms of the attrition rate, working from January forward, the rate was 5.7. It fell to 5.3 in February, then to 5.2 in March, in April it was 5.1, in May it was 5.0 and the figure for June is obviously yet to come to hand. There is a calculation that could be performed, but it will not be accurate for June, of course, until the conclusion of the day of assessment.

**Mr TELFER:** For clarification, are those numbers that you have quoted month by month the proportional amount for that month or—

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Or a rolling total?

**Mr TELFER:** —is this a rolling number for the financial year? What is the latest number for the end of this financial year that you have at hand at the moment?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Those figures are a rolling figure as against the figure for the previous 12 months, as I am advised. So just for clarity: 5.7, 5.3, 5.2, 5.1 and 5.0. I should also emphasise, in terms of attrition rates, that we are clear-eyed about the challenges that South Australia Police faces with respect to recruitment. I have made some opening remarks in relation to those issues and they reflect the nature of the market.

I should also add—because I referenced jurisdictions more broadly—that, in terms of recruitment, these experiences are not only experiences that are being shared in other Australian jurisdictions but also challenges that are experienced in the United Kingdom, Canada and parts of the United States. With respect to attrition rates overall, South Australia has one of the lowest attrition rates in Australia.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, I appreciate the commentary. The question was how many of the FTEs that are in the budget on page 178 are operational officers?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Yes, I very much appreciate us coming to these matters. The important matter to emphasise in terms of attrition is that we believe we are one of the very best in the country. We know, of course, that the Australian Federal Police are doing slightly better there, but we believe that we are one of the best. The Australian Federal Police obviously have a different focus and series of objectives, and operate slightly differently.

In terms of total police, I think it is important for me to indicate that to the member. I think he had indicated that 2023-24 was the figure that he is seeking, which is 4,674. There is a fractional component there as well, but 4,674.20 is the total police FTE cap. It is an approximate figure, because you need to net out obviously cadets being sworn in and those who are separating, but presently, for South Australia Police, we are approximately 160 under the FTE cap. If a single figure was to be used, then you might pick 162.4, but once again we are dealing with humans and so a fractional component is probably not that helpful.

**Mr TELFER:** For clarification, are you saying that 162.4 is the shortfall in the current versus the budgeted?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** That is the forecast shortfall, but in context it is also important to note that we are 105.0 FTE above the cap for cadets, taking into account the timing of recruitment and courses. For present purposes, in an effort to most accurately address the shadow minister's question, the figure that we would represent, based on advice, is that we are approximately 160 to 165 below the establishment figure; and noting that we are 105.0 above the FTE cap for cadets.

**Mr TELFER:** Thank you, minister. So the question asked 10 minutes ago was: how many of the FTEs were operational officers? That number is 4,674, to clarify?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised full-time active sworn is 4,674.20. That is the FTE cap. We have just gone through and broken up the budgeted cap, but the advice I have, once again, is that we are approximately 160 to 165 below, as matters stand, noting the figures which are above full cadets, naturally reflecting the additional activity for recruitment.

**Mr TELFER:** We are 162 below the 4,674—4,512?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think the important thing to emphasise here is that we are offering you a range 160 to 165 because of the way—to assist the shadow minister I am going to turn to the commissioner, but, on the consistent advice I have received, yes, we would want to pick the single figure 162, obviously, which we have offered you, but the more accurate is the range because of the way separations work. Commissioner, I might turn to you.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. I actually think the minister has done a reasonably good job of describing the current status in terms of where we sit against our establishment. We are in the order of about 160 to 165 below where we need to be. With the accelerated recruiting activities that we have in place, particularly with an emphasis on the international recruitment strategy, we are optimistic that we will be able to get back to establishment by the middle of next year.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, how many of that number of FTEs are PSOs, police security officers?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The advice I have received is approximately 270, but to break down some of those figures I am going to turn to the commissioner.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** The current establishment at the end-of-year forecast for police security officers attached to Police Security Services Branch is 140, and our end-of-year forecast is that we will have 129.5 in District Support SEction and in training as a part of our commitment to deliver 189 additional PSOs.

**Mr TELFER:** To clarify, commissioner, the 140 are currently in place?

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Currently sworn.

**Mr TELFER:** 129.5 going through the training at the moment?

**Cmmr STEVENS:** The training process. By the end of the year it will be 129.5 through training.

**Mr TELFER:** By the end of?

**Cmmr STEVENS:** The financial year.

**Mr TELFER:** 2023-24?

**Cmmr STEVENS:** 30 June.

**Mr TELFER:** So that 270 number is the number that within five days would have gone through and completed?

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** Is that 129.5 the total number of PSO recruits for this financial year? Of the 189, are 129 basically the first step, so there are another 62 recruits within this coming financial year?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the shadow minister for the question. I will turn to the commissioner, but just before we do, in terms of the context of overall police employment figures, it is important to emphasise that PSOs are unsworn.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. Just for further classification, they are classified as unsworn, but they are sworn under the relative legislation. We were budgeted for 69 for this financial year, but we are actually ahead of the game, which gives us the number of 129.5, which leaves a shortfall of 59.5 to achieve the target of 189 additional PSOs as a result of that government commitment.

**Mr TELFER:** So the 59.5 will be in this coming financial year, 2024-25?

**Cmmr STEVENS:** That is the target.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, what is the current attrition rate for PSOs? It is a number which is of interest to me because last estimates it was higher than I thought.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Just to clarify in terms of overall figures before we come to PSO attrition, in terms of the way we represent figures for total police employment, although, as the commissioner rightly pointed out, PSOs have certain powers under the Police Act, the calculation is performed having them not in the 'sworn' column. Without that observation, there could end up being some confusion in terms of the budget papers, but I want to provide that for the purposes of clarification, but that is quite distinct as to what powers they might be able to exercise.

In answer to the shadow minister's question, the attrition rate is at 18.1 per cent for PSOs. There are a number of observations that would be important to make there. One that I would make at the outset is that quite a number of these PSOs are coming across into the Constable Development Program, and so that can influence what is effectively a transfer to police and therefore a transfer into the 'sworn' column. So, for example, PSO transfers to the Constable Development Program for 2020-21 were 13; for 2021-22 were 19; for 2022-23 were 23; and for 2023-24, noting that the year is not complete for financial year purposes, is presently 21.

**Mr TELFER:** So the remainder above that are ones who have left?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Through you, Mr Chair, and to the shadow minister's question, I will turn to the commissioner.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. One of our observations is the recruitment of 114 additional PSOs during COVID-19, specifically for medi-hotel related duties, has probably seen an increase in our attrition rate as some of those employees have moved on. That has had an impact on our attrition rate, and, as the minister highlighted, more and more police security officers are seeking to transition into our Constable Development Program.

**Mr TELFER:** Has the minister made the observation in light of that commentary from the commissioner that there is a change in the expectation of PSOs with the expansion of the powers and the scope of the work that PSOs are doing? Has that been something which has been an

advantage to recruitment and retention, or something which, upon reflection, those who are in what was a lesser responsibility may think that the higher responsibility is not for them?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I turn to the commissioner in relation to the operational employment matters.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Our observation is—and I suppose in some respects this is anecdotal, having spoken to several police security officers—the increased responsibilities or diversification of work activities are actually seen as attractive to the current cohort and as a means to marketing the role of police security officer. We have not seen it as a negative in terms of people's desire to stay with a police security officer role.

The other observation I would make is that we are employing people as police security officers who often leave SAPOL and leave that role to pursue career pathways that they were originally intending to follow anyway as a result of tertiary qualifications. Given the lower level of responsibility attached to a police security officer, it is one of those positions we would describe as perhaps attracting people who are more transient in terms of their career expectations with the police.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, how many of the FTE are community constables?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I turn to the commissioner in relation to these operational matters.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** The FTE cap for community constables is 46, but we currently run with a total of about 26 on our books at this point in time. It is a continuing challenge to attract, recruit and retain community constables, particularly in regional locations.

**Mr TELFER:** Just on from that, minister, and it is in conjunction, how are the Aboriginal recruitment targets within SAPOL going? What is the latest update on performance versus those targets?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We certainly do have some data with respect to the question, but to ensure that the house has the full information that the shadow minister is seeking we will take the question on notice and endeavour to return to the house with the full detail that is being sought.

**Mr TELFER:** I appreciate that. Minister, are there any additional programs put in place to try to bridge that gap between the 46 FTEs but the reality of only 26 being in place? What special programs for recruitment of community constables in regional areas in particular are in place?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** South Australia Police is committed to ensuring that it is closing the gap in a range of different ways, not only in terms of employment. It is fully focused on those measures. Some of those measures include NAIDOC Week and an event that follows there. There is an additional focus on ensuring that we are recruiting Aboriginal constables wherever we possibly can. There is as well, and not only, the inaugural First Nations Meet the Employer event facilitated by Workforce Australia and a range of other initiatives.

The other matter that I should emphasise is that South Australia Police is focused not only on closing the gap and Aboriginal recruitment and engagement but also on a range of measures to ensure that recruitment is occurring from other community groups. Those initiatives should not be understated. I also turn to the commissioner in relation to efforts that are underway in regional communities, which are important to this matter.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. As further information, our sworn officers and managers who work in regional locations, particularly Eyre, western and Far North, engage heavily with Indigenous community members, including elders. Part of the brief for those officers is to identify prospective applicants and to support and encourage them to engage with SAPOL. On the APY lands, we do have a stepped opportunity where we can offer liaison officer roles to people who potentially would make good community constables so they can develop an understanding and affinity with South Australia Police with the hope of progressing them through to community constable roles.

**Mr TELFER:** That is good ongoing. Are there any specific, targeted programs or any change of strategy? That number, only 26 in place out of 46, is a startling one. How many of those 46 are designated to the APY, and how many of the gap of 20 are gaps that are within the APY lands?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We are eager to ensure that we are updating the house with the latest possible information in relation to these important matters, so we will take that question on notice and return to the house.

**Mr TELFER:** In the broader sense, when we are considering the APY lands and the challenges faced there at the moment for policing in particular, what are the current FTE positions for the APY lands, and how many of those positions are currently filled?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** On these important, specific staffing and employment matters, I will turn to the commissioner. I would observe at the outset the placement of staff on the APY lands is a key factor in enabling the local community to form relationships with police. There are, of course, a number of positions permanently stationed on the APY lands and if they are not filled then, of course, there is a focus on filling them.

The focus there allows for detailed examination of family violence and criminal investigation response matters across all of the APY communities. One intelligence officer regularly travels to the APY lands from Port Augusta to ensure that that intelligence function can be performed. But, as these are specific employment operational matters, I will turn to the commissioner.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** I can say from the outset that we have nine residential officers who are deployed to the APY lands. They are supported by a contingent of 33 Adelaide-based sworn officers working from State Operations Support Branch. They conduct eight-day rotations into the APY lands. If it is appropriate, I will take on notice the current number of vacancies we have in State Operations Support Branch. There has been some turnover of staff in that area, but I would need to seek advice on the current number of vacancies.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, you impressed then in your words the importance of the ongoing relationship of officers in the APY with the local community. Are the nine residential all fully in place at the moment?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised by the commissioner we are not aware of any vacancies. These officers are sworn in and performing the role, but let us take that question on notice just to triple-check that detail for you.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, are you satisfied with the model where there are 33 Adelaide-based officers rotating through? I understand the nuances of trying to fill positions within the APY and the challenges of that. Is there a mood within SAPOL, or you as minister, to review that rotational roster and put extra efforts or incentives to try to make the police presence within the APY lands more permanent?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In terms of rostering of staff and operational questions, as the shadow minister will appreciate, those have traditionally been matters exclusively within the purview of the police commissioner. Respectful of that division, I will turn to the commissioner.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** The current model of 33 police officers operating from State Operations Support Branch doing a fly-in fly-out rotation onto the APY lands was introduced a couple of years ago, and the need to review the model and implement a different approach came about as a result of the number of vacancies we were carrying and the difficulties of identifying police officers willing to transfer permanently to the APY lands.

It is fair to say that the model, in some respects, does address the staffing issues that we were experiencing. However, we are seeing a reasonable level of turnover within State Operations Support Branch, which is not ideal, and we are currently considering what the future operating model may look like for the APY to ensure the right number of police are on the APY at any given time, that they are the right people to be working on the APY lands, and that they are undertaking the right level of community engagement. Whether or not that means that we revert to a full living on the lands arrangement or adapt our current model remains to be seen, but we are certainly examining the best way to deliver policing services to extremely remote parts of South Australia.

**Mr TELFER:** How many of the FTEs that are referenced on page 178 are on parental leave?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In terms of parental leave across South Australia Police, that is a question we will take on notice and come back to the house.

**Mr TELFER:** How many FTE are on medical or stress leave?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In terms of those matters too, so as to ensure that we have the most accurate figure with respect to the shadow minister's specific question, we do have certain information to hand but we want to make sure we have the most accurate figure, so we will take that on notice too and come back to the house.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, earlier you pre-empted some questions that I did not ask in the first one that you answered, but you talked about the fact that there were 242 recruits but 226 separations, so there is a difference of 16—at least it is a positive, I guess. In relation to the 226 separations, does SAPOL have a process for interviewing to understand the reasons behind the separation of those 226 officers, or over 5 per cent of officers, who are leaving the force annually?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I want to make a number of remarks before I turn to the police commissioner that may, I anticipate, assist the house. The first is that with respect to the recruitment that the shadow minister had identified, the 242, because of the timing of the international recruitment program it is important to keep in mind that recruitment is in two streams: one is largely domestic-based recruitment, the other is international recruitment.

We have earlier indicated there are well over 200 applications that are being processed in the international stream, but all observers of South Australia Police and commentators in this space, I think, would be wise to remember that there are those two streams in terms of the recruitment process. I just emphasise that to the house as we return to some of these matters for examination. I turn to the commissioner on operational and staffing issues.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** In relation to the question about processes for obtaining feedback from separating employees, each employee on advising of their intention to separate, be it through resignation or retirement, is required to submit a specific form known as a PD89. On that form there are several categories that we seek their feedback on in writing. Of course, it is an option only; we cannot compel people who are leaving the organisation to provide feedback.

