

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
Wednesday, 26 June 2024
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Chair:

Hon. A. Piccolo

Members:

Hon. J.A.W. Gardner
Hon. D.G. Pisoni
Mr D.K.B. Basham
Mr M.E. Brown
Ms C.L. Hutchesson
Ms O.M. Savvas

The committee met at 09:02

Estimates Vote

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, \$3,820,063,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, \$523,400,000

Minister:

Hon. B.I. Boyer, Minister for Education, Training and Skills.

Departmental Advisers:

Prof. M. Westwell, Chief Executive, Department for Education.

Mr C. Bernardi, Chief Operating Officer, Department for Education.

Mr P. Kelly, Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Preschools, Department for Education.

Mr B. Temperly, Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy and Corporate Services, Department for Education.

Mr A. Creek, Executive Director, Finance, Department for Education.

Ms M. Elliott, Executive Director, People and Culture, Department for Education.

Mr D. Humphrys, Executive Director, Support and Inclusion, Department for Education.

The CHAIR: Good morning, and welcome back to Estimates Committee A. 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. Having said that, 'informal' does not mean the rules of the committee do not apply about asking questions and how you ask questions. Those rules still apply. Some members thought that they did not apply yesterday.

I understand the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed an approximate time for the consideration of proposed payments, subject to an additional two minutes.

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—in other words, to take it on notice—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 of up to 10 minutes, if they wish to do so. 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 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. 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 to this committee. Consistent with the rules, photography by members from the chamber floor is not permitted while the committee is sitting.

Ministers and members may not table documents; however, they can be supplied 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.

Minister, we are going to deal with the portfolio of School Education. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and now call on the minister to make a statement or introduce his advisers.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, Chair. I do not propose to make an opening statement, but I will introduce the representatives from the department who are here with me for this session. To my left is Professor Martin Westwell, Chief Executive. To my right is Ben Temperly, Deputy Chief Executive. To Martin Westwell's left is Chris Bernardi, Chief Operating Officer. Behind me we have Anthony Creek, Executive Director, Finance; Peter Kelly, Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Preschools; Darren Humphrys, Executive Director, Support and Inclusion, and Marina Elliott, Executive Director, People and Culture.

Could I also perhaps say from the outset—I am hoping the member for Morialta will be okay with this—we are proposing to deal with questions to or about the Skills Commission in the skills section. I thought I would say that at the start, just in case.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: You might have the right people at the table. I would like to start with workforce questions on Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 173. How many teacher vacancies and other staff vacancies does the department currently have?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I can give you a bit of detail in response to that question. At the beginning of the 2024 school year, 68 positions remained unfilled, which compared to 71 in 2023 and 86 in 2022. The majority of these roles were in country areas and for secondary teacher positions. I can give you updated figures since then. At week 10 of term 1, the department was supporting sites with 41 teaching vacancies, so we saw a drop, which was good. But as of week 3 of term 2, which is the most recent data I have, the department was supporting sites with strategies to fill 56 unfilled vacancies.

Maybe I will give a little bit of context. We all know what a difficult environment it is nationally at the moment to attract and retain staff. South Australia is in a far better position than other states, which is a great thing. We need to keep it that way, but those pressures continue, particularly in country areas. Some of the reasons for vacancies, which I do not think will come as a surprise to this committee, are around teachers winning new roles or taking leave, backfilling of leave, people leaving the system, and retirements as well. We have seen an increase in that here and an increase everywhere else.

Current data, just to summarise that answer, is 56 unfilled vacancies. That is a small decrease on where we have been previously, but there is still obviously a lot of work to do to continue to protect us from higher vacancies of the kind that we have seen in, particularly, states like Victoria and New South Wales.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Does the minister have any advice or has the department offered any advice in relation to what is anticipated for term 3? Are we expecting that 56 to become a harder task for term 3, or is the pressure easing as the year goes on?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I do not have that advice at this stage. When I do, I am happy to speak to you about it if you wish, but at this stage I do not have projections on whether it is going to get harder or easier. I would probably surmise that the fluctuation that we saw from the start of the year at 68 and then end of week 10 of term 1 dropping to 41 and then back to 56 for week 3 of term 2—they tend to go up and down, but I am happy to update when I can if we get any projections about what the department expects to happen for term 3.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: How many vacancies is the department carrying in corporate support services and other non-teaching roles?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will take that on notice and provide an answer back to the committee, member for Morialta.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: How many staff are currently suspended due to investigations of the nature of which the minister would be briefed on, I imagine, on a monthly basis?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Is the government anticipating the use of waivers for teaching students and other unregistered teachers increasing or decreasing to fill these vacancies?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Just to clarify, your question is: do we anticipate the number of waivers for teaching positions to go up to try to fill the existing vacancies that we have?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Perhaps I can ask the question with a little bit more context, but basically, yes. The 56 roles that were vacant at week 3 in term 2, I am guessing that either some or a larger number of those were supported with TRTs who might be permanent employees of the department or they might not. Some of them, I understand, will be supported by teaching students who have waivers from the Teachers Registration Board (TRB) given the current circumstance.

My question is not just about those 56; it is more of a broad question. I understand the department has been working with the TRB to facilitate those waivers. Is your advice that the use of those waivers for this purpose will continue and increase, or is it something that is being sought to be phased out over the medium term? Sorry, I think I used the wrong term. I think I should have used 'special authority to teach'.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: At this stage, I do not think there has been any advice provided to me that we expect it to go up, but I would imagine it will still be part of what we try to do to fill vacancies. The department, obviously, is looking at that continually, which I think is important. But, as I said, I do not have current advice that we are expecting an increase in that as part of our strategy that we have for dealing with the vacancies that we currently have.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: We asked a similar question last year and I do not know if the minister has figures to hand, but how many teachers who are teaching in the country exercised their right of return after teaching in the country for a required period of time last year, in 2023? I understand there have been some changes to the way this is working, but are you able to identify for the last year, to start with, and then any previous data you have on teachers exercising right of return to come to the city?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Just as we are trying to find an answer for you on that, it is an opportunity for me to respond to what you alluded to in your question around there being changes. That is correct, but what we made sure that we did in response to very clear feedback from the profession was retain the right of teachers who previously had a right of return to go back to what is

generally a metropolitan teaching position to do that. We did not support the notion of taking away that right.