We also offer all employees the opportunity for an exit interview where they can speak with their manager or supervisor in relation to their experiences with SAPOL, their reasons for leaving and any other feedback they wish to provide. In certain circumstances, based on some of the comments that are provided on the PD89, our people within People, Culture and Wellbeing will reach out to some individuals to seek further information, based on the comments they make either in an exit interview or on their PD89 on separation. But we cannot compel people to provide feedback.

**Mr TELFER:** On that, minister, of the 226 separations, how many of them separated by retirement, resignation or termination?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In terms of the number of police separations and percentage retired, we do have those figures for the shadow minister. It may be useful for me to work through 2022-23 and then 2023-24, keeping in mind that the 2024 year is yet to be complete.

On this particular dataset there is one figure that is one number out or different from the original figure for reasons that are easily explained. It must be that the date of this document is slightly later. The difference in figure is 227 separations. The earlier figure that I outlined to the house I think has a date of the production of the document earlier in June, it seems to me. In any case, it is very similar, so I just make that observation.

**Mr TELFER:** It is only one.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The 2022-23 figures are for 253 total separations, so that is the previous year, and then noting 227 for the purposes of this document for the next year. Resigned is 119, retired is 120 and there is a list of 14 for other, for a total of 253. Then in 2023-24, noting that we are not yet complete with respect to June, there is resigned 117, retired 97 and other is listed at 13: the total figure there 227 as against 226 earlier mentioned. The percentage retired, therefore, is 42.7 per cent on 2023-24, but noting that that dataset is incomplete.

**Mr TELFER:** Something that would interest me, and you may have to take it on notice and whether it is something that is easily collated or not, are the separations from SAPOL according to rank. Is that information that is at hand or something you may have to take on notice?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We will take that question on notice in relation to 2023-24. It is probably convenient to do it that way in any case because, obviously, the dataset is not yet complete, but it will shortly be complete.

**Mr TELFER:** With the amount of separations, the 226, 227 number, are there any programs that either SAPOL as an organisation or the government have put in place or are considering to aid with the retention of officers? Are there any measures that are being considered or being put in place to try to stem that flow of officers leaving the force?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Retention of experienced police officers is a very significant matter. It is a significant matter not only for South Australia Police but it is important to emphasise that it is a significant and important matter for police forces right throughout Australia and, of course, overseas. We earlier discussed that South Australia Police has, we believe, the second lowest attrition rate in the country, but that does not mean that there should not be focus in relation to these issues. There are certain measures in place for, for example, regional policing.

I might turn to the commissioner, though, because these are questions that equally bear on operational employment matters overall, except to say, as I have already said, that we are very closely monitoring the attrition rate and separation rate, and also very closely monitoring the recruitment rate in terms of the cadets, which we have discussed in some detail today and, equally, are very focused on the program of international recruitment. I will turn to the commissioner.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. We do find retention of currently serving police officers to be more of a challenge in some respects than the efforts or the ability to enhance our marketing and recruiting for new employees. The current enterprise bargaining process, I would expect, will place a particular focus on retention opportunities, and encouraging current serving officers to remain with the organisation.

**Mr TELFER:** Just on that then, minister, are you playing a role in the enterprise bargaining process currently underway?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The enterprise bargaining process is handled from central government and the commissioner's office, to some extent. There is no direct involvement of any minister, I am advised, in relation to that process when it comes to police because of the historical separation between operational policing and what might be described as the political sphere.

**Mr TELFER:** So to clarify, no minister, at any level, not just you as police minister?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think it is right to say that I am closely interested in the process, but I do not have a direct day-to-day involvement in that process, nor have any previous police ministers, I understand and am advised.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, you referred to the overseas recruitment process that is happening at the moment, and the over 200 applicants. Is there a targeted goal, a percentage number of expectation from those applicants that you expect might be successful in going through the recruitment process?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In terms of a target, I am not sure that I would necessarily describe it that way, and I would also add to my comments that the 312 target, with respect to local recruits, is the maximum throughput of the academy. In terms of the aim or intention, the intention is to recruit approximately 200 officers from what I have described as the international recruitment stream and, I am advised, that so far from the pool 12 have accepted. Obviously, as earlier indicated, there is a real focus in terms of that stream for the second portion of this calendar year, as against the financial year.

**Mr TELFER:** You referred to the 312 maximum throughput of the academy. Does that 312 number include the training of the PSOs?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The answer is reasonably straightforward, Mr Chair, through you, and in relation to the shadow minister's question. That is just sworn police officers, the police cadets.

**Mr TELFER:** The process for the additional training necessary for the overseas recruits: where is the capacity within the academy or is this going to be a separate training program outside the academy?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** It is an important question, and I will turn to the police commissioner in relation to operational matters there.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. Historically, the academy has run in the order of five to six Constable Development Programs per year. With the accelerated recruiting target, and the requirement to return to establishment, we have escalated that to between 11 and 12 courses a year, just for the Constable Development Program. The emphasis on the international recruitment strategy in some respects offsets the challenge of attracting and selecting local recruits, the reason for that being that local recruiting of people who do not have any previous policing experience requires a training duration of 9½ months before they are deployed fully operationally.

The expectation with our international recruits, given their previous policing experience—and this includes interstate police—is once we have established a cohort of officers transitioning into South Australia Police it will be in the order of 15 weeks, which means we can process many more experienced officers more quickly than attracting local recruits. Having said that, there is still a strong emphasis on local recruiting to ensure that we have South Australians joining the South Australia Police.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, is there a budgeted cost or an expectation of how much it will cost for each overseas recruit to basically land in Australia from go to whoa through the process pre the training and the like?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As the house will be aware, there has been a significant investment in police recruitment and PSO recruitment overall. In terms of police recruitment, an additional more than \$12 million has been injected to ensure there are sufficient additional resources. In terms of police PSOs, there has been more than \$80 million. We will take on notice the question in terms of the individual estimated costs for the training of cadets. I appreciate the question.

**Mr TELFER:** What is the percentage attrition of cadets going through the Constable Development Program? How many drop out as a percentage of those who start the course?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The overall picture, I think it is fair to say, is this: in terms of the number of cadets who commence the program, the attrition rate is exceptionally low. On occasion, it may be the case that a cadet drops out of that program for reason of injury or other reason, and in those instances may rejoin a later program. In terms of the actual percentage figure for dropouts over the last financial year, noting that the financial year is yet to be completed, we would want to have a close look at whether there are any cadets later in course, if that makes sense—and we can come back on that figure—but I am advised for present purposes that it is particularly low.

**The CHAIR:** I will go to the member for Waite for one question; she has been patiently waiting.

**Ms HUTCHESON:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 180, line 4. What are SAPOL's plans for the Naracoorte Police Station?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the member for Waite for her question. I also appreciate her very strong interest in policing matters not only in relation to policing of rail stations but rail safety overall. In terms of the Naracoorte Police Station, the station is an ageing asset, and it is in the ownership of the Minister for Police. The original building on the site was the courthouse in Naracoorte, which was extended to provide a new courtroom and waiting and witness facilities in 1954. The police station utilised the old section of the courthouse, and there were additions to the facility in 1972 and 1996.

The asset has faced continual building and structural issues, noting the original construction failed to include a damp course, which has created consequential damage to the facility at the base level, noting the local climatic conditions in Naracoorte. The aged building and associated infrastructure is no longer fit for purpose and is no longer supporting modern-day security requirements, technological capacity and space for a growing and modern workforce. The station



also fails to meet required standards for cell infrastructure. They are presently placed externally to the building, to those who are familiar with the asset. Delivering the new Naracoorte Police Station infrastructure to replace the existing deteriorating asset will enable a fit-for-purpose, modern facility to support regional policing operations in this key South-East location.

I will also acknowledge the advocacy of a number of members, but most particularly I think it is important to emphasise the advocacy of the member for MacKillop, who has been fierce and determined to raise the importance of not only this issue but a range of other emergency services and policing issues with me since I assumed these portfolio responsibilities.

The construction of the station will improve South Australia Police's public-facing police station amenities in line with universal design principles for accessibility and enhance service delivery for the community. The Department for Infrastructure and Transport building projects division will be engaged for delivery of the new police station asset according to the government's project implementation process.

A new facility that incorporates modern, environmentally sustainable design in a secure and robustly constructed space could be achieved by approximately, I am advised, June 2027. Design would be in line with SAPOL's accommodation standards, including hard and soft interview rooms, cell complexes, a gym, wellbeing rooms, exhibit storage, appropriate male and female amenities and lockers, and secure car parking to provide fit-for-purpose infrastructure.

I should at this point observe that in terms of South Australia Police's overall property assets, a number of buildings would have come into the portfolio. Some are legacy assets—historical buildings, buildings which have been designed in different ways and not necessarily for policing, and some police assets which have been designed specifically for policing purposes. Importantly, this investment will ensure that there is a police station in Naracoorte that is designed to accommodate modern policing needs. I am particularly advised that the new build will include internal cells of significant improvement over the existing facility, which has cells, as earlier mentioned, external to the police station, resulting in limitations for oversight and risks for work health and safety for staff.

In terms of the budget impact, budget estimates have been provided to the Treasury for an investment decision in relation to new police station infrastructure at Naracoorte, and I am very pleased that, as a new investing measure, a decision has been taken to fund a new police station.

I think it is also important to emphasise, by way of background, the inherent limitations and deterioration of the existing police station, as well as the requirements for what has euphemistically been described as a 'temporary decant', will of course mean that there will not be redevelopment of the existing site, but the construction of a new facility will require, ideally, a single-move transition. But, as I say, the decision has now been taken, and it is very important. If there is to be land acquisition, then that will commence through Renewal SA as a priority. The new Naracoorte station will reposition the cells, as I have earlier indicated. I think it might be useful for me to turn briefly to the commissioner to add any additional matters in relation to Naracoorte policing.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** I think it is probably no secret that the facilities at Naracoorte are long overdue for replacement. We have reached that point in time where there is no further capability to maintain the existing asset, so the decision to fund the new Naracoorte Police Station is obviously well received by the staff at Naracoorte.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, this will be a greenfield site—is that the expectation?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** Will it have an increased number of staff with the upgrade of the facility?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The new facility will be able to accommodate any necessary future growth and will be fit for purpose. However, it is important to observe that the operational decisions in terms of police staffing then for Naracoorte will naturally be a question for June 2027 or when the facility is constructed. But I emphasise that it is intended to be fit for purpose and to allow for all necessary future policing operations.

**Mr TELFER:** I respect that. Obviously, the planning for the facility itself as a standalone is important. I think it is also important that there is an understanding, not just within this chamber but

within the community, if there is a plan in conjunction with that to alter the arrangements perhaps with some of the South-East policing. This is why I was trying to get an understanding whether there would be a growth within Naracoorte, an increased number, whether there is going to be growth overall within the South-East or whether there potentially could be a consolidation of other officers from further out within a new state-of-the-art fit-for-purpose facility.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think at the outset I will observe that the new Naracoorte site will be home to approximately 14 sworn and one unsworn staff, and that is essentially the current complement. Once again, in terms of future arrangements and operational decisions, those would be a question for the police commissioner of the day.

**Mr TELFER:** I would like to get an understanding of the work or otherwise of asset management of facilities within SAPOL. Has there been any asset assessment planning work done to ascertain the short to medium-term work necessary to replace ageing SAPOL infrastructure and buildings? Obviously, within regional South Australia, it is very prominent. You highlight that Naracoorte is well overdue but there are other facilities around it. Is there a comprehensive body of work that has been done by SAPOL as far as their asset management goes?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The short answer to the question is yes, there are of course decisions that are taken in terms of the examination of the existing asset base. As I earlier indicated, the assets within the South Australia Police portfolio are legacy assets, some of which are historical buildings. There are buildings that have come into the property portfolio that were not constructed specifically for policing purposes, and there are a range of facilities and buildings that have been constructed specifically for policing purposes. It is right to say that South Australia Police does have a focus both in terms of maintenance and also the improvement of its overall asset position going forward.

**Mr TELFER:** As someone who has experience in local government, obviously with asset management plans and the like, I am assuming the working document for the SAPOL assets obviously has to be done in conjunction with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, who have the technical ownership of some of these buildings. Is that work around the prioritisation and timelines of replacement something that gets considered at each annual budget when it comes to looking at allocating the necessary funds to maintain and/or upgrade facilities?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The answer is yes.

**Mr TELFER:** To go back to my previous line of questioning, minister, I refer back to the core numbers of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3 and pages 178 to 180. I would like the committee to get an insight into any further update you can give about the policing review being undertaken by the Premier's Taskforce, the timing of those aspects and, in particular, when a report from the Premier's Taskforce will be made public.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As members present are aware, the incoming state government committed to a Premier's Taskforce. That commitment was made to ensure, as I have earlier indicated to the house, that the incoming government could be fully apprised of all the matters of concern to police and all the matters that a new government would need to be aware of to ensure that the new government could plan and invest for policing needs.

It is important for me to observe that the cabinet has taken through the budget process a number of significant decisions. It is not possible, of course, for me—nor would members present expect me—to reflect on the decision-making processes inside cabinet, but I think it is obvious that there has been a series of decisions of government that are reflected over consecutive budgets. I have earlier indicated to the house that I have been very grateful for the advice that has been provided to me by police, the expertise that they have shared with me and the information as well that they have shared with government and cabinet through the Premier's Taskforce process.

I have earlier indicated that the Premier's Taskforce contains material that continues to inform government decision-making at the very highest levels. There are decisions in this budget, which I am sure we will touch upon in the remaining time that is available to us today, that reflect the information that has been gathered as part of that process, and government will continue to make decisions based on that process.

**Mr TELFER:** When was the last time the task force met?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised that the last meeting was in March 2023.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, being 15 months since the last meeting of the Premier's Taskforce, is there a risk, or are you concerned, that work that is done in formulation, and input that has been given to the task force, is out of date and will need to be revisited because of the ever-dynamic changing nature of policing in South Australia?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The matters examined by the Premier's Taskforce are long-term in nature. They relate not only to acute matters that the government or then opposition anticipated it might encounter on coming to government but also to the decisions that would need to be made over multiple budget cycles and would need to continue to be made. As evidenced by this budget and the previous budget, important decisions are being made to ensure that there are sufficient resources, for example—but not only—with respect to police recruitment and, of course, those budget measures which are detailed most obviously in the present budget line items that we are examining.

Meaning no disrespect to the shadow minister, obviously this is not necessarily a matter that is squarely on its face within the budget line items that we are examining, except to say I have indicated to the house—and will continue to indicate to the house—that the information gathered as part of this process will continue to inform budget decisions that will be made going forward.

**Mr TELFER:** Are there aspects of the recommendations that have been made to the task force that are not progressing because the task force report has not been finalised?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** With great respect to the shadow minister we are now very much in speculative territory that falls outside of the budget line items, and although I have been reasonably generous to the shadow minister—

**Mr TELFER:** With the guidance of the Chair.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** —I would require him at this moment to identify the budget line item to which he is referring.

**Mr TELFER:** I would say that the overall expenditure of SAPOL is very much a pertinent aspect. Minister, can you give me an insight into the status of any review into the regional policing model?

**The CHAIR:** Can the member for Flinders please remind me what program we are operating under?

**Mr TELFER:** Yes, the overall program net cost of services summary on page 179, which is over \$1 billion, Chair.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As I understand it, we are referring to matters that concluded in 2019 and this is a budget that is much further afield than that. Whilst I have been very, very generous to the shadow minister and will continue to seek to do so, I think it may be that we would need to reflect on the current budget line items.

**Mr TELFER:** So there is no insight into any future review of the regional policing model?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think I will refer to my previous answer.

**Mr TELFER:** I will take that as a no. We will continue on those same pages, speaking specifically about officer morale and increased pressure of workforce shortages. We were reflecting on the FTE aspects. What action is the government taking to protect the mental health and wellbeing of first responders and SAPOL staff in particular?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The pressures that are placed on police officers in terms of modern policing are real, and those pressures can be compounded in circumstances where there is a real need to ensure that South Australia Police is returning to establishment figures. Both South Australia Police and the government do understand that there has been a significant focus, and needs to be a significant and ongoing focus, on these matters.

By way of more general information, the Employee Assistance Section sits within the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Branch and does provide a statewide, professional psychological, medical and social work support service with the aim of maintaining or improving the physical and mental health of all South Australia Police employees. This incorporates collaborative work with employees and local managers to mitigate risk and encourage safe and healthy workplace practices. The EAS also provides a consultancy training and assessment service in the areas of physical and psychological mental health and wellbeing.

It is important for me to observe that the South Australia Police executive leadership team are signatories to the Government of South Australia's Mentally Healthy Workplaces Statement of Commitment, along with officers in charge and managers in districts and regions.

SAPOL's overarching policy relates to EAS and its mental health response in general order psychological health management. The general order applies to all South Australia Police workplaces and workers and, amongst other things, aims to ensure that workers experiencing trauma are offered adequate and targeted resources and also that workers are aware of the processes to access the support that is available.

The EAS is located within the South Australia Police headquarters; however, employees of the section travel and make use of electronic means of communication, of course, to connect with all South Australia Police employees, as required. Located within the EAS is the psychosocial team, comprising psychologist and social workers. The team aims to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, the physical, psychological and, indeed, social wellbeing of employees within the workplace is maintained.

The team has experience in counselling and can provide support as well as direct employees to appropriate external services. The team aims to assist South Australia Police to deliver safe, healthy and harmonious working environments to all employees so that they can perform their duties effectively and develop to their full potential. The team can and does assist employees with work-related issues, for example: work-related stress, financial issues, interpersonal relationship issues, critical incident debriefing, harassment and bullying, staff performance problems, suicidal ideation, sexual assault, anger management, and grief and loss issues, as well as non-work related matters such as family concerns and relationship breakdowns.

An on-call EAS psychosocial service is available for all employees 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through South Australia Police communications. There are other matters that we could reflect on, but I want to respect the shadow minister's opportunity to ask additional questions.

**Mr TELFER:** Ongoing from that comprehensive answer, could the minister please advise how many employees are captured under the Employee Assistance Section Policy 14 who are in roles where there is a high psychological demand, and whether each of these employees have had their required annual psychological reviews over the last 10 years?

**The CHAIR:** Member for Flinders—

**Mr TELFER:** This one, sir, is 189.

**The CHAIR:** No, that is not the question. I have been fairly lenient and given you quite a bit of scope. I just remind you that questions have to relate to the budget and you have now asked a question, if I have understood correctly, going back 10 years. That is way out of the scope of the budget.

**Mr TELFER:** Sorry, to clarify it, Chair, this is around the management of the process. Obviously, the ongoing management of data does stretch back to 10 years; that is why I am asking the question.

**The CHAIR:** I am not convinced. I will let this question go ahead, but I just remind you that you need to make sure your questions are about this budget and actually have some sort of financial aspect to them.

**Mr TELFER:** I respect your guidance, sir.

**The CHAIR:** Okay.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Thank you, Chair, for your reflections in relation to the budget line items that are open for examination. We are endeavouring to be reasonably generous to the shadow minister because of the importance of these matters, but we are also anxious to ensure that all members present have the opportunity to examine the budget line items. I understand that certain of these matters were examined in the Budget and Finance Committee, which might well illustrate the appropriateness of that forum—if I am right about that matter—but in any case I turn to the—

**Mr TELFER:** It might have been a select committee.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Very well. In any case, to assist the shadow minister, I turn to the police commissioner with respect to these operational matters.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. We have responded to a question of this type in relation to annual psychological assessment for employees working in areas identified as having particular risks associated with exposure to different elements that are inherently part of policing. The question we responded to specifically asked how many members have an obligation to undertake an annual psychological review and the number of officers who were overdue for that review. The proportion of officers who were overdue was very low and we are happy to provide that detail on notice. The reasons for their failure to comply with the annual psychological review requirements were also articulated in that response and we are happy to provide that.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister—and this is reflecting, obviously, as I said for page 189, on ongoing employee management and probably consideration for an investment both within SAPOL and any directive from the minister—are you aware if SAPOL has a centralised system to monitor compliance with the annual psychological reviews?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised that a very similar question was asked in another forum and I anticipate that the answer that will be provided to that question, which is presently on notice, will assist in informing the shadow minister with respect to the matters that he is now raising.

**Mr TELFER:** Is there money within the current budget to be able to establish such a centralised system?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** It is important to emphasise the matters that I have already detailed in relation to psychological and other support available to police officers. The budget measures are well known and outlined in the budget, but can I say that these matters are of ongoing significance to South Australia Police, and if it would assist the shadow minister we can turn to certain other of those supports which I broke off from detailing in my earlier answer.

**Mr TELFER:** I turn now to page 180 within the Agency Statements, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, specifically looking at the South Australia Police barracks relocation. What is the final budget expenditure expectation for the Thebarton barracks relocation?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think it is important to outline this matter in context. In the 2022-23 state budget, the government committed \$2 million for planning the relocation of South Australia Police from, for example, Thebarton barracks, with the budget held by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. The early \$2 million planning budget has been fully expended in early planning activities. In addition to the original \$2 million planned funds, the government has to date formally approved \$140 million in capital funds to support the relocation of the SA Police business units. We touched on certain of these matters in an opening statement.

I can say as well that there have been efforts to secure the lease of Blackburn House, providing a lease incentive as well. The lease incentive is incorporated in the Blackburn House project, delivering fit-out of the premises to multiple floors through relocation of several barracks units. The balance of the incentive has been applied to Eastern District police station fit-out works to vacant level 2 of Blackburn House, with one final tenancy on the ground floor of Blackburn House remaining, which is subject to a government funding submission. When the ground floor tenancy for the Eastern District police station front of house is completed in future, the building, it is anticipated, will be fully occupied.

The budget for the temporary relocation of the SA Police band and a warehouse storage solution is still to be determined, but efforts are certainly underway to work with all the relevant

business units. The capital works budget is currently supplemented with a \$4.26 million for new lease costs pending further lease budget allocations for Netley Commercial Park leases.

I am advised that it is also important to emphasise that increased operating costs primarily generated by dispersing Thebarton barracks business units across multiple sites are still being finalised at this time but, to emphasise, the formally approved budget allocation from government at this time is \$140 million in capital funds to support the relocation of business units. I will just consult for a moment before completing my answer.

I am advised, as earlier foreshadowed, that certain of these work streams are yet to be completed and are ongoing, but for the purposes of the present line item, we have certainly explored with you the funding allocation.

**Mr TELFER:** The \$140 million, is that adequate budget allocation to relocate all of the 15 business units that are needing to be dispersed from the government's decision to relocate the Thebarton barracks team?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As additional work streams and planning for those work streams are not complete, it would not be possible for me to speculate in relation to other matters at this time. We can confirm that the present capital allocation is \$140 million in capital funds to support the relocation of the business units that we have earlier discussed.

**Mr TELFER:** How many of the 15 business units are encapsulated within the \$140 million capital investment? For example, how many locations and arrangements still need to be finalised for what number of remaining business units?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We have earlier indicated that forecasting work is still underway, and it would be speculative for me to indicate a future figure. Approximately 14 of the 15 business units have completed their workstreams, if that is the correct way to describe the work that has been undertaken. I am sure that this is a matter that will be examined in the course of future budgets, but I am very mindful of the standing orders, and also a convention in relation to the examination of these budget line items. That is the conclusion of my answer in relation to this matter.

**Mr TELFER:** Can you clarify the one business unit? That is the band you referred to earlier?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** The budgeted amount for the development of the Gepps Cross site: what is that figure?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised it is \$93 million.

**Mr TELFER:** Does the \$93 million include the arrangements that need to be vested in for the city staging area or is that a separate amount? If so, what is that amount?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised that that component is approximately \$11.9 million.

**Mr TELFER:** On top of the \$93 million?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Yes.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, the last information that I received on this project from the Treasurer was that the capital amount was \$162½ million. Is this number incorrect or is this the challenges of the separation between what Treasury and Finance are doing as opposed to what SAPOL are involved in?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Obviously, I am not going to speculate on other remarks that the Treasurer may have provided at an earlier time but, looking over the budget line item, the advice I have is the advice that has been expressed.

**Mr TELFER:** Very good. I will refer the minister to the *Hansard* from last week. Minister, we will continue on with page 181 of the same budget paper and talking about public safety and the importance of maintaining community safety. What is the status of the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce, which, on my understanding, was the taskforce to initiate a response to CBD crime in particular?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In terms of the specific outcomes and focus of Operation Paragon and Operation Measure, I will turn to the Commissioner for Police.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. In terms of clarification, South Australia Police does not have a task force known as the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce. My understanding is that that may be a task force comprised of multiagency activity. South Australia Police is running two operations within the CBD and in a metropolitan area focused on antisocial behaviour and other crime activity. The first one of that is Operation Paragon, which runs from Eastern District.

The purpose of Operation Paragon is to actually support the work of the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce in terms of antisocial behaviour. It deals with public safety issues within the CBD environment, including homelessness. It is comprised of a sergeant and 10 other ranks, as I said, working from Eastern District, supporting people who are at risk of becoming victims of crime or committing other types of crime.

That is supplemented by the work that we are doing within the CBD in relation to other antisocial behaviour activity and shop theft. Whilst we do not have a dedicated operation, we are surging additional police resources into those environments based on intelligence, the most recent activity being just in the last week where we ran a dedicated shop theft operation resulting in significant numbers of arrests and reports of people for those offences. That has proven to be very successful. In some respects, that is supporting the work that we have in relation to Operation Measure, which targets shop theft and which relies heavily on collaboration with the retail sector, private security and police.

**Mr TELFER:** Thank you for your clarification, commissioner. It seems as though there is always a bit of uncertainty around the titles of some of these operations and the like. I am happy for the minister to keep seeking clarification. Operation Paragon on my understanding is an ongoing operation, so there is no end-date time frame, and the resources that you highlighted of sergeant and 10 other ranks is ongoing and there is not a need that you see, minister, to add to that?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised that Operation Measure and Operation Paragon are ongoing operations. If it is necessary for additional specialist police to assist those operations then they will be, I am advised, directed or seconded to those operations, as may be necessary, based on the circumstances, intelligence or other policing decisions that might be necessary at the time.

**Mr TELFER:** So if and when that does happen, where will those resources come from?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I might turn to the commissioner in relation to those operational matters.

**Cmmr STEVENS:** Thank you, minister. Depending on the nature of the concerns that we are addressing of additional resources to support the established Operation Paragon, members would come from our mounted operations section, our dog operations, the Security Response Section, STAR Group and, depending on whether it is associated with other events being held in the CBD, we may call upon resources from other districts to provide the appropriate level of policing response necessary to ensure that we are on top of any antisocial behaviour.

If I may clarify, the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce is, on my understanding, managed by the Department of Human Services. Its purpose is to address antisocial behaviour and homelessness within the CBD and SAPOL plays a critical part in supporting that whole-of-government approach.

**Mr TELFER:** Thank you. It sort of folds into my next lot of questions, also reflecting on the questions around Thebarton barracks. When is SAPOL required to be vacated out of the Thebarton barracks?

**The CHAIR:** Member for Flinders, I think that question does go a bit far, but I will leave it to the minister if he wishes to respond. If the minister does not wish to respond, that will be fine as well.

**Mr TELFER:** Sir, I am referring to page 180, the line 'SA Police Barracks relocation'.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, I understand that, but unless you can couch the question in financial terms, it goes to a policy matter, which is really a question for everyday question time or other

committees, not for this session. I have given you quite a bit of leeway. I think you are going too far now.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Thank you, Chair, for your reflections in relation to the importance of our focus on budget line items. With respect to the shadow minister's question, importantly, I am advised that access is being provided progressively to the site to ensure that the Women's and Children's Hospital team can perform that work which needs to be performed as against the time frame that is required for the project. Of course, it is obvious to motorists passing by the site, as I myself did very recently, the level, intensity and scope of the work that is presently being performed on that site.

**Mr TELFER:** Is the minister satisfied, following the budget line 'SA Police Barracks relocation', page 180, that that relocation budget allocation amount will be appropriately expended to facilitate the SAPOL move to those new facilities that they are being relocated into to suit the time frames necessary?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the shadow minister for the question. Intending all great respect to the shadow minister and endeavouring to assist him as best we can, of course the question invites a degree of speculation on my part.

**Mr TELFER:** That is what a budget is, sir.

**The CHAIR:** No, the budget does not do that. The budget gives some estimates. I think the minister is quite correct that it actually expects an opinion, which he can only provide to the extent that it is in the budget already. So the minister can take it on notice or move on.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think I would refer to my existing answer.