Having said that, we know that it can cause complications for sites. It is feedback that I have certainly received from principals on many occasions, and I would guess that you probably have too. It can be an impost upon leadership in—let's say hypothetically—a metropolitan school that is feeling quite settled with staff and then gets told that there is a teacher coming from elsewhere to exercise their right of return. It is of course a big step to consider removing that, given the person who, for instance, might have gone to the country to fill a role there most likely did so under the—

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Expectation.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: —expectation, commitment, that once they were finished they would be able to go back to their other role, so we did not suggest removing that. The information I have, member for Morialta, is that as of this year I think our workforce management team in the department, led by Marina Elliott, have placed 86 teachers and there will be more. I am happy to try to get more specifics for you and provide that on notice, but my advice is as of this year, I think that 86 would be those who have exercised right of return, who have been placed under that entitlement that they have.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: On the same line: how does that square with the Premier's commitment prior to the election? I think there was a Facebook post in which he said that principals should determine who they hire to have in their schools, not bureaucrats in Flinders Street. I am paraphrasing, but I am sure the minister remembers the post.

Maybe I can ask it in a more straightforward manner: has the department changed the process for how these teachers are placed within schools, and do principals have the right to say no if they do not wish to accept that teacher?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes, I certainly remember that issue and I will accept that your paraphrasing of my comments is as accurate as, if not more accurate than, many things that are said in this place. I am happy to give you an answer because, yes, we have made changes and the changes we have made are in line with that commitment I gave around trying to provide more ability for site leaders to have a say and choose who is working at their school. There are a few things I can take you through there.

In 2023 the department worked with principal associations and the union to co-design and evaluate changes to the recruitment and placement system. Those changes included, but are not limited to, expanding the eligibility criteria for conversions to permanency to create stability for schools and preschools, and certainty for teachers as well, and that is also an election commitment we made around increasing levels of permanency in the system.

Other changes included advertising all teaching roles at the same time, rather than sequencing country, metropolitan, permanent and contract roles, so that teachers have visibility to all roles, which was not the case previously—I am pretty sure that was feedback that not only the department received but that I received as well; to reduce consequential vacancies arising late in the year, which are harder for leaders to fill; enabling site leaders to match teachers with that industrial right that you and I have just discussed, with the right to a permanent role, to a suitable role in their school, rather than corporate teams choosing the site and advising site leaders of the outcome.

I think that gets to the heart of the question, and a good one it is too, around what we are trying to do. It is a tricky space in which to work because we are operating within industrial requirements that are legislated—or mandated I should say—as part of the enterprise agreement, so not all things are possible. We have done a number of things here, including giving those site leaders more of a say in terms of matching staff they think will be a good fit to their site. We do that under our understanding that leaders know their sites best.

Other changes include recruiting and reappointing leadership roles earlier in the year to reduce the number of leaders being placed as a permanent teacher in a school as per their industrial entitlement, then winning another leadership role and leaving the school with a vacancy late in the year. I have seen this happen at a number of schools in my own area, which I think is not a great

outcome, particularly for the school community if they have just become used to a new leader and then, potentially, losing them late in the year and being left in a situation of uncertainty.

Another change is introducing a more contemporary approach to recruitment by trialling online tools to improve the applicant's experience, create efficiencies for the department and reduce the administrative burden for our school and preschool leaders.

This is the advice I have received from the workforce management team around what they have done. I can say that the evaluation of the changes that we conducted in 2023—and we evaluated those changes with the organisations that were part of the co-design, which were the principal associations and the AEU—the feedback was positive and constructive, which is good. I think we have made good on the commitment that we made and certainly I can say to this place with my hand on my heart that the feedback I get from principals is that those changes have been beneficial.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Given the shortage of teachers at the moment, I imagine that probably principals are eager to recruit staff at a higher level than maybe five or 10 years ago, which probably makes it easier. I just want to touch on one of the issues that you raised, which was the Labor commitment to increase permanency. We have discussed this at each of the last two estimates as well. The commitment was, 'To increase the percentage of permanent teachers by at least 10 per cent.'

My recollection is two years ago the minister said that they were working on what the figure would be and that last year it was characterised as an aspirational goal rather than data set in stone, but I could be mischaracterising that. Does the department have a figure on what they currently view as the permanent teaching workforce? I think last year the suggestion was it was about 80 per cent, but the minister identified that that was a contested figure by the AEU and potentially other stakeholders.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Member for Morialta, could you repeat the end of that question? My apologies.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The straightforward question would be: what is the department's figure for permanency in teachers? I think last year it was in the order of 80 per cent.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will get you the figure on what we calculate our permanency rate at. I can tell you, though, that we are going to have to do a lot more to meet the election commitment, but that is not for lack of massively increasing conversions to permanency. I am just making sure I have the up-to-date data because we are converting at a rate, I think, that is above what the department has ever done before. Of course, because of turnover in the system, which is not unique to our state but an issue, it is meaning that we are going to have to accelerate.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am happy for the minister to take that on notice. I would be keen to understand the data that the minister is using, identifying that he said that it has to accelerate, but what was the percentage in 2022-23 and this year, comparing apples with apples?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: On the percentages, I will come back to you. As I said, I am being pretty straight up here in saying that we will need to do even more than we are doing because we are up against it in terms of movement in the system. I can perhaps just give some context in terms of how hard the department and I are trying and what we are doing to try to meet that commitment. I do not give these figures as an aspersion on your time as minister or any previous minister because it was a different environment, and I accept that. Conversion of temporary to permanent: 2017, 56; 2018, 359; 2019, 263; 2020, 208; 2021, during COVID, I accept, 106; 2022, 206; 2023, 512; and, as of 24 January 2024, the figure I have is 683. So we have really accelerated; we are doing it at a rate.