**Mr TELFER:** Alright, I will continue on page 180. I will look to the 'Police Records Management System—Stages 2 to 4'. There has been a delay in this project. I am interested in the reasons for the significant delay.

**The CHAIR:** That question had some commentary. Seriously—

**Mr TELFER:** In the introduction to the estimates process—

**The CHAIR:** No, let me finish. The question is okay. You said 'significant delay'. That is commentary. 'Significant' is an opinion, not a fact. Can you just rephrase your question, please?

**Mr TELFER:** Sir, I appreciate your guidance. I thought, with the direction at the introduction of this, it is a relatively informal aspect. There has been plenty of opinion and speculation that has been included.

**The CHAIR:** The other thing I also said is that the normal rules apply, which means questions are questions, and questions do not have commentary in them.

**Mr TELFER:** I will rephrase then, sir. What is the reason for the delay on this project?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The program to which the shadow minister refers was significantly impacted by COVID-19, and that impact was caused or resulted from program staff being redirected, as was necessary and urgent at that time, to COVID-19 emergency response and operational duties, along with staff isolation and absence due to COVID-19 illnesses. This extended the duration of the program. A further delay has been experienced due to requirement to address certain data held in a legacy system to make it suitable for migration, as is a difficulty sometimes experienced in ICT programs of this type.

**Mr TELFER:** How many FTE are expected to be required to deliver this project?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised that a mixture of sworn, unsworn and other staff are assisting the completion of the Shield program.

**Mr TELFER:** How many?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** That is a matter that we will take on notice. It is very specific in relation to a particular ICT program that the shadow minister is examining.



**Mr TELFER:** What is the planned timeline for this project?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The budget papers indicate that the program will move to what is being described as program management rather than program implementation in June 2025.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Playford has been quietly trying to get my attention.

**Mr FULBROOK:** In relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 182—to be quite precise, line 2—can the minister provide an update on the National Firearms Register?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the member for his question and his particular focus and interest in relation to firearms management and policing matters overall. To date, I am able to inform the house that the Firearms Control System replacement project has delivered the implementation of a customer portal for firearms dealers to submit records of incoming and outgoing firearms movements. Since launch, more than 93,000 have been processed electronically. Integration with the SA government's mySAGOV platform enables licensees to view and display their current firearms licence information via the myGov mobile application.

Integration of the current mainframe Firearms Control System, described as the FCS, within the Australian Firearms Information Network, referred to within policing as AFIN, ensures current data related to firearms registered within South Australia is available to other state and national jurisdictions via the AFIN program. The procurement of a supplier to undertake the implementation configuration of a digital capability platform to deliver the business capability component is nearing completion.

I am pleased to inform the member and the house that design work is expected to commence right about now, with the solution anticipated to be operational in approximately December 2025, noting the complexities of programs of this type. On 6 December 2023, the national cabinet agreed to implement the National Firearms Register over four years, beginning 2024-25. SAPOL will not be able to contribute to or benefit from the capabilities of the NFR without, of course, the full operational system coming online. The new system will deliver benefits in terms of officer and public safety outcomes and will allow access to firearms data in near real time. As well, it will deliver a better service to licence holders by decreasing turnaround times for licence applications, renewals and registrations from several weeks to days or potentially less.

To support the program, the SAPOL firearms program itself has been initiated. This program incorporates the firearms control assistant project as well as a number of other initiatives. South Australia Police will need to undertake to support the national objectives, including system changes, data integration and potential legislative amendments. These matters are of close interest to the national Police Ministers Council and are also of close interest to police commissioners around the country. Full integration of the various platforms is anticipated to be completed by June 2028.

In terms of the budget impact with respect to the inquiries made by the member for Playford, the 2018-19 state budget provided funding for the development and implementation of a new firearms control system. The funding is derived from a levy on fees and charges under the Firearms Act. It is estimated to generate \$2.25 million, with the remainder amount, \$3.01 million, funded from within existing SAPOL resources. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$5.26 million. On 27 April, the commonwealth Attorney-General announced that \$161.3 million has been approved in the federal budget over four years for the National Firearms Register.

I am cognisant of the fact that the time we are sharing together is coming to a close. I thank the member for his question and note the importance of this matter.

**The CHAIR:** The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the SA Police complete. Further examination of the proposed payments for SA Police will continue after the break.

*Sitting suspended from 15:31 to 15:45.*

**DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT, \$1,167,341,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND**  
**TRANSPORT, \$7,946,000**

**Minister:**

Hon. D.R. Cregan, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Special Minister of State.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr J. Whelan, Chief Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Ms E. Kokar, Executive Director, Transport Policy and Regulation, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

Ms S. Clark, Director, Road Safety, Policy and Reform, Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

**The CHAIR:** It is now the time allocated for this committee to sit. I have not been notified of any changes to committee membership. The portfolio we are dealing with is Road Safety. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. The payments we are examining are the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, Administered Items for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, South Australia Police, and Administered Items for South Australia Police. I declare the proposed payments open for examination.

I invite the minister to introduce his advisers and also to make a preliminary statement, if he wishes to, of no greater than 10 minutes. I will then invite the opposition spokesperson, who I believe is the member for Hartley, to make some comments or go straight to questions. Minister, the floor is yours.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Thank you, Chair. I am joined today by Jon Whelan, Chief Executive of the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. To my right is Sarah Clark, Director, Road Safety, Policy and Reform. To my far left on the table is Emma Kokar, Executive Director, Transport, Policy and Regulation.

The South Australian government has continued its strong commitment to improving road safety outcomes over the 2023-24 financial year. This is a very high priority, and of course has been a priority for former governments as well. Until April of this year, ministerial oversight of this important work was under the Hon. Joe Szakacs, who is now Minister for Trade and Investment, Local Government, and Veterans Affairs. I thank Joe for his impressive work and dedication to road safety.

The 2023 calendar year was tragic in the road safety area, with 117 people losing their lives. This was the highest number of lives lost in a single calendar year since 2021 and followed the 2022 calendar year which recorded 71 lives lost, the fewest lives lost on our roads since records were taken.

Beyond the alarming number of lives lost in 2023, there were 124 serious injuries and road crashes across the state, again impacting broad sections of the community. All of this tells us that there is still a good deal of focus required and that road safety measures must be continuous, considered and in line with evidence of what works to deliver effective outcomes.

In view of that, the South Australian government has been working towards delivering the measures set up in South Australia's Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2025. The action plan reflects an evidence-based, safe system approach to protect our community, with a focus on actions that will progressively transform our road network and bring about cultural change in road user behaviour.

The plan is being delivered by multiple agencies, including the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, South Australia Police, SA Health, Department of Treasury and Finance, and

SafeWork SA, in collaboration with key road safety stakeholders including the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, local government, the Department for Education, school leadership and, of course, emergency service organisations.

A key component of the action plan is accountability, and in recent weeks we have released the Road Safety Action Plan Annual Report 2023. This is the first of a series of annual reports that act as an important accountability mechanism, reporting on actions undertaken over a 12-month period and against the targets and safety performance indicators reflected in the action plan.

South Australia's Road Safety Action Plan sets out actions across 10 focus areas: schools and local places; public transport, cycling and walking; motorcyclists; Aboriginal road users; road user behaviour; road safety in the workplace; regional and remote areas; heavy vehicles; vehicle technology, of course, is also a focus; and research and data must continue to be a focus as well.

The May 2023 federal budget provided \$84 million towards a new road safety program as a key new measure. The state government provided \$84 million in the 2023 Mid-Year Budget Review, bringing the total budget to \$168 million to be spent across 2023-24 and 2025-26. Of this, a total of \$131 million will be spent to increase the star rating of regional roads from one or two stars to three stars. Works commenced on the Mallee Highway and Thiele Highway in April 2024, on the Mannum Road and RM Williams Way in May 2024, and Lincoln Highway in early June 2024.

A total of \$37 million within the \$168 million national road safety program has been committed across four programs of work: new pedestrian and cyclist crossings, pedestrian safety upgrades to existing intersections, school zone projects and safer strategic bikeways. Work on these projects will commence in the second half of 2024. We have also made a further commitment to the Aboriginal road safety and driving licensing program, On the Right Track, with the service expanded to multiple outback areas and the APY lands communities now having access to medium rigid driving lessons and testing. The program also continues to provide child restraints, safe installation and education on the use and installation of child restraints.

Distraction is one of the leading causes of lives lost and serious injuries on South Australian roads. Between 2018 and 2022, South Australia Police road crash data listed inattention as the contributing factor in 42 per cent of lives lost and 45 per cent of serious injury collisions. The introduction of mobile phone detection cameras in South Australia aims to detect and deter distracted drivers who illegally use a mobile phone while driving.

Following a successful trial of the technology in 2023, mobile phone detection cameras have been installed at five priority locations across Adelaide: the Southern Expressway at Darlington, South Road at Torrensville, the North-South Motorway at Regency Park, Port Road at Hindmarsh and Port Wakefield Road, Gepps Cross. Installation commenced in March 2024 and was completed in May 2024. South Australia Police commenced the testing phase in April 2024 and a three-month grace period commenced, as members are aware, on 19 June 2024. Registered vehicle owners and drivers detected using their mobile phones will, from now on, receive a warning letter; as members are aware, that grace period ends on 18 September, with enforcement beginning on 19 September 2024.

As part of the 2023-24 state budget, from 1 July 2023 the expiation fee for drivers detected illegally using a mobile phone while driving is \$540 plus the \$99 victims of crime levy and three demerit points to align with the expiation fee for a red light traffic offence. Any fine revenue received will be paid into the Community Road Safety Fund for expenditure on road safety measures to benefit the community.

Reaching directly into the community is a critical component of road safety. The department's THINK! Road Safety partnership program is a South Australian government initiative aimed at road safety being at the core of every club, business and organisation, to influence individuals and to achieve cultural change. That change is intended to be achieved through supporting community road safety initiatives, helping local organisations address road safety at a grassroots level, creating a range of organisations and sectors where road safety becomes a key part of the way they operate and leveraging partnerships organisations' influence and reach into the community.

THINK! Road Safety is aligned to national and state road safety strategies, with identified target audiences including regional and remote road users; vulnerable road users, including older road users; young drivers and riders; cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians; and Aboriginal road users. The program is structured with a hybrid approach to its partnership activities to ensure delivery of grassroots community funding through a new THINK! Road Safety grants program as well as key road safety partnerships aligned with the program's target audience segments.

Partnerships under the program are delivered in collaboration with our partner organisations and program stakeholders to represent a joint effort in South Australia in sharing important messages with target audiences and segments to encourage safe road behaviours. In 2023, these partnerships delivered 22 engagement opportunity events throughout the year through sporting clubs and grassroots partnerships to positively engage road users on emerging and recurring road safety issues.

Funding was also provided for road safety related educational programs to directly reach around 29,000 students in primary and high schools across South Australia, over a thousand football players in regional football clubs, almost 600 people from other local community groups and organisations, and players and staff at the major metropolitan sporting clubs that the programs partner with. Six road safety campaigns have also been conducted featuring respected AFL, basketball, soccer and motor racing ambassadors.

Mindful of the time, Mr Chair, among the many successes in road safety education over the past 12 months was the RAA Street Smart High event in September, which had a record 89 schools and 10,000 students participate over two days. Critically, the department has reached out to youth across the regions, which are traditionally over-represented in road trauma statistics. I am sure that today we are going to examine some of the budget impacts that are contemplated by the 2024-25 state budget, but I do note the state government's ongoing support for road safety with a further \$80.1 million invested.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Thank you, minister, for that very comprehensive introduction. Budget Overview, Budget Paper 1, page 23, in terms of enhanced enforcement: can the minister confirm when the purchase and implementation of the additional road safety cameras will begin and occur?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The advice that I have is that the budget contemplates the financial year 2024-25, noting the important involvement of South Australia Police in relation to this matter.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** On Budget Overview, Budget Paper 1, page 23, in relation to the 40 km/h zones, is the minister able to outline which locations will receive the new road safety cameras? Further to that, which arterial roads and/or school zones will have speeds reduced to 40 km/h? How will that be determined and how many schools; those sorts of details please?

**The CHAIR:** The question should relate to the budget. The actual question itself had no budgetary aspect to it that I could hear. Can I ask you to please phrase your questions in a way that have some resemblance to a financial question from now on?

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** I will take that on board Chair.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the shadow minister for the question; it is an important one. Priority locations will be identified based on an assessment that considers, for example, not necessarily exclusively, crash history, number of lanes, traffic volumes, expiation numbers, poor pedestrian-actuated crossings with existing road safety cameras and also, importantly, constructability.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 135 mentions various highlights and mentions the Black Spot program and the delivering of 17 blackspot locations. Is the minister able to provide a list of the locations that were addressed within the Black Spot program?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The 2023-24 Australian government-funded Black Spot program was approved on 30 March 2023 by Senator the Hon. Carol Brown, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, and announced on 13 July 2023.

The Black Spot projects directly target improvements to the safety of roads with a proven crash history or higher risk locations. These projects are aimed at delivering infrastructure improvement measures, such as traffic signals, junction upgrades, safety barriers, shoulder sealing, lighting improvements and pedestrian and cycling safety improvements.

The 2023-24 Australian government allocation was \$7.9 million to assist with the treatment of 17 locations. Assessments and priority rankings were undertaken by the department's staff and circulated to the South Australian black spot consul to give the panel for the Australian Government Black Spot Program, and projects are ranked based, I am advised, on the highest safety benefit, with a minimum benefit cost ratio for the program of two. The maximum contribution from the Australian Government Black Spot Program towards the project is limited to \$2 million.

On 14 July 2023, the call for nominations for the 2024-25 Australian Government Black Spot Program opened and closed on 16 October 2023. Nominations received for the 2024-25 Australian Government Black Spot Program are currently being assessed, for the information of members, with an expected date of release by the Australian government in July 2024. For information as well, the Department for Infrastructure and Transport administers the Australian Government Black Spot Program for South Australia and nominations were sought from the department, councils, community groups, associations, road user groups, industries and the public in terms of specific locations.

For 2023-24, locations include: the Currie Street and Morphett Street intersection safety improvements—that is within the City of Adelaide; the Jones Road safety upgrade—that is the Adelaide Hills Council; the Jeffcott Street and Ward Street intersection safety improvements, within the City of Adelaide; the Morphett Street and South Terrace intersection safety improvements, within the City of Adelaide; the Main Road, Johnston Road and McMurtrie Road intersection upgrade, in the City of Onkaparinga; the Grand Junction Road and Nelson Road mast arm, City of Port Adelaide Enfield; the Cudmore Terrace and North Street roundabout upgrade—that is the City of Charles Sturt; the Dalkeith Road and Stebonheath Road intersection upgrade, City of Playford/Town of Gawler; the Marion Road and Alawoona Avenue traffic signal upgrade, City of Marion; the Grand Junction Road and Wandana Avenue traffic signal upgrade, City of Tea Tree Gully/City of Port Adelaide Enfield; and the Montague Road and Fairfax Avenue traffic signal upgrade, City of Salisbury.

I pause there for a moment to ask whether the shadow minister has any particular interest, otherwise I will continue reading the record.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Are there many more to go?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think together, shadow minister, we will be able to work through this.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Otherwise if you perhaps table them.

**The CHAIR:** You cannot table them.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** You cannot table as a minister, okay. On notice is fine.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** It is not too long to go. I think I might be able to wrap it within 45 seconds, so let me just read very quickly for the benefit of those present. The other locations include: as I mentioned, the Grand Junction Road and Wandana Avenue traffic signal upgrade; the Montague Road and Fairfax Avenue traffic signal upgrade; the Montacute Road, Athelstone, safety improvements; the Beovich Road, Wright Road and Uno Road safety improvements; the Wellington Road safety upgrade; the Tillers East Road, Glenelg River Road intersection safety improvements; the McKay Road intersection realignment; and the Angas Valley Road, Stoney Banks Road intersection upgrade. There concludes the list.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 135, Highlights 2023-24, expenditure: can the minister outline how many students took part in the bicycle education program delivered to primary school age children in 2023-24?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I understand that certain of this information is drawn from the 2023 Road Safety Annual Report, released on 9 May, and with respect to the involvement of bicycle riders, particularly the delivery of the Way2Go Bike Ed program, a practical bike education lesson for

primary school students in years 4 to 7, I am advised there were more than 4,000 students and 58 schools across South Australia that participated in that program.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 135, targets: what is the cost to implement South Australia's Road Safety Action Plan 2023-25?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Pardon me, shadow minister, 2023-24 or 2024-25?

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** What is the cost to implement the action plan from the strategy?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Just to be specific, 2024-25?

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Whatever data you have.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The advice I have is that the program and its outcomes are delivered by a range of agencies and departments and, accordingly, it is not necessarily specifically possible to break down that number out of this particular portfolio space.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Okay. Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 135: Program summary— income, is the minister able to outline what sale of goods and services contributed to the department receiving \$331,000 more in revenue than budgeted for in 2023-24?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As this matter relates to the specific sale of goods and services, I am going to turn to the chief executive momentarily.

**Mr WHELAN:** I would like to advise that this is in relation to services to the CDP regulator, for example, like the Centre for Automotive Safety Research grants, annual road risk rating, policy research and analytics activities, the Road User Safety Advisory Committee, and communication engagement programs.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** On the same line, is the minister able to provide an update as to progress made in the development of the 10-year South Australian Level Crossing Safety Strategy? How is that going?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In South Australia, there are 555 public road level crossings, and more than 450 pedestrian level crossings. Between 2019 to 2023 there were 582 near-hit incidents reported in South Australia, and three collisions very tragically resulting in 11 lives lost, and six serious injuries. The strategy focus areas are: education and enforcement; assets, technology and innovation; data and analysis; and coordination and collaboration. Initiatives contained in the strategy will be delivered through a rolling three-year action plan to be, of course, updated. Implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and the South Australian Level Crossing Advisory Committee. The group will monitor the strategy's progress and adjust accordingly based on pre-determined performance indicators.

In February 2024, the National Level Crossing Safety Committee released the National Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2023-32, and a three-year work plan 2023-25. The strategy aligns with national focus areas and will enable actions identified in the national strategy to be supported at a state level. Consultation occurred throughout the advisory committee, which is internal and external membership via the department, South Australia Police, local government, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and rail infrastructure managers. The strategy will be presented to the advisory committee acknowledging their participation in developing the strategy and to ratify the commitment to the strategy.

I also add for completeness that I am advised that on 6 March there was a National Level Crossing Safety Roundtable, which I am also informed was held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Supplementary to that: is the minister able to provide the names of the people who are on the State Level Crossing Strategy Advisory Committee, and how often do they meet and how are they paid?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am informed that there is no payment for the committee. In terms of its very specific make-up, I will take that question on notice and return to the house with a specific answer.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 180, statement of comprehensive income. Is the minister able to explain why there appears to be a bit of a delay in rolling out the new road safety cameras?

**The CHAIR:** Member for Hartley, which page are you quoting from?

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** I was looking at Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 180, statement of comprehensive income and was asking about the new road safety cameras and the delay in them being rolled out.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** For clarification in relation to the budget line item, I am happy to answer. The trial in the technology for mobile phone detection cameras was, of course, conducted in 2023, and as part of that procurement process the trial outcomes were, as the shadow minister is aware, evaluated. There was at that time, or thereafter I should say, a preferred supplier selected. The contract negotiation processes with the preferred supplier, importantly, were not concluded until January 2024.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 179, program net cost of services summary, program 3: road safety. Is the minister able to please outline why the estimated net cost of services in 2023-24 for road safety is estimated to be \$5.44 million, \$1 million more than budgeted for?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Shadow minister, can we have that budget line again please? I am just consulting with South Australia Police.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Page 179. There are two questions: can the minister outline why the estimated net cost of services in 2023-24 for road safety is estimated to be \$5.44 million, \$1 million more than budgeted; and is the minister able to outline why the budget for the net cost of services in 2024-25 for road safety is \$12.8 million more than estimated for 2023-24? So it is just pertaining to those numbers on page 179: program net cost of services summary, road safety.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** With respect to the time and with great respect to the shadow minister, there is some information we certainly do have available for the moment. It would take some time to read some of that into the record, but I am conscious of the time. What I will do is undertake to take that question on notice—the two portions of the question—and come back to the house with an answer, thereby hopefully allowing the shadow minister to ask a further question before time expires.

**The CHAIR:** The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of Road Safety complete. I thank the minister and his advisers.

## **DEPARTMENT FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, \$424,706,000**

### **Minister:**

Hon. D.R. Cregan, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Special Minister of State.

### **Departmental Advisers:**

Mr D. Brown, Chief Executive, Department for Correctional Services.

Ms S. Taylor, Executive Director, People and Business Services, Department for Correctional Services.

Ms K. Smith, Director, Finance, People and Business Services, Department for Correctional Services.

Ms M. Deer, Manager, Government and Jurisdictional Affairs, Department for Correctional Services.

Ms S. Borrillo, Executive Services Officer, Government and Jurisdictional Affairs, Department for Correctional Services.

**The CHAIR:** The committee is examining now the Department for Correctional Services. The minister appearing is the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. I declare the proposed payment open for examination. I call on the minister to make an opening statement, if he wishes to do so, and then to introduce his advisers. Then I will call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if he wishes to do so, or go straight into questions.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Good afternoon, Mr Chair. Yes, I do wish to make a statement. To commence, I wish to introduce the Department for Correctional Services representatives supporting me here today. To my right is Mr David Brown, Chief Executive, and to my left is Ms Sarah Taylor, Executive Director, People and Business Services. Behind me are Ms Megan Deer, Manager, Government and Jurisdictional Affairs; Ms Kerri-Anne Smith, Director, Finance; and Ms Sofia Borrillo, Executive Services Officer. I am grateful to all of the executives present for their hard work in assisting with preparation for the examination today and the estimates processes overall.

Correctional Services is a portfolio that performs a critical public safety service. I am delighted, therefore, that for my first parliamentary estimates as minister I can highlight the significant agency investment that is outlined in this budget. That investment includes \$227 million to increase capacity of both Yatala Labour Prison and Adelaide Women's Prison.

At Yatala Labour Prison, an additional 312 high-security beds will be built, consisting of three new units, each housing 104 beds. Construction at that site is expected to begin in August 2025, with units to start to come online from the end of 2027. At the Adelaide Women's Prison, an additional 40 beds will be constructed, commencing in January 2024. Both of these capital projects will contribute to meeting the continued growth in the prisoner population that we have experienced.

While expanding the capacity of the prison system is important, as a government we must also prioritise addressing the primary drivers that lead to imprisonment, in particular strategies that can positively influence reoffending rates. This includes access to support services, stable accommodation and employment.

Therefore, other 2024-25 budget measures allocated to the department are also focused on the agency's rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. One example is the investment of \$1.2 million per annum from 2024-25 to enable the ongoing operation of the Lemongrass Place precinct—an important partnership with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector. Lemongrass Place provides a culturally appropriate alternative male custody facility that delivers reintegration and rehabilitation services. Without this facility, these men who are predominantly from the APY lands and elsewhere would otherwise be in prison.

The department has seen great success through initiatives such as the Reducing Reoffending by 10 per cent by 2020 strategy, known as 10by20, which was started by the Premier in 2016 when he was then serving as the minister. In addition, the department is again leading the way with a current target for a reduction of 20 per cent by 2026, known internally and externally as the 20by26 program. The department not only met the initial 10by20 target but exceeded it, bringing the rate down from 46.1 per cent to 39.3 per cent. This was the lowest recidivism rate in the country at the time and well below the national average of 53.1 per cent.

In 2022-23, South Australia's rate of return to corrective services with a new correctional sanction within two years of release continued its overall downward progression to 36.9 per cent. This further re-establishes the department as the lead jurisdiction, again below the national average of 51.7 per cent. It is not a matter that should be overlooked and it should be a matter of considerable pride, I hope, to DCS officers everywhere in our state.

Initiatives as part of the 10by20 and 20by26 programs are contributing to a safer community, fewer victims and increased opportunities for people in contact with the criminal justice system to contribute positively to the community. Furthermore, there have been immense economic savings for the government and for all taxpayers.



Unfortunately, despite the agency's considerable success in reducing reoffending, including being well placed to achieve the 20by26 target, prisoner numbers in South Australia are increasing. The increase is due to several factors, including recent legislative reform as well as the time an offender spends on remand. To this end, over the last 10 years, there has been growth from an average of 60 days in 2013-14 to over 80 days in 2023-24.

As I have earlier outlined, there are very substantial budget measures outlined in this budget to address the state's capacity issues and also to ensure that we have modern fit-for-purpose prison facilities at the locations that I have identified. As well, there is a newly announced post-release accommodation service at Jonal Drive and increased capacity at Yatala Labour Prison and the Adelaide Women's Prison, or I should say there is a focus on investment at Jonal Drive.

In addition, the department will continue to invest in other evidence-based initiatives to reduce reoffending and boost alternatives to custody. This includes remaining steadfast in the department's approach and the government's approach to Closing the Gap. Aboriginal people in South Australia are 12 times more likely to be imprisoned when compared to the general population and 10 times more likely to be under a Community Corrections order. Aboriginal South Australians are also over-represented in the remand population. Nearly 57 per cent of Aboriginal in prison are on remand. This is 16 times higher than the general population. This disproportion is unacceptable and requires collaboration from all areas of government and, most importantly, also from society.

You may recall the \$11.18 million investment by the government last year for Yalakiana Tappa. This is a suite of culturally responsive, community-based programs that will be delivered by Aboriginal-led organisations to address the remand over-representation. I am pleased to report the department has worked swiftly to create and implement the Yalakiana Tappa programs.

The first priority of the package was the establishment of a dedicated Aboriginal Justice Liaison Officer. This role is already working to reduce the number of Aboriginal people on bail by providing specialist and culturally informed service to Aboriginal people on remand. The second program is Marni Tapa, 'fresh path', which is a wraparound, culturally responsive case management and rehabilitation support program for Aboriginal men and women released from custody to bail within northern metropolitan Adelaide. Marni Tapa was launched in November 2023 in partnership with InComPro Aboriginal Association, and there have been over 100 participants to date.

The third program is Healing Lodge/Wodli. For that project, the invitation to supply closed in May 2024, and an evaluation and supplier selection process is now underway by the department. The final program is an intensive alcohol and other drug treatment facility that will support successful compliance with bail conditions and address treatment needs. I am advised it is intended that this program be implemented in the latter part of 2024.

I do note that time is probably expiring for an opening statement, but may I take this final moment to congratulate the staff of the department and highlight the agency's continued workforce planning, particularly with its ongoing efforts to reduce recidivism, which I have earlier identified in my comments.

**The CHAIR:** Before I call on the member for Flinders, I will just let the committee know that there has been a surge in ratings. We are now in triple figures, and we have doubled committee B.

**Mr TELFER:** Can I start by also thanking the department. It is an area of our society that the vast majority of people have no involvement in at all. It is only when they have an involvement in the process, whether as a victim, perpetrator or family of a perpetrator, that they actually have an insight into the immense work that is done by the department, so my utmost respect to you, Mr Brown, and the whole team that comes in behind you. As I have said when discussing in this place the police budget lines, in no way with my questioning am I ever criticising the operations as far as the day-to-day work of the individuals who are involved in such an important part of our community.

I will cast the minister's attention to page 102 and start with an insight into the workforce summary, which in a way is different to the vast majority of other departments. I should not be surprised, with Corrections being so capable and astute, that when I added up the FTEs for the three different programs that are within the budget papers, I got to the number of 2,012.1, the exact

number. I am interested, in the designation between the three different aspects of custodial services, rehabilitation and reparation, and community-based services, where the executive decision-making aspect is allocated—Mr Brown and the like, the senior executive. Which of these three programs?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the shadow minister for the question. It is a fairly operational question. I will turn to Mr Brown in relation to the answer.

**Mr BROWN:** Where there is a natural alignment to a program, the executive role would sit with that program. By way of example, the Deputy Chief Executive, Statewide Operations and general managers of our prisons where they are members of the South Australian Executive Service would fall under the custodial services program. The Executive Director, Offender Development, by way of an alternative example, I understand would sit under the rehabilitation and reparations program. So they are dispersed where there is a logical fit.