The reason the election commitment that you referred to talks about increasing by at least 10 per cent is that, in constructing that election commitment at the time, there was and remains a difference of opinion between the department and the union about what existing levels of permanency are. Rather than get caught in that quagmire, we made a commitment to, regardless of what the union and department at the time believed it was, increase it by 10 per cent. If we can keep up the acceleration that we have had over the last few years, I still think that we can do it, but that is going to have to increase for us be successful.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can the minister provide a definition of what those numbers are that he was just quoting? In particular, I am wondering if that is the conversion of individual roles to permanency within the school that they are in? Is that the figure that the minister was quoting or is it the net figure on the number of extra permanent roles created within the system during the course of the year? The reason I ask for clarification is that, of course, during 2020 and 2021 there was an enormous shift from teachers working in primary schools to high schools. Now that may impact on that figure or it may not, but I am wondering whether the minister can define those numbers he was just quoting.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Understood. The chief executive will provide an answer on that.

Prof. WESTWELL: It is not the net figure, the unbalanced figure, it is the number of individuals who are on temporary contracts who got moved to permanency.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you for that. My understanding of the election commitment is that we would not be using that as a basis. My understanding of the election commitment was to increase the percentage of permanent teachers by at least 10 per cent, which would suggest to me that the net figure is a more relevant one. I am wondering, within the system, the number of teachers, the percentage of those who are permanent increasing by 10 per cent. That is how I take the election commitment to be, and I think that is how most people would.

I do not think that you can get that figure in a sensible way from just thinking about people who transfer within their current job. If they go from contract teacher at one school to permanent teacher at another school and, overall, the system has more permanent teachers, then to me that is producing an uplift, and I am not sure that those figures are a fair reflection of the system-wide effort.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I take your point. I do not think necessarily that we are in agreement on that, so I will take it on notice and provide a more detailed answer around our methodology. I just want to reiterate that, despite what we are up against, I think the election commitment was a really important one, and I would like to think that those lower levels of vacancies we have here, compared to elsewhere, are in some way there because we are doing what we can to give people permanency.

I have been approached by parents of young teachers at street-corner meetings in my area saying young teachers are being asked to go elsewhere and being offered higher salaries, which is what happens, and would stay if they were offered permanency, which to me speaks to why it is an important thing to do. It might be the difference in having, particularly, a young contract teacher stay as a teacher instead of choosing a different profession. We will get on with that, but I will get you more detailed answers to your questions.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can I ask about the other aspect of the same policy, which was not just principals' right to hire the teachers they want but also what was described in the media as the principals' right to fire. In fairness, I do not think that is how the detail of the policy was characterised. The minister has previously talked about reducing the time that somebody would be under performance management. In posing this question, I highlight that the major risk to the time frame blowing out in previous years was teachers exercising their right to go on stress leave or other sorts of industrial rights being used. I am wondering has there been any change to the use of those industrial rights, and has the promise of the Labor government to effectively have the right to fire—characterise it however you will—has that been fulfilled?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will give an answer to that question, thank you, member for Morialta. We might offer a clarification to our answer on the previous question while I am finding you an answer to that.

Prof. WESTWELL: The clarification I want to give is around the placement question—because of the advice that I gave to the minister, I just want to make sure that it is clear—that 86 teachers who we referred to this year were actually teachers who are eligible for placement but we do not think will need placing next year, so we are not considering them for placements next year. I think your question was about the country teachers who need placing. Identified in 2024 for placement in 2025, we have 34 country to metro transfers that we have to place.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Okay, and you have more than 34 schools that are very, very keen to get new teachers, so that will be helpful.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Onto your next question, member for Morialta. Yes, I will say from the outset, I, and we, firmly believe we have met our election commitment on the management of underperforming teachers or unsatisfactory performance, and there is some detail I would perhaps like to take the committee through here.

We have updated the managing unsatisfactory performance guidelines to include a 10-week formal performance management process to speed up the removal of underperforming teachers. The new time frame is applicable to all department staff. Between 1 July last year and 20 May this year, the performance support team received contact from 684 leaders seeking advice on how to address performance concerns. Those outcomes include, and I am happy to provide this as detail to the committee:

- six employees are deemed resigned on the basis of being absent without authority. One was a teacher;
- 11 employees did not have their contracts renewed. Six were teachers;
- six employees had their employment terminated. One was a teacher;
- 45 employees resigned. That includes five workers compensation redemptions. Of that 45, 20 were teachers;
- 42 employees' performance improved or deemed to have improved, which I think we can agree is the best outcome if it can be achieved. Twenty were teachers; and
- 11 employees were required to participate in formal performance management. Six of those were teachers.

The position of the department, and I support this, is that the early assistance and advice that has been provided to site leaders—and we can see with the 684 figure that a lot are reaching out and seeking that—is contributing to a lower number compared to previous years of underperforming employees progressing to the formal performance management process, and this was one of the things that we grappled with when designing this.

Because of the complicated nature of how the formal performance management process was taking place, once teachers found themselves within that, I think it was rarely bringing about situations where the teacher was either determined to have improved their performance and go back into the classroom, and then a delay if that was not the case, and it was deemed that that was not possible for a decision to be made on them being moved on.

One of the fundamental parts of this change is to provide advice early in the piece to leaders when they reach out in regard to what they believe is an underperforming employee in the hope that something can be addressed earlier and not need the formal performance management process to be used. Now, of the six teachers who did participate in that, three are on leave and not currently teaching, so the process has been suspended. One had their employment terminated; one resigned from their employment; and one currently is in process. I think we will look closely at the outcomes of those as a way of informing us about whether or not any other changes potentially need to happen or not.

But certainly the feedback that I have received and the department has received has been positive, and we think that it is contributing to a process that is better for leaders and a process that is better for staff who I think in years gone past had been caught up in very, very long, seemingly never-ending processes, which was a bad outcome for them, a bad outcome for the site leader and a bad outcome for the school. I know that we have very strong support for the changes that we have made from both the secondary principals and primary principals associations as well, who believe that it has been a really positive change.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The minister identified a series of categories and numbers just then for this year. Can the minister—and I am very happy for him to take it on notice—find the equivalent numbers for each of the last five years?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am happy to take that on notice, member for Morialta.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you very much. I would like to move to page 174, the investing expenditure summary. Two years ago, the minister was good enough to take on notice a request to provide a budgeted expenditure for all projects for each year of the forward estimates, and I think he might have done so again last year; would he again be able to provide us with such a list this year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes, I am happy to do so again this year, member for Morialta.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Will families at Plympton International College and Errington special school have access to an OSHC facility on campus next year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am aware of the public debate on this issue, and there are a few things that perhaps I can put on the record here in regard to Plympton International out-of-school-hours care facilities. I was written to by the chairperson in May regarding the OSHC facilities. It was a request for funding of, I think, between \$450,000 and \$500,000 to purchase a prefabricated building to service as a dedicated space for an expanded OSHC.

Department staff met with representatives from the school on 8 May and 24 May on how the school can utilise its existing \$14 million redevelopment to construct a multipurpose facility, where OSHC services could also be delivered; \$23.5 million has been provided, I think all by Labor governments—if I am wrong about that I am sure you will correct me; \$3.5 million for STEM in 2016; \$3 million under Building Better Schools in 2017; a \$3 million election commitment for a kiss and drop, road improvements and additional classrooms, 2022; and a \$14 million capital upgrade to which I just referred from the 2023-24 state budget. Architects have been appointed, and I understand planning is underway.

I accept what the member for Morialta has said, there is need like this right across the system, and I am not for a second saying to the Plympton community that their request is not without merit, because we have so many requests for new and refurbished infrastructure that do have merit that the budget just cannot accommodate. It goes to the heart of the infrastructure plan that we released, which is about trying to set some clear parameters around what we use to make decisions around where we put the money that we do have. I would like that bucket of money to be larger, and no doubt the member for Morialta wished it to be larger when he was the Minister for Education.

If we were to accommodate the funding request of an additional roughly half a million dollars, it would come at the expense of something else. On all those infrastructure projects that we announced recently, and I think probably all the ones that have been announced since the election, I have taken the advice of the department on what are priorities and what are not priorities.

In terms of your more specific question around what do we do around Plympton International College having an OSHC, the department has given its commitment to work with the school to make sure there is an OSHC there next year. Having dedicated OSHC spaces is a topic that comes up all the time. With my own three daughters, we use OSHC for them at a public primary school. It is not a dedicated room; it is a room that is a classroom during the day and then becomes OSHC at 10 minutes past three. I know the OSHC team there all too well. When I arrive at 5.59pm to pick the kids up, I have a chat to them, and they would certainly like a dedicated OSHC space as well. We will work with Plympton International to make sure there is an OSHC.

In terms of the broader question, we have certainly supported Plympton International with significant funding in a number of different ways. It is a school for which the enrolment figures are pretty impressive in terms of how they have changed over recent years, which is fantastic. I have no issue with schools, including governing councils, getting out and advocating for more spending; that is what governing councils are there to do. Ultimately, I am in this job and the people around me are in these jobs to decide where we prioritise the money that we do have.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The minister mentioned the 20-year infrastructure plan in his answer and how that would guide commitments of funding. Can I clarify that the 20-year infrastructure plan does envisage that funding will go to meet the capacity needs of schools that are bursting at the seams and that do have significant growth, and that that is one of the criteria that is used to assess where expenditure on school infrastructure should go: growing school populations?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: That is a good question, member for Morialta. Yes, that is certainly a criteria. It is one of a few, but of course that is an important criteria.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: On that basis, I took the minister at face value and, I think, on occasion at the school, warmly congratulated the government for the provision of the \$14 million to Plympton in last year's budget on the basis that it was needed, as Plympton is a rapidly growing school that has gone from a few hundred students at the beginning of my time as shadow education minister nine years ago, to where it is about to tip over 1,000, I think. On that basis, my understanding was that the scope of works last year was absolutely required.

Can the minister perhaps provide the original scope of works determined as necessary when the \$14 million project was awarded, and what is the current scope of works now that some value management has already been applied?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I might pass over to the deputy chief executive, Ben Temperly, to answer your question.

Mr TEMPERLY: Thank you, minister. There are a number of different funding streams going into Plympton International College at the moment. There is the original commitment that was made under the previous government, plus there is some additional funding going into supporting additional scope through an election commitment of the current government. We are working with the school to meet the original scope of all of those commitments through the funding that is available. As you referenced, value management is needed from time to time in order to bring those projects in on budget. I do not have the exact detail to provide a detailed comparison of original versus current, but we would be happy to provide that detail.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can the minister advise if it is a fair characterisation of his previous answer that a dedicated OSHC space is not an essential requirement of a large and growing public school with large numbers of students in primary years?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I would not accept that characterisation. What I am saying is that there are lots and lots of sites across the state that do not have a dedicated OSHC, and I understand that they would all like that. Given the range of commitments this government has made on OSHC—which I would be pretty confident in saying is more than any government before it has made in terms of trying to prioritise OSHC—we well and truly understand that need.

But, no, my answer should not be characterised as saying that that is not a valid request. I think I said from the start that I understand what they are asking for has merit. Unfortunately, we are up against, as we always are, what the budget can and cannot accommodate, hence I think there is that really important need, as the Auditor-General said, for an infrastructure plan, which gives us some firm criteria on which to make those decisions and tries to give a modicum of transparency, not so much to those sites that get funding but to those that do not, around how we are making our decisions.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I have one more on this.