**Mr TELFER:** Fantastic. Like I said, it is refreshing to have the numbers add up. There are no FTEs hiding in different bureaucratic levels. How many of those FTEs, minister, of the 2,012 number, are administrative staff?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised that it is possible to break out a certain cohort or class of employees that might be described as 'administrative', except to say that some of them do perform operational or frontline roles and so the breakout is not necessarily as clean as it might otherwise be across other agencies inside government. But, for the sake of the exercise, I am advised that that figure is approximately 527.

**Mr TELFER:** The FTE allocation within custodial services—which is on page 108, Chair, a direct reference there—the budget in 2023-24 was 1,356 the actual estimated result for 2023-24 was 1,377 and this budget is back to 1,356. The 21-staff reduction, seemingly, of what we have now to what is budgeted now: what is the explanation, minister, to that custodial aspect? In your opening statement, you mentioned that prisoner numbers are increasing; I was surprised to see that decrease.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised by the chief executive that there are increases and decreases in the overall number of FTE staff who are working within Corrections. One aspect of the workforce at the moment is that the secure area of the Port Augusta Prison is offline for the present, so those roles are, for the moment, not required.

**Mr TELFER:** Is there a time frame for when that secure aspect of Port Augusta is expected to be back online?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The works there will be progressively completed in what might be described as two phases. The first phase will fall into the 2024-25 financial year; most of the operational posts relate to that work or those workspaces. The second phase will fall within the 2025-26 financial year. But, as I say, the operational posts largely relate to phase 1. I will just confirm any additional advice before I conclude my answer.

I am advised that that is the main contributing factor but, of course, there are a range of other matters that might influence fluctuations in workforce. I could turn to the chief executive if it would assist the shadow minister in relation to those matters.

**Mr TELFER:** On that, minister, it is obviously interesting because you are saying that they will be phased in potentially throughout the financial year, yet the number at budget time is a 21-person drop. A bit more of a technical answer from the CEO would be appreciated.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I will turn to the chief executive in relation to those operational matters.

**Mr BROWN:** The only key point I would make is that we are referring to budgeted FTEs, not actual people. In a 24/7 rostering environment, the number of people that we have against our budgeted FTE varies in line with the recruitment cycle to run a trainee correctional officers school. The main contributing factor is those beds that have been taken offline. We bring 104 of those beds back online in that first phase, but then we have to take other units offline in that area so that they can be refurbished. So there are ups and downs across that program.

**Mr TELFER:** Turning to page 106, which has the rehabilitation and reparation FTE numbers, the budget for 2023-24—the last budget—was 335 and the actual was 341, but then the 2024-25 budget is down by 11 FTE, back to 330. Is there an explanation, minister?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The advice that I have is that there is no specific program or operational change that might inform the change in the FTE calculation, but the timing or other calculations performed by Treasury might produce that result. I can turn to the chief executive if there is any additional detail required but, as I say, it would not appear that there is any program change or decision that has influenced that particular outcome.

**Mr TELFER:** Then the question probably is, as you turn to the CEO: what impact will there be on programs with a reduction in the FTE?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Very well. This being a very specific operational question, I invite the chief executive to reflect on whether there are any other additional matters that we might be able to inform the member of.

**Mr BROWN:** Thank you, minister. By way of explanation about impact on programs, we do not anticipate any impact on programs; in fact, when looking at the activity indicators on page 107, our estimated result for 2023-24 in terms of the number of program hours delivered is 13,130, while in 2024-25 we anticipate an increase in program delivery hours to 14,022.

**Mr TELFER:** On that, once again, a budget is an anticipation. How can you anticipate a higher output with fewer FTE?

**Mr BROWN:** As the minister explained, whilst the budget reflects a budgeted FTE number, it does not necessarily reflect the number of clinicians that we have on the ground available to deliver the program. We have no changes planned to that program in 2024-25. There is a combination of programs delivered directly by our staff, which are our more intensive rehabilitation programs, and then there are programs that are delivered through partnerships with non-government organisations that deliver programs, like Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services, for example, that deliver the SMART Recovery program in a number of our prisons.

**Mr TELFER:** Likewise, with the community-based allocation of FTE on page 111, there was an expected result of 333 from 2023-24 that dropped down to 325. Is this number going to affect the outcome in that space?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I turn to the chief executive in relation to this operational matter.

**Mr BROWN:** Thank you, minister. Similar to my previous answer, the actual FTE and resources available for the management of Community Corrections is not expected to reduce or change in 2024-25; in fact, based on our own internal operational planning for Community Corrections, some additional Community Corrections resources have been deployed in the 2024-25 budget process.

**Mr TELFER:** On that same line of questioning and referring back to the FTE numbers as a whole, the CEO makes reference to the comparables between budgeted FTE and reality of staff on the ground. Is the department at full employment or is there a shortfall between that budgeted number and the actual FTEs being delivered? I understand it varies but at the point of time in which we are at the moment.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The question invites some reflection on the workforce planning for the department, which is a continued focus. The Department for Correctional Services requires all correctional officers to hold certain qualifications: the qualification of Certificate III in Correctional Practice and training correctional officers are subject to eight weeks of classroom-based training during the Correctional Officer Training Course, often referred to as the COTC, followed by practical training. The COTC is overseen by the department's Learning Academy and the Learning Academy is in turn committed to ensuring the delivery of professional, appropriate, timely and relevant training for newly recruited correctional officers who will staff our prisons.

The COTC is essential to the department's strategic plan requirement for a skilled, competent and capable workforce. It may be useful for me to reflect for the benefit of members that for the period 2022 to August 2023 in the TCO courses 200 to 209, the department recruited a total of 234 new

frontline staff, including 68 for other programs, including for Port Augusta Prison, which we earlier reflected on. The TCO school 210 commenced on 3 October 2023, with a total of 15 TCOs, and school 211 commenced on 5 February 2024, with a total of 32. The next TCO school is intended to commence, I am advised, in July 2024.

I am also advised that, whilst there is some variance that we have explored in terms of Treasury's calculation of the FTEs, the department's view of its workforce is that it is effectively fully staffed save for those matters that are reflected on in relation to Port Augusta, the management of vacancies and any other program adjustments or program delivery requirements that we could explore further but, as I say, that is the advice I have.

**Mr TELFER:** So there is no differentiation between actual and budgeted when it comes to staff: a shortfall of officers or staff?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised that the crisp answer is no, but to provide a little bit more assistance for members present and to better inform the house, in part the department recruits in blocks of officers to enable those officers to progress through the training programs. Accordingly, there can be at different points in time differences in numbers than present or employed. But effectively the advice from that is unchanged.

**Mr TELFER:** As far as FTE recruitment, how is the judgement of the department as to their ability to be able to attract applicants to their programs?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I will turn to the chief executive in relation to this operational matter, to ensure that we can introduce as much technical detail as may assist the shadow minister.

**Mr BROWN:** Thank you, minister. We have been very successful in the number and quality of candidates that we are receiving for the correctional officer role within the department, and that is reflected in the success we had in recruiting that 234 new staff that the minister referenced. We have, in the last two years, experienced some regional challenges in Port Augusta with recruitment but, in the most recent programs, we have seen a positive improvement in the recruits for Port Augusta positions as well, so we have been very pleased with the work of our recruitment staff, and also with our communications strategy with the wider South Australian community about the real opportunity that presents with a career with the department for corrections.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Gibson has tried to get my attention. You have a question?

**S.E. ANDREWS:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 105. Can the minister inform the house about the Work Ready, Release Ready program?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the member for her question, and also her focus and interest on correctional services matters, and on the overall focus the department has had historically on reducing recidivism. It is very much appreciated.

With respect to the Work Ready, Release Ready (WRRR) program, it is an employment-focused rehabilitation program that involves the expansion of education and vocational training to improve employment opportunities for prisoners and offenders in the community and was a key initiative of the Reducing Reoffending by 10 per cent by 2020 program, the 10by20 program to which I earlier alluded.

The Department for Correctional Services targets the program to those offenders most in need to assist with transition to employment post release, and the program is provided both in prison and post release with the aim of reducing the rate of reoffending. It is also part of the 10by26 program for completeness. Participants are supported in custody by a mentor who works with them on an individual basis to develop and implement a training and employment plan. Participants engage in prison-based vocational training programs and gain work experience through the prison industries program or series of programs. The mentors also work with the participants for up to 18 months post release to support them to achieve their employment goals in the community.

The key aims of the WRRR are to support participants to build job skills pre-release through education, vocational training and employment readiness training, and to help participants to gain financial security, purpose and social connections as a result of returning to work, and to mitigate against the likelihood of reoffending and breaches of community-based orders. As well, the program

assists participants to find and maintain employment post release. The program is currently run at Port Augusta Prison, Adelaide Women's Prison, the Adelaide Pre-release Centre, Cadell Training Centre and the Mobilong Prison.

The WRRR is delivered through a contract with Workskil Australia following a competitive procurement process. Workskil Australia is a South Australian not-for-profit community organisation, and one of Australia's largest providers of employment services. The program has been highly successful since 2018 with over 1,500 participants enrolled onto the three-phase journey of the program. On 1 August 2023, the WRRR final evaluation report was endorsed. Overall, the WRRR participants showed better recidivism outcomes compared with a matched comparison group over a two-year follow-up period, with the greatest effect observed for those who did find employment.

As at 15 June 2024, the WRRR have had 1,076 employment placements, with 594 individuals obtaining ongoing work from the program. I think on a percentage figure, member for Gibson, that is 55.2 per cent. Given the positive evaluation for the original WRRR program and current stressors in the labour market, the WRRR Plus intention is to increase the number of individuals who leave prison with employment. In terms of the budget impacts, to better inform those present, in 2023-24, \$6.299 million across the forward estimates was developed for WRRR Plus to build on the successes of the WRRR pilot.

**Mr TELFER:** That program is a fantastic one—very successful. Is that envisioned to be rolled out across all Corrections facilities?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I understand, and I am advised, that a portion of last year's budget allowed the WRRR program and I assume, now, the WRRR Plus program to be rolled out at remaining correctional services facilities, and the intention is for that program to continue. As I have earlier outlined, it has been a very, very successful program. I certainly welcome the shadow minister's interest in the program and support for it.

**Mr TELFER:** I will continue on my workforce line of questioning. What was the attrition rate amongst Corrections staff this past financial year nearly ending?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** The attrition or turnover rate for the 2023-24 year to date—noting that the date, as I said, is not entirely complete—has been approximately 7.9 per cent. I am advised that the attrition rate is reasonably consistent in the department's experience, and I am further advised that the variance in the attrition rate is approximately 1 per cent.

**Mr TELFER:** I will continue on. Firstly, I focus on community-based services, program 3, pages 110 to 112. What percentage of the department's budget is allocated to the Intensive Compliance Unit?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We certainly have a portion of information available in relation to that program and its operations. In terms of the specific amount that the shadow minister is seeking, the best course I think and most accurate course will be, I am advised, to take that question on notice and we can provide that information together with the information we presently have.

**Mr TELFER:** I appreciate that. To continue on, how many FTEs are there within the Intensive Compliance Unit?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We are able to break down headcount by site and classification, but for our present purposes it is not represented necessarily as a specific prison site or agency location, and so we can come back on notice with an answer.

**Mr TELFER:** Thank you. It is interesting data to dissect on pages 110 to 112 on some of the numbers which the department are dealing with at the moment within the intensive bail supervision, the home detention system and the like. Are these numbers comparable to previous years, minister, or are these numbers that we see increasing and, thus, the burden on Corrections to manage the intensive bail supervision, the home detention and the like?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** There has been growth in the population subject to an order, as well as subject to electronic monitoring. That might be anticipated or expected in the context of growth in the prisoner population overall rather than necessarily being informed by any specific legislative change or other changes that might create a result of that type. I am not suggesting that legislative

or other policy changes do not inform those outcomes—they certainly do—but I think it is important to examine it in the context of the overall growth in the prisoner population in the first instance and then to reflect on whether there are other matters that might be informing those figures.

**Mr TELFER:** Continuing on that same line, minister, as you point out, there is an increase in the number of people who are having to be managed under this system. Has there been a subsequent or corresponding increase in the staffing levels for the unit that is required to be in charge of managing and monitoring these arrangements?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Whilst there is no specific budget measure that informs this particular unit or portion of the agency, what I am advised is that internal budget decisions have allowed for officers involved in community corrections settings to be allocated appropriately to the programs.

**Mr TELFER:** To continue on, obviously a lot of these performance indicators, activity indicators and the like that are included in the budget are important for us to understand the detail of it. For my understanding and for clarification, minister, has SafeWork done an investigation into staffing issues with the ICU? If so, who did they interview?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am not certain necessarily that that question relates to any specific budget line item, but in an effort to assist the shadow minister I am informed that we would be happy to take that question on notice.

**Mr TELFER:** On page 111, it speaks about expenses around employees and thus the management of and the like and that is why I am interested in the answer to that one. Are you aware of how many, if any, staff from within Corrections are currently before the South Australian Employment Tribunal on WorkCover disputes with DCS?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think the best approach, given the very specific nature of the question, is to take that question on notice, I have been advised.

**Mr TELFER:** Obviously, with the increase, as you say, in prisoner numbers and thus the increase in some of the requirements for the department to be going through the intensive bail supervision and home detention processes that strain those processes, is the minister aware of any technical issues regarding monitoring systems losing track of offenders' locations?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the shadow minister for the question. I think it is important for me to provide some context in terms of the Department for Correctional Services monitoring approaches overall. DCS does monitor offenders, subject to various community supervision orders, through the electronic monitoring system, as is known.

In 2015-16, for important context, the then government introduced a number of legislative and program changes that aim to expand the use and effectiveness of home detention throughout the state and the use of electronic monitoring for offenders in the community. It is an effective supervision tool that contributes directly to public safety.

The use of EM has been expanded in recent years as a result of court-ordered home detention, sometimes referred to as COHD, which was introduced in September 2016 following changes to the Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act, now the Sentencing Act 2017, and legislative changes to the Correctional Services Act 1982, which came into operation on 10 June 2016, and the introduction of intensive corrections orders, referred to as ICOs, as an alternative to custody through the Sentencing Act 2017.

I think it is important in the context of the question as well to emphasise that the department has very stringent policies and procedures in place which do provide clear parameters, both in terms of the technology that is being used and the resource capabilities. I think there is also, if I am not mistaken, a tiered approach to what is sometimes described as the EM approach and the levels of response. There is a reasonable amount of sophistication in terms of the planning and operation of the system.