The CHAIR: Member for Morialta, I think you are starting to stray a little bit in terms of your questioning. If you can perhaps get back to the budget lines.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will go to the budget line that we have been on, page 175. There is a line for Plympton International College, \$14 million being spent. My questions are directly to the use of that expenditure. I put it to the minister that the minister has identified in his last answer that the government has made a lot of commitments to OSHC services. We have a \$14 million project currently underway, where there is a negotiation between the school and the department on the exact use of that. We have an OSHC service that services not just this school but the special school next door as well, and the minister identified the desirability of improving OSHC services around the state.

I ask the minister to take into consideration a reconsideration of this relatively modest adjustment in the scheme of these new facilities. I just introduce one new element, that being that, if there is a 20-year infrastructure plan that has criteria for gauging where investment should go, it strikes me that such an investment would be absolutely within that were it not that we are in a scarcity environment and there are limited funds to go around. I put it to the minister only that this project of

an OSHC, a dedicated space at Plympton, is not going to get cheaper if it is not incorporated in this current build. I encourage the minister to give this further consideration in the months ahead.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I guess I will take that on notice. As I have said, our position on this is not brought about because we do not believe that the ask or request from the Plympton school community is without merit: it is brought about by the fact that we have a finite budget available for infrastructure. We could spend what we have; Chris Bernardi could probably do the maths in his head many times over.

As minister, I think it is important that we look at schools that have received some kind of funding support. Plympton is certainly one, and it has made very, very good use of that money, as the member for Morialta rightly said. Its enrolment turnaround is possibly of a like we have not seen anywhere else. It is a real success story. But I go to schools almost every single day that have not had any level of support, and I know how they feel when even meritorious projects like a dedicated OSHC for Plympton get money and they do not. They certainly ask the question around what it is going to take for them to get some support.

The foundation on which the 20-year infrastructure plan is built is to make every school a great school. I do want us to stick to it, and I am hell-bent on trying to achieve as best I can in whatever time I get in this role. Plympton is one of the best examples of it and so I think are The Heights and Valley View. There is probably a long list of those that, once a bit of funding support was sent their way—some excellent leadership, perhaps a specialisation—they were able to dramatically turn around enrolment figures so that we were using the latent capacity at those sites.

That is good for the community that lives around it so they can use their local school, but it is a more equitable and economic way of using the money that we have available to us rather than having to build something new or expand something existing. In order for us to achieve 'every school a great school' and the aims of the infrastructure plan, we do have to make sure we try to focus on schools that have not attracted any. Plympton is a school that has. That is one of the criteria I think that we need to take into account when we are deciding what we do. The commitment I made earlier that I reiterate is that the department is working with Plympton International to make sure there is a good, functioning OSHC there.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I have a question on the same page in relation to infrastructure. Will the minister and the department reconsider the request from Unley High School's governing council for funding to expand their capacity so they do not have to impose a capacity management plan in future years?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes, I am of course very well aware of this and the desire of Unley High School to have some further infrastructure and capital works. Unley High School is certainly another success story, a school of choice, a school in great demand. It is a school, however, that has had some significant funding support in recent years, if I am correct, from both sides of politics. It has had a \$32.5 million major facility upgrade—\$20 million from the former Labor government's Building Better Schools and \$12.5 million from you, member for Morialta, for year 7 to high school—and capacity was increased by 450 students from 1,250 to 1,700.

I guess my answer will be in some way in the same vein as my answer to the last question about Plympton, and that is that it is a school that has attracted significant funding support, whereas others have not. The deputy chief executive reminds me that capacity is 1,700. Current forecasts are I think 1,669 for 2025 and 1,681 for 2026. The department believes it can be managed. I do not think I have it in front of me but, from memory, 33 per cent of current students are living outside the zone, including 24 per cent of year 7 students. I accept that is because they want to go to that school, and it is a great school, but we have zones for a reason, to manage capacity.

I am not entirely sure—I know the member for Unley has made comments about the department encouraging the school to do a business case and, I think, forcing them to spend money on a business case and giving them the impression that we were supporting them for that. That is not the advice that I have from the department, and certainly the correspondence that I have seen, I think, from a director level in the infrastructure team does not support that.

If there is something that the member for Unley or Morialta would like to bring to my attention that I am not aware of, I would be keen to hear it, but from what I have seen the department's position that it does not support that has been very, very clear. As I said, I have taken the department's advice on what is a priority at this stage and what is not. I will continue to do that, but, again, I commend the governing council chair for his strong advocacy in standing up for his school.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I move back to page to 174, Mount Barker High School and Mount Barker new preschool and primary school, under the new projects lines.

I draw to the attention of the minister the representations of the Mount Barker council, which he may have or may not have seen. In relation to new school capacity, they characterise the new preschool and primary school that are expected to provide an additional 100 preschool places and 350 primary school places, but with operations not commencing until 2028 there is a risk these places will not suffice, given projected population growth over the next four years.

In relation to the high school, the council welcomes the funding but says it is unclear if this funding will be adequate to fully address the infrastructure and capacity challenges faced by the school. To put it in context, the council, which is the fastest growing LGA in South Australia, has said, and I quote from their press release:

It is forecast that for the next 22 years...Mount Barker will welcome a new classroom of school-aged children every two months (or a total of 3,316 school aged children.)

The mayor, David Leach, is quoted as saying:

We urge the government to consider additional measures to ensure all local children have access to quality education.

And the council has been arguing for a new birth-to-year-12 public school. Does the minister have a response to council and, in this context, can he advise if the processes that have been guiding the decision to do a new primary school and not a new birth-to-year-12 school have been informed by Infrastructure SA along the way?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I can confirm, and I should say from the outset I met with the mayor of Mount Barker council here last sitting week, I think, to discuss these. I am aware of the media release that the council put out and the issues brought to the attention of this place by the member for Morialta.

If I recall correctly, I think I got a question—it might be in question time—from the member for Morialta in a previous sitting week about whether or not these things would go through Infrastructure SA. I said that they would, and they have, and that includes the matter before us now. There was a departmental process, a lengthy one, then Deloitte supported the work through Infrastructure SA as well, so it has been through a really thorough process and what we have announced has been informed by that.

I understand the council's position. We all know that provision of public schooling in the Mount Barker area has not kept up with growth and the planning has not been adequate. This has been a long time coming, but we have stuck to the commitment that I made around taking departmental advice and the advice of Infrastructure SA in terms of what we provide here, and that is what we have done with a new preschool and a new primary school as well.

One thing that I think was not mentioned in the council's press release was the commitment we made to Oakbank as well—\$15.9 million, I think. Oakbank is another school that falls into that category of 'let's make every school a great school'. Lee Knight, the principal there, is doing exceptional work. It is a great school. It has something like 150 vacant enrolment places. It is 15 minutes from Mount Barker and close to other areas. There were a number of reasons that we committed that money, but we see that as a school that can, I guess, soak up some of the enrolment demand around the area as well. I think that is probably something that was not mentioned by Mount Barker council, which they probably could have put a bit more focus on, given that is a pretty significant commitment for the local area.

I expect that once those works are complete those enrolment places will quite quickly fill up, as we have seen in other places like the schools we have just spoken about—Unley and Plympton International—when the same kind of new infrastructure has been provided there.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I have just one follow-up question. Despite the council saying that they will need an extra 3,300 places—acknowledging this is over the next 22 years—is the minister confident that the modest extra investment at Mount Barker High School, which has already had some extra investment in recent years, and the new investment at Oakbank, will be sufficient for the foreseeable future for Mount Barker? Or is it the department's view that there might need to be further high school infrastructure commitments next decade but are not needed now?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to the deputy chief executive, Ben Temperly, to answer that question.

Mr TEMPERLY: Thank you minister. As the council indicates, the population change in Mount Barker is happening over time. We are confident that with the initial addition of the increased capacity coming through this year's state budget that that will certainly help meet the future demand. However, we are also conscious that the population is increasing and we are continuing to monitor the changes in the demographics in Mount Barker, and we will continue to provide advice to the government in accordance with those changes.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: On a new budget line, Budget Paper 3, page 23, I am looking at the overall expenses for selected agencies. I am sure there is another place where this figure is represented as well, but if you go to the education department, it identifies last year's budget as being \$4.6 billion and the estimated result being just under \$4.8 billion. It is a variance of about \$139 million. Can you advise why this variance? Unkind people might characterise it as a blowout, but I am sure there are other ways to characterise it too.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: You are not unkind, so you would not do that. I might pass over to Chris Bernardi, who is itching to have a swing at this one. I will let him have a go.

Mr BERNARDI: Thank you minister. As outlined in the budget papers, the expenditure increase is related to the different programs within the department. We have early years education and also skills. For example, as outlined in Budget Paper 4, page 181, we have higher expenditure in government schools, the impact of carryover in the estimated result, including the National Student Wellbeing Program boost funding, higher indexation in relation to the National School Reform Agreement, and commonwealth funding for the Schools Upgrade Fund.

Then in the 2023-24 financial year, the new enterprise agreement was approved so we have costs in the estimated result that is causing a variation of that as well. There are other expenses movements in the other programs as well. I can take those on notice and give you a more detailed explanation.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you. Mr Bernardi's mother is a constituent of mine, so say hi to your mum for me, please.

Mr BERNARDI: I will do that.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: To clarify, then, I am looking at Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 181, where Mr Bernardi has just directed us. It identifies \$78 million being the impact of the enterprise agreement. Can I clarify: did the final settlement reached in the EB agreement require extra funds to be provided or was it within the negotiating margin that Treasury would have set for that negotiation to take place all along?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass to Chris Bernardi to answer that question.

Mr BERNARDI: As per standard processes with the Gonski funding, that was approved a while back. We manage the costs of the education-type activities from within existing resources. As part of our normal budget planning, we would budget for expected outcomes of the EB in relation to education, and that includes price increases, wage increases, plus also other policy-type decisions. The part of the EB that relates to the education activities is funded from within our existing resources. In terms of the early years, as per normal standard processes, we are unable to use Gonski funding

for that, so our budget is supplemented by Treasury and cabinet to meet the full cost of the preschool early years component of the EB.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can I clarify, then? Mr Bernardi has explained that the funding for the EB was able to be entirely paid for from within existing resources on the basis that the Gonski entitlement had enough headroom to allow for that funding to take place. My understanding, though, is that within the department's budgetary processes it would know what the Gonski entitlement would have for expenditure in the years ahead because that is based on the formula, or at least it would have a pretty good estimate.

The department would have notional allocations for how much it would be allocating to the cost or wages, the EB cost, and then other projects within the Gonski allocation that the department would be likely to pursue, whether they be a new South Australian curriculum or autism support teachers or wellbeing teachers or other aspects. Did the EB agreement come within the department's notional allocation for what it anticipated the EB would cost, or have some of those other Gonski-applicable measures needed to be reduced in order to cope with a higher than expected EB agreement?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take that on notice.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: How are students, who are entering reception midyear, treated for funding purposes by the state and by the commonwealth? Effectively, these are students who are doing that extra six months of reception over and above what the commonwealth has previously argued they should be paying for.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Just a point of clarification, member for Morialta, and then I am very happy to have a go at answering your question: are you asking in relation to both the non-government and government sectors?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Just the government sector now. I will talk about non-government a bit later in the day.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: My answer would be the same for both us—as in the government system—and the non-government system. Obviously, as has been a matter for the public record, the federal government has unfortunately pulled its funding for midyear intake, which comes as a cut for the public system in terms of the funding that we were going to be able to attract from the federal government towards the election commitment that we have made and are delivering to reintroduce midyear intake for preschool and reception students and, of course, also a cut to the non-government system as well.