Electronic monitoring does not force compliance and serves as a means to monitor an offender's compliance with their order conditions. I think it is also very important to emphasise in this space, as other ministers over time have emphasised, that electronic monitoring is just one tool to

monitor and manage compliance of offenders in the community. Electronic monitoring must be and is complemented by physical compliance checks, regular and unannounced home or venue visits and also, as the shadow minister will be aware and the Chair will be aware, alcohol and other drug testing and that regime is all conducted by Community Corrections staff. However, intensive monitoring does encourage offenders to comply with the conditions of their order and further supports them to live what might be rightly described as offence-free lifestyles.

In this regard, electronic monitoring is a valuable monitoring tool that is contributing to community safety—I think we can have confidence that it is—through providing a high level of monitoring and supervision. The use of electronic monitoring for offenders in the community has proven to be an effective supervision tool, as I earlier outlined to the house, with expanded jurisdictions worldwide adopting this additional method for monitoring offenders.

In terms of the specific technology that is being used, the department transitioned to GPS-capable electronic monitoring equipment in 2015, allowing for higher-intensity supervision for offenders. The electronic monitoring system comprises an ankle unit, known, as I understand it, at the department as a solo and a home monitoring unit (HMU). Solos are the anklet installed on the leg of an offender, with the HMUs installed in the offender's residence. The HMU includes a telephone to allow contact between departmental staff and the offender.

As well, members would wish to know that the system's user interface displays what are described as chronos. It is the application that allows the department staff to view and monitor offenders subject to electronic monitoring orders and it provides access to real-time data and allows for rapid responses by the department or of course by South Australia Police should that be required in the context of the particular management of that offender.

Recent advancements in technology have also significantly improved how the department manages offenders in the community. I think it is right to observe that in 2023 the department successfully transitioned to what might be described as the new electronic management platform and the new system is vastly upgraded and corrected previous vulnerabilities identified. I think it is right to say that the new system is also much more secure.

**Mr TELFER:** To follow on from that, we are talking about the community-based services, the budget lines that are included on pages 110 and 111 and the stats that go with it.

**The CHAIR:** The next question will go to the member for Waite. She has been waiting patiently.

**Mr TELFER:** Minister, you talk about the stringent processes that need to be followed and how the EM is not a replacement for physical compliance. That is also in the context of you saying that there are higher numbers that are having to be followed up. What are the processes, as far as the interaction between DCS staff, with the monitoring of such offenders and the police?

We have had this conversation at parliamentary level, the bigger picture stuff, and I am trying to understand a bit more of the nuance of it. When a signal is lost, when there is a break in the monitoring, are the police informed? Are there capacities within DCS staff, especially overnight—we have talked about that previously—to effectively monitor when there are people who go beyond the scope of the intensive arrangements they have in place?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I appreciate the question from the shadow minister and his focus and interest in these matters. Because we are examining very specific operational questions and interface matters, I will turn to the chief executive to assist the house.

**Mr BROWN:** The staff have well documented response protocols when there is a breach by an offender of their electronic monitoring conditions. That can include phone contact with the offender and issuing the offender a direction to carry out certain functions, such as charging their device if the battery level is low or returning to their home if they have stayed outside past a curfew time or a pass permit, through to physically having staff respond to the location of the offender right through until contacting police and formally lodging a breach where a breach has occurred.

It is very much tailored to the nature of the breach and the nature of the person subject to supervision. A higher risk offender might trigger an immediate response from SAPOL, while someone

who is not assessed as a high risk would have a differentiated response. The electronic monitoring function is staffed by DCS staff in the monitoring centre. The monitoring centre operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and has direct communication with staff in the field and also with our colleagues in SAPOL.

**Ms HUTCHESSON:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 103. Can the minister inform the house about the upgrade at the Cadell Training Centre dairy?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the member for Waite for the question and her focus and interest in Correctional Services matters, including reducing recidivism in the community and the operations of the Cadell Training Centre. The Cadell Training Centre, sometimes referred to as the CTC, operates a registered Holstein Friesian stud and dairy that processes and packages the milk produced for use throughout the South Australian prison system. The award-winning dairy operations at the prison employ on average 25 prisoners per day, and it is regarded as one of the state's best vocational programs through hands-on job skills linked to industry and, of course, to farming, animal husbandry and so on.

The facility was built in the 1960s, with the ageing infrastructure providing some limitations in production capabilities. In late 2020, the department committed the funds to deliver a new dairy complex at the Cadell Training Centre to ensure the ongoing functions of the dairy and to meet future growth needs and opportunities that might arise. In August 2021, a firm of architects was engaged through the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to undertake an appropriate concept design and costings model for the new proposed dairying operations.

The new dairy, which I have had the opportunity to visit and which is an excellent facility, will aim to ensure that the current milk contracts that are in place—that is, contracts outside of the need for supply to the South Australian prison system overall—can be met and, as earlier indicated or foreshadowed, where there is an opportunity for new and increased production, which there is, that any new opportunities might be identified, including an opportunity to enhance the product lines being produced and further offset the cost of dairy products used across the South Australian prison system.

This is a significant development for the prison and will work to affirm the role and function of the dairy going forward. The expansion will also provide for increased employment and training opportunities. It will greatly assist prisoners on release to gain employment. The department appeared before the Public Works Committee, as members will be aware, on an earlier date in accordance with the Premier and Cabinet Circular PC015, and the pre-tendered estimate provided by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport was at that time \$8.7 million.

The Department for Infrastructure and Transport released an expression of interest to build interest from suppliers who wished to tender for the works, and in July 2022, a request for tender was issued to three suppliers that were shortlisted from the EOI process. In October 2022, a contract was awarded to Mossop Construction and Interiors at a total project cost at that point of \$12.2 million, inclusive of all construction and professional fees. Construction commenced, I am advised, in November 2022, and I am also advised the dairy became operational earlier this year, I think in February, as it happens.

The forecast project completion date was May 2024. As I have indicated, I was present at the opening of the dairy. It was an important moment not just for Corrections but for former staff of the Cadell programs, and I think it was a particularly significant moment for the family of Mr David Oates, of course, who were present as well to observe the opening of the dairy.

**Mr TELFER:** I will present the omnibus questions:

1. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive appointments have been made since 1 July 2023 and what is the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?
2. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many executive positions have been abolished since 1 July 2023 and what was the annual salary and total employment cost for each position?



3. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what has been the total cost of executive position terminations since 1 July 2023?

4. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide a breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors with a total estimated cost above \$10,000 engaged since 1 July 2023, listing the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier, the method of appointment, the reason for the engagement and the estimated total cost of the work?

5. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, will the minister provide an estimate of the total cost to be incurred in 2024-25 for consultants and contractors, and for each case in which a consultant or contractor has already been engaged at a total estimated cost above \$10,000, the name of the consultant or contractor, the method of appointment, the reason for the engagement and the total estimated cost?

6. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, how many surplus employees are there in June 2024, and for each surplus employee, what is the title or classification of the position and the total annual employment cost?

7. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the number of executive staff to be cut to meet the government's commitment to reduce spending on the employment of executive staff and, for each position to be cut, its classification, total remuneration cost and the date by which the position will be cut?

8. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:

- What savings targets have been set for 2024-25 and each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the estimated FTE impact of these measures?

9. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:

- What was the actual FTE count at June 2024 and what is the projected actual FTE account for the end of each year of the forward estimates;
- What is the budgeted total employment cost for each year of the forward estimates; and
- How many targeted voluntary separation packages are estimated to be required to meet budget targets over the forward estimates and what is their estimated cost?

10. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how much is budgeted to be spent on goods and services for 2024-25 and for each year of the forward estimates?

11. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, how many FTEs are budgeted to provide communication and promotion activities in 2024-25 and each year of the forward estimates and what is their estimated employment cost?

12. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, what is the total budgeted cost of government-paid advertising, including campaigns, across all mediums in 2024-25?

13. For each department and agency reporting to the minister, please provide for each individual investing expenditure project administered, the name, total estimated expenditure, actual expenditure incurred to June 2023 and budgeted expenditure for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27?

14. For each grant program or fund the minister is responsible for, please provide the following information for the 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years:

- Name of the program or fund;
- The purpose of the program or fund;
- Budgeted payments into the program or fund;
- Budgeted expenditure from the program or fund; and

- Details, including the value and beneficiary, or any commitments already made to be funded from the program or fund.
15. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
- Is the agency confident that you will meet your expenditure targets in 2024-25?
  - Have any budget decisions been made between the delivery of the budget on 6 June 2024 and today that might impact on the numbers presented in the budget papers which we are examining today?
  - Are you expecting any reallocations across your agencies' budget lines during 2024-25; if so, what is the nature of the reallocation?
16. For each department and agency reporting to the minister:
- What South Australian businesses will be used in procurement for your agencies in 2024-25?
  - What percentage of total procurement spend for your agency does this represent?
  - How does this compare to last year?
17. What protocols and monitoring systems has the department implemented to ensure that the productivity, efficiency and quality of service delivery is maintained while employees work from home?
18. What percentage of your department's budget has been allocated for the management of remote work infrastructure, including digital tools, cybersecurity, and support services, and how does this compare with previous years?
19. How many procurements have been undertaken by the department this FY, how many have been awarded to interstate businesses? How many of those were signed off by the CE?
20. How many contractor invoices were paid by the department directly this FY? How many and what percentage were paid within 15 days, and how many and what percentage were paid outside of 15 days?
21. How many and what percentage of staff who undertake procurement activities have undertaken training on participation policies and local industry participants this FY?

**The CHAIR:** The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the Department for Correctional Services complete. I thank the minister and his advisers.

**ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, \$7,023,000**

**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA,  
\$545,000**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, \$5,962,000**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, \$8,593,000**

**JOINT PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES, \$20,289,000**

**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR JOINT PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES, \$4,074,000**

**Membership:**

Hon. J.A.W. Gardner substituted for Mr Telfer.

Hon. D.G. Pisoni substituted for Mr Pederick.

Ms O'Hanlon substituted for Mr Fulbrook.

Mr Teague substituted for Hon. V.A. Tarzia.

**Minister:**

Hon. D.R. Cregan, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Special Minister of State.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr M. Sherry, Electoral Commissioner, Electoral Commission of South Australia.

Ms A. Cashen, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Electoral Commission of South Australia.

Mr R. Crump, Clerk, House of Assembly.

Ms C. Freeman, Director, Organisational Capability, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Mr T. Smith, Manager, Policy and Entitlements, Electorate Services, Department of Treasury and Finance.

Mr C. Nguyen, Manager, Finance, Electoral Commission of South Australia.

**The CHAIR:** I open the portfolios of the Electoral Commission of SA, the Legislative Council, the House of Assembly and Joint Parliamentary Services. The minister appearing is the Special Minister of State. I advise that the proposed payments are now open for examination. I call on the minister to make an opening statement, if he wishes to do so, or introduce his advisers. I will then call on the lead speaker, who is the member for Heysen, to make some opening remarks if he wishes to do so or go straight into questions. Minister.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Thank you, Chair, and good afternoon. To start, I wish to introduce the representatives who are present today. To my right is the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Mick Sherry, and to my far left is the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Ms Alice Cashen. Also joining me to my left is Mr Rick Crump, the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

Also appearing, behind me from the Department of Treasury and Finance, are the Director of Organisational Capability, Ms Connie Freeman, and Policy and Entitlements Manager, Electorate Services, Mr Tony Smith. I am also joined by the Electoral Commissioner of South Australia's Manager of Finance, Ms Chau Nguyen. I am grateful to them for the assistance in preparation for today but also their assistance that they will provide to the house today in relation to questions that members may have.

As the Special Minister of State I would like to very briefly touch on one of the government's key priorities in this particular portfolio area. Members will be aware that the state government has released a draft bill to ban political donations. The then opposition made a commitment to examine this matter if it came to government and now, of course, has come to government.

This is, in my view, world-leading legislation that seeks to play a part in restoring trust in our democracy. I would strongly encourage all those with an interest to engage with the public consultation process. I look forward to working with members on this important measure to improve our democratic practices and processes.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I will just start where the minister left off. The minister might indicate by reference to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1 at page 13, second dot point—perhaps as well as those introductory remarks—was the Electoral Commissioner consulted on the legislation in relation to the donations?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Yes.

**Mr TEAGUE:** What form did that consultation take and when did it occur? What was the response?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Certain operational matters were put to the Electoral Commissioner to assist in the drafting of the legislation and to seek the Electoral Commissioner's considerable expertise with respect to certain matters which are contemplated by the draft legislation, and to ensure that the draft legislation could be put out to public consultation.

**Mr TEAGUE:** It is a new portfolio. The minister has given some indication of what is entailed by it. Perhaps by reference to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 at page 7—this is replicated elsewhere in the budget papers as well—at about point 3 on the page there is a description of the Hon. D.R. Cregan and, after naming other portfolios, indication of Special Minister of State. The indication in relation to that portfolio appears to be the last named item on the list. I do not know if the minister has that. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 7 is the example I am referring to, but I think it is repeated at the beginning of each of the budget papers—yes, we have it in each of the budget papers; that is just one example.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Yes.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Is the Special Minister of State responsible for Electorate Services?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Yes.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I refer in that regard to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 157. That is an area of responsibility within the responsibility of the Special Minister of State, is it?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Electorate Services overall. Do you have a particular budget line there that you have in mind?

**Mr TEAGUE:** Yes, Sub-program 3.3: Electorate Services. Is that a ministerial responsibility of the Special Minister of State?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As far as I am aware, the budget papers as printed are accurate, but if there is a specific question that the shadow minister would like to take me to on one of the line items, we might be able to assist the shadow minister.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I am not sure what question the minister is answering, but the question, once again, is: is the minister responsible for Sub-program 3.3: Electorate Services?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As far as I am aware, yes.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Does the minister have any explanation for why that sub-program appears within the responsibility of the Treasurer? I refer, for example, to page 140 of that same budget paper.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Let me seek advice. I am advised that the business unit still sits within Treasury, to clear up the mystery, but reports to me.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Perhaps by reference to the list of agencies and programs that is set out in each of the budget papers at the start, but we are using Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 7 as the working example perhaps—at least I am: is it the case that the sub-program, therefore, Electorate Services, ought properly to be identified as within the—there is no part of Electorate Services that is within the ministerial responsibilities of the Treasurer, in other words?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As I say, I understand that the business unit remains within Treasury but for ministerial purposes reports to the Special Minister of State.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Are there any other constituent parts of the Special Minister of State that are not articulated there on page 7 of Volume 2 or otherwise in the budget papers?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Let me seek some additional advice in relation to whether there is any other, for example, business unit that still remains within Treasury. I am advised that the business unit is the unit that is remaining within Treasury, but I think it might be useful to observe for members present that there is not a standalone department that is sitting underneath the Special Minister of State. Instead, there is a series of programs or sub-programs and, indeed, policy objectives and government objectives that have been—it might be described—collected within that particular portfolio.

The business unit is an example; the FTE staff remain at their desks within Treasury and there has been no shift of those staff into a new building, so far as I am advised. It might be the case that if there was a transfer of a particular unit or agency within a department as between, for example, Treasury or another government department—the one that springs to mind most obviously is the Attorney-General's Department—then there would be the physical movement of staff, resources, records and other arrangements.

In this case, using the business unit to which we have earlier referred as an example, as I say, those staff, those documents, those records, the computer systems and the performance of day-to-day tasks remain exactly where they were the day before the portfolio was instituted, but all of those staff members, I am advised, for program purposes are reporting to this particular minister.

**Mr TEAGUE:** So there are a number of them collected: what are they, in addition to the Electoral Commission of South Australia that is within AGD and Electorate Services that is within Treasury?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I think that it is not necessarily agencies. There are certain acts, for example, that are committed as well to the Special Minister. Otherwise, I would depend on the accuracy of the budget papers as printed.

**Mr TEAGUE:** What are the acts?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We can provide a full list if it would assist the shadow minister, but otherwise those matters are gazetted and do not necessarily relate to a particular budget line item. If there is a program or budget line item that the shadow minister would like to advance, then of course we can examine that but, as I say, I provide three matters by way of guidance: the first is that, so far as I am aware, there is no physical movement of FTE staff reflected in the budget papers; there are certain policy objectives that have been collected within the Special Minister's portfolio; and, as is always the case with ministers, there are a series of acts that are committed to that particular minister and gazetted. This, I feel, Chair, is straying a fair way from the examination of a particular budget line item.

**Mr TEAGUE:** The Electoral Commission staff have—

**The CHAIR:** The member for Heysen is using up his time; if he wants to waste it, that is his prerogative.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Thanks very much, Chair. Have the Electoral Commission staff moved offices or shifted their work location in any way, out of AGD?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Let me seek some advice. To answer as best we can the shadow minister's question, I am not aware and not advised of any movement of staff that are within the Electoral Commissioner's office. I am not advised of any additional secondments, for example, that have been made to assist us. The agency remains intact, if that is the right way to describe its extant existence. Of course, it is an independent organisation, as it has been from its foundation, and assistance must be provided in terms of financial assistance and administrative assistance. I will seek some additional advice as to which departments provide that assistance.

The particular agency is supported by, for example, the Attorney-General's Department. In terms of support that might be provided, it is financial support; procurement support, if there might be the need to assist with procurement matters; and of course HR matters as may be necessary. It is also advice—if there is to be Crown advice that is obtained then it is obtained on a cost basis, and it may be that the Attorney-General might support with respect to some certain other advice—and then, of course, there may be the necessity to coordinate or assist with the delivery of particular ICT or other programs.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 17, sub-program 1.2: Non-parliamentary Electoral Services. First in the dot-point list of highlights for 2023-24 is:

Conducted the initial election for members of the South Australia First Nations Voice. Polling day was 16 March 2024.

Just by reference to the table on page 19, at about point 3 on the page it refers to non-parliamentary elections prescribed by acts of parliament. Is there any reason that the First Nations Voice election

was not projected in the 2023-24 budget? Just for the committee's benefit, this is legislation passed in March 2023, with the election originally scheduled for 9 September, which was later deferred to March 2024. So it is all within 2023-24. We see a projection of zero non-parliamentary elections, which turns out to be one election in the estimated result.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** We have sought advice from the Electoral Commissioner in relation to that matter. I am just going to seek some additional advice at the moment, and then I will come back to you. I am advised that the best course here, to ensure that we can assist the shadow minister with the additional detail he seeks, is to take the question on notice and come back to the house.

**Mr TEAGUE:** So you just do not know why the election was not projected for 2023-24? You see there is zero. Do you agree with that?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** It is not for me to agree or disagree.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Well, you see it. You can see it there on page 19.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** As I say, we have taken some initial advice. The initial advice leads me to the conclusion that the best course to assist the shadow minister with the inquiry that he has made is for us to return to the house.

**Mr TEAGUE:** So the minister is going to take on notice, for the benefit of the committee, any explanation as to how there were zero non-parliamentary elections projected and the estimated result is one election. Can the minister indicate that that one was in fact the First Nations Voice to Parliament election that is described in the footnote to that line?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** In our efforts to assist the shadow minister in relation to the accounting treatment and arrangements, we have received some additional advice which may allow me to supplement the information that we would otherwise bring back to the house. I will turn to the Electoral Commissioner.

**Mr SHERRY:** The Voice election was originally attributed to sub-program 1.1, which was Parliamentary Electoral Services. That traditionally relates to parliamentary elections. It has since been corrected and moved across to sub-program 1.2, which relates to Non-parliamentary Electoral Services, which is the appropriate program for the Voice to fit within.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Did the Electoral Commission work with Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation in relation to the Voice election?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Certain arrangements were put in place to best facilitate the election to which the shadow minister refers. I am going to invite the Electoral Commissioner to outline some of the steps that were taken to both ensure the election could be delivered and also which reflect the appropriate collaboration between departments in order to give effect to that particular outcome.

**Mr SHERRY:** In the planning for the Voice election, we did engage with Commissioner Agius, who at that time was the South Australian Voice commissioner, and we also engaged with staff from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. The purpose of that engagement was that the staff from Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation were ultimately responsible for the explanation and the promotion of the Voice concept itself, and ECSA's role was the promotion and the communication regarding the electoral process. It is important that both our organisations worked together to ensure consistent messaging and consistent branding to avoid any potential confusion.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 14, Electoral Services, Description/objectives, dot point 2 states:

monitoring and reporting disclosures of donations and campaign expenditure for registered political parties, candidates, agents and third parties

With the proposed changes to donation laws that you are managing, are you anticipating that the Electoral Commissioner will continue in that role and, if so, what other duties would the Electoral Commission have to undertake in order to enforce or investigate breaches of disclosure or donations and other matters that have quite severe penalties outlined in the legislation?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I thank the member for the question. The legislation proposed by the government is out for consultation. It is entirely possible that that legislation will not only change in the course of the consultation process but it may also change between the consultation process and when it is introduced to parliament, and then of course might be changed by this house or the other place. I illustrate or emphasise those matters to indicate that the question, although I appreciate it and understand its thrust and direction and the importance of it, is really inviting me to engage in what might be described as fairly extensive speculation as to what it is the Electoral Commissioner may or may not be required to do by parliament ultimately, assuming that legislation passes in whatever form it passes.

What I can say to assist the member, within scope ideally—but I feel we may be straying well beyond budget line item analysis—is, as has been initially detailed, that there has been some consultation with the Electoral Commissioner about the overall architecture to take the benefit of this proposal, to take the benefit of the Electoral Commissioner's advice. That is as far as I can advance matters, being as generous as I possibly can.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** Have you been advised that the new requirements as proposed—with all due respect, minister, it is government legislation that is out there for consultation. It is intended the government will move that legislation. It would not be putting something forward if it had not considered the ifs and what ifs and the mechanics of how that would work. Would there still be a role for the Electoral Commission in monitoring and reporting on disclosures and donations under the new legislation as it is currently before consultation?

**The CHAIR:** I note the minister's response to the earlier question; I rule that question out of order. Next question. Member for Heysen.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I have some questions about the local government elections. I will endeavour to do this in the most practical way, with reference in particular to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 18, the performance indicators table at about point 7 on the page, and the previous page, page 17, at about points 7 and 8 on the page, the completion of the operational review and the local government election report. I reference first the page 17 dot point highlights. Has the operational review of the 2022 local government periodic elections been completed and what operational changes were recommended in the review?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** There is a procedural difficulty. Certain of these matters fall within another minister's portfolio, although we would endeavour to assist the shadow minister. I can turn to the Electoral Commissioner, who may be able to provide some general overview, so as not to frustrate the shadow minister but, as I say, the portfolio delineation does not assist the examination of the budget line item, regrettably.

**Mr SHERRY:** Thank you, minister. As with all elections, ECSA conducts a comprehensive evaluation. That evaluation involves surveys with candidates, electors, in this case council CEOs, etc., and that forms the basis for what we consider in relation to what we call our internal evaluation report. That evaluation has been completed. We are now finalising a parliamentary report regarding the 2022 local government periodic elections. That report has been drafted. The next stage is some design and then printing. At the conclusion of that process, it will be provided to the Minister for Local Government for his consideration. Within that report, I can say there will be a number of recommendations for parliament's consideration regarding legislative change.

**Mr TEAGUE:** As a follow-up to that, I suppose, can the minister indicate to the committee what caused, as announced in December 2023, a mistake in the Electoral Commission process that resulted in the incorrect calculation of votes in those 25 local government elections, including the Adelaide Plains Council, which altered the outcome of that election, I understand, in respect of two candidates? That is referred to particularly in the table at page 18.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am able to inform the house that on 5 December 2023, while preparing for the City of Adelaide Central Ward Court of Disputed Returns, an error in the settings of the count software used to process 25 elections from the 2022 periodic elections was discovered. The settings error had little to no effect on 24 of the 25 elections; however, in the Adelaide Plains Council area councillor election to which the shadow minister has referred, the error caused two of

nine councillors to be what might be correctly described as incorrectly elected. A subsequent casual vacancy was therefore also filled using what might be described as incorrect candidates.

The Electoral Commissioner of South Australia engaged Crown Counsel to advise the Electoral Commissioner on his options to resolve the incorrectly elected councillors under the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999. The Electoral Commissioner has petitioned the court for an extension of time to lodge an application in the Court of Disputed Returns, I am advised, and cause the correct candidates to be declared elected.

There are certain other matters that I would wish to advise the house. The petitions were lodged on or about 5 February 2024. As well, to inform the house, a directions hearing was held on 26 February 2024. The extension of time petitions, I am advised, were set down for argument on 17 June 2024. I will just take advice for a moment. I am informed that whatever the outcome or not of that argument, or whether it did or did not take place, the court will next convene on 25 July. The Electoral Commissioner of South Australia currently does not have a time frame as to when this matter will be resolved or detail on further future court attendances as may be required or managed by the court as part of its case management and other processes.

The Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 provides for the Electoral Commission of South Australia to recover all costs and expenses incurred by the returning officer in carrying out official duties from councils; however, I am advised that this recovery is restricted to the conduct of the elections. This does not include costs that arise following this activity.

I am also informed that the Electoral Commission of South Australia has incurred approximately \$50,000 in Crown legal costs to date. In terms of the date for that calculation, unsurprisingly it is 17 June, which was the earlier reference to a possible—

**Mr TEAGUE:** Is that amount—

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Just hold on a moment, shadow minister. I am still providing some additional detail. It should be noted that these types of expenses have been incurred following prior statewide council elections; however, were previously insignificant. These expenses were unavoidable cost pressures that were not budgeted at the time the 2023-24 budget was implemented.

The Department of Treasury and Finance has provided the Electoral Commission of South Australia with a total of \$400,000 in expenditure budget to fund additional advice likely to be incurred by the Crown Solicitor's Office and legal fees incurred in 2023-24 relating to Adelaide Plains Council and City of Adelaide Central Ward, Court of Disputed Returns.

A review into this error identified the correct processes were undertaken, including two staff members verifying the settings and running a 2018 election through the 2022 settings to ensure the same results were achieved. Unfortunately, I am advised, the 2018 election chosen did not involve a distribution of preferences that would have detected the error and no computer counts will be conducted until a new procedure guide is completed, for obvious reasons.

**Mr TEAGUE:** In respect of the \$400,000 of additional provision, how much of that has been applied to the first of those disputed returns that I think the minister indicated or referred to in the course of the answer, that is the City of Adelaide Central Ward? It is also listed as pending a decision. Has the entirety of the \$400,000 been spent? Do we do the maths relevant to the \$50,000 spent to 17 June on the Adelaide Plains? Is there any correlation?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I am advised that it is possible on an approximate basis to perform what might not be necessarily a calculation but rather an allocation of funding or an estimated allocation. I am advised that the \$50,000 relates to the legal matters arising from Adelaide Plains and it follows that the balance relates to the Adelaide Central Ward, Court of Disputed Returns.

**Mr TEAGUE:** But that has all been spent, has it? Put it this way: how much has been spent already on each of those disputes, and how much is budgeted to be spent?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** I appreciate the shadow minister's effort to try to clarify the matters that he is seeking an answer to. The most up-to-date advice I now have—and we have just sought additional advice—is that, in fact, \$341,000 will relate to the Adelaide Central Ward costs incurred



(and, for that purpose, I suppose we could say spent), and \$50,000 for the Adelaide Plains. That makes a total of \$391,000.

I observe that these matters are ongoing. I am advised that both matters will continue into next financial year, and I make that observation without any speculation as to the consequences. I am sure that certain inferences can be drawn in relation to what might be necessary to sustain the appearances that are being made for the Electoral Commissioner in order to advance the Electoral Commissioner's position, either as an applicant or respondent, with respect to these important matters.

**Mr TEAGUE:** When will there be a public-facing report from the Electoral Commission if a local government periodic election is completed, as has been the case with other local government elections?

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** There again may be some difficulties to which we have alluded with respect to portfolio allocations, but I will just seek some additional advice.

**The CHAIR:** That will be the last question, because the time allotted has expired.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN:** Chair, without intending to frustrate anybody present, I have done my best to assist the shadow minister, but I cannot answer for the Minister for Local Government.

**The CHAIR:** The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the Electoral Commission of South Australia, Legislative Council, House of Assembly and Joint Parliamentary Services complete. I thank the minister and his advisers, and I thank members of the committee.

At 18:01 the committee adjourned to Wednesday 26 June 2024 at 09:00.