The federal government has given, as I understand it, transitional funding for a year—and I accept that you want to discuss this bit in more detail in another session, which is fine—to the non-government system, and we have also provided some transitional funding to the non-government system. We have not, in the public system as I understand it, attracted any transitional funding from the federal government, which of course is disappointing. I might leave my answer there and am happy for any follow-ups.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I guess I have two follow-up questions, and I will put them both to you, and you can answer them together or one at a time. What is the loss or the cut from the federal government? What is the quantum of that based on what the state had been anticipating receiving? The second question is: what is, therefore, the cost to the state budget of this program, which is welcome, obviously, in schools or most schools?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Understood. Member for Morialta, the money that we would have attracted from the federal government into the public system towards midyear intake was approximately, I am told, \$7 million per year, so that is what we are now not receiving.

In terms of the second part of your question, following enrolment offers in term 1 this year, verified midyear enrolments were used to refine final funding for schools, as you would expect us to do. Based on enrolments of 4,372 midyear intake reception students—which I must say is a pretty positive response to the commitment that we made—the department is providing \$29.4 million to primary schools in the 2024 school year.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can I just clarify: that \$29 million that the government is providing to primary schools, does that include the \$7 million that you were hoping to get from the commonwealth?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: That \$29.4 million figure I gave you includes the money that we would have expected from the federal government.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Is that \$29 million going to be the ongoing sum, notwithstanding variations in enrolments? To the direct purpose of the question, I understand that some support was given to schools to enable them to take on teachers during the first half of the year, either this year or next year, I cannot remember which. Is that support going to be maintained going forward, or are schools going to have extra funding only in the second half of the year and then, if they want to maintain their midyear reception teacher, if they have standalone classrooms for that, are they going to have to do that from within their own budgets? Will schools be funded effectively for the full year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: It is ongoing.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That ongoing figure is on the basis of that extra support that schools have experienced this year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am told yes.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Bravo. Given that the commonwealth does not seem to count these students towards its Gonski allocation, is the funding that the state government is putting into midyear reception, this \$29 million per year, allowed to be counted towards the state's Gonski allocation? Are these students counted for the purposes of our Gonski allocation?

The CHAIR: After this answer I will turn to the member for Waite, who has been patiently waiting for me to notice her attention.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Well timed, it was the last one in the run.

The CHAIR: Perfect timing then.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take that on notice, member for Morialta.

Ms HUTCHESSON: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 181: can the minister advise the chamber of the outcomes of the enterprise bargaining?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Waite, for the question and, yes, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the enterprise bargaining agreement that we struck with the education union. As members of this place, including yourself will know, it was not an easy process. I know the member for Morialta went through one of those as well in his time as minister. It certainly went a lot longer than I would have wished, probably longer than the union would have wished, and there were certainly times there where I did wonder whether or not we were going to be able to reach agreement or not.

There were a few specific challenges in terms of these negotiations. One of those, of course, is that we were negotiating in a climate of teacher shortages nationally, but thankfully nothing in South Australia as other jurisdictions have seen—and I hope it stays that way. Also, teacher workload has increased for a long time now based not exclusively but primarily on the complexity of classrooms.

This was the first one in my memory, and I have been involved in a number, where a pay increase was not solely the number one priority. I think the union stuck to its guns, to its credit, on doing something around workload. That was even despite a lot of the hardheads around me telling me that that would drop away, and at the end of the day it is always just about the money. But I think it comes as an indication of the pressures that are out there, the workload stuff, and trying to find a way to address it—which was exceptionally hard in the end and costly—remained for us an equal number one priority with a pay rise.

As I said at the time, and I will say it again now, it is the biggest package of proposals ever provided to South Australian teachers. It is worth an estimated \$1.6 billion over the life of the

agreement. It is a 13 per cent salary increase over the life of that agreement. Principals and preschool directors will receive a 16 per cent salary increase over the life of the agreement—that was a point of contention as well. I stuck to my guns on that; I did not want that to be taken out.

There were those, including some in the union, who did not like the idea of leadership receiving an additional salary increase. However, given the pressures on school principals and leadership teams now are so extreme—and the difficulty that we have as a system in keeping them there; attracting existing teachers to consider moving into a leadership position—we have to look at things like this in order to be able to attract them into those roles and keep them in those roles, and I am pleased that that was able to be maintained.

The complex part about the pay rise that we landed on is always finding a way for the budget to accommodate that, and that was true also of the increase in non-instructional time. Of course, the other challenge with non-instructional time, which we have increased by an hour and are progressively rolling out, was not just how to afford it—that was certainly a significant factor—but, as I said at the start of my answer to your question, that we are in an environment where it is harder to find teachers.

Of course, in order to provide an extra hour of non-instructional time, there needs to be someone else standing at the front of the class, which means we need teachers to be able to do that, and hence the decision in the end to phase in the extra hour of non-instructional time from our most disadvantaged schools through to our more advantaged, progressively. I have had mixed feedback—I would say there are always those who would say they would like that to be more—but if you look around the country, every jurisdiction is dealing with the issue of workload. It is on the agenda for the national meetings that I have every single time. I am proud that we as a state have at least decided to tackle it as part of this enterprise bargaining agreement.

It was frustrating that we were in a very lengthy back and forward around what are the things that we constantly hear have been added on top of the daily duties of a teacher that compound that workload issue that could be removed? It comes as an existing source of frustration to me, I must say, that we cannot collectively agree on what some of those things are and decide what we can remove and what we cannot. Because that seems to be a task beyond all of us right across Australia, we come back to doing something which is probably a bit more of a blunt instrument, which is an extra hour of non-instructional time. It was the only way in the end that I could see us making any kind of meaningful impact on the workload of teachers, and we managed to do it and provide a pay rise.

I finish my answer by saying that by making the Country Incentive Zone Allowance ongoing not only for staff who currently receive it but who would lose it at the end of five years, I think it is, but also for country staff who have been in their role long beyond the five-year period is something I am very proud that we kept in this. There were moments when it was on a knife's edge. I think that is exceptionally important.

The first question from the member for Morialta today was a very fair one, of course, about teaching vacancies, and I said that where it is hardest is in the country. That will remain the case, and we have done something about that: not only did we meet the election commitment we made in terms of making it ongoing for those who are getting it but we are bringing it back as well. In some cases that is a significant increase in salary for those staff, and I think it will do well to continue to protect us in the way that we have been a bit more protected from the kind of teacher shortages that we have seen elsewhere.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: In the targets at the top of page 180, it references the National School Reform Agreement. What is the status of negotiations with the commonwealth on that: are we talking days, weeks, months, years?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I certainly hope it is not years, I can tell you that, but it is hard going, there is no doubt about it; it is hard going. I do not in any way seek to make my answer political—there is no benefit in that for anyone, I do not think—but it has been made clear by the federal opposition and the shadow education minister that if they are to become the government whenever the next federal election is, there will be no more discussions around extra Gonski funding from that government. That brings things into very sharp focus, I think, for all states around trying to come to

an agreement about how we get public schools to 100 per cent, and we are 5 per cent short in that endeavour.

I do think we are inching closer and I remain confident that we will come to an agreement. Of course, the considerations for the state are the funding split and what we can afford, and how soon we could bring whatever our share might be online. They are, of course, considerations for the federal government as well.

On top of that, we have all requested the federal government to get back into providing infrastructure money, for reasons that would be obvious to the member for Morialta, because all states are in the same position—at least in the public system—that South Australia is in, which is that we are slipping behind. Stock is getting older. The age of buildings is getting older. The amount of money that we are spending on upkeep and maintenance of buildings, as opposed to building new ones or refurbishing them, is increasing, so our capacity to do that is diminishing.

The cost of builds has rapidly increased and significantly increased post COVID—again, we get less bang for our buck. I point to the new northern school that we are saying is going to be constructed in 2028 as a very good example of that: we have put, I think, \$155 million towards that. I remember a time and the member for Morialta would remember a time not long ago when that would get you two schools; it now gets you one. That is out of the control of me and this department, and it is the same right around the country. So we are pushing hard on that too, because we need assistance not just getting to 100 per cent, which is important, but getting that infrastructure money as well. I think we are getting closer and I remain confident that we can come to an agreement, but it has been a very difficult process.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The minister may be reluctant to provide too much detail, given an ongoing negotiation, so I will not spend too much time here. In relation to the allowances within the current agreement—of which the minister has previously been critical of spending towards SACE and ESB being counted towards the state's share and the 4 per cent allowed for depreciation and other matters—is the minister committed to removing those percentages from the state contribution, or do they potentially remain within the negotiation sphere?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Given that negotiations are live and they may or may not be topics of conversation within those negotiations, I will reserve any answer for a later time once we actually come to an agreement.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am happy to move on to a different target, the South Australian curriculum. What is the purpose of having a South Australian Curriculum for Public Education, as I think it is described, on top of the Australian Curriculum which is, of course, owned in part by the South Australian government?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will hand over to the chief executive, if the member for Morialta is okay with that, to provide some detail and perhaps answer as many questions as you wish to ask.

Prof. WESTWELL: Thank you, minister. When we look at the Australian Curriculum, of course the Australian Curriculum is created centrally and provides that guidance across the country, but every jurisdiction looks at that and thinks about how it might be adapted to make the biggest difference for their students in their own jurisdiction. Here in South Australia, and certainly in public education, we did a process where we started talking with our students, asking them about their aspirations for the future. We talked to parents and leaders around what we should be striving for in public education. We talked to employers, importantly, as well, around what they were seeing they were going to need in the future.

We are absolutely using the Australian Curriculum. We are based on the Australian Curriculum, but we are trying to respond to our context as well and make sure that this is going to work for our students in South Australia and help our teachers. The Australian Curriculum can look like lots of content to deliver. It is almost described as lots of pieces of content. That can be overwhelming for teachers, so one of the things we did with the South Australian Curriculum for Public Education was take that content—it is the same content—and help teachers to see what the through lines are from reception to year 10.

The reason why that is important is it helps teachers to understand what they might prioritise over other parts of the curriculum. The curriculum is all important, but we are going to need to put some emphasis on some parts of the curriculum and not others, and what we did not want was some of the important parts of the curriculum not being covered. That is what through lines are: organising the content around those big ideas, if you like, that run all the way through the curriculum. It helps teachers to do their planning. That was one thing.

The second thing that we did was that, in the Australian Curriculum, we have the general capabilities, and I think one of the weaknesses we have seen in the general capabilities over time is that they are being seen almost as an add-on to the curriculum. South Australian educators have done a really good job in kind of folding the general capabilities into the curriculum, but again, what we wanted to do was provide some guidance for educators to say that there are some general capabilities and there are some specific capabilities.

In the general capabilities, we would talk about critical and creative thinking, we would talk about things like interpersonal skills, and we would talk about intercultural understanding. Previously, and the way that the Australian Curriculum is structured, you would have to have a look at the content, what we are expecting students to be able to know and what we are expecting them to be able to do. You would have to take that, and then you would have to add in these capabilities. There were two, in fact, in the Australian Curriculum. We have the cross-curriculum priorities, which is another layer.

So there were these three organisers in the Australian Curriculum. It can be overwhelming for teachers, so what we did was bring those together in the subject so the organiser is the subject. So for the general capabilities that are appropriate in a subject, we put those there, and specific capabilities, specific skills of subjects, we brought those to the fore as well.

If we take something like mathematics, for example, the shaping paper for mathematics, before the Australian Curriculum was even started, had a lot of evidence in there about what makes effective maths learning. That is in the Australian Curriculum, but it is really de-emphasised. Yet those were the things about which, when we talked to particularly employers and our teachers, they were saying, 'Actually, those things should come to the top.' So, again, it is the same as the Australian Curriculum; we have just provided emphasis to guide teachers.

One of those notions that is in the research is this notion of strategic competence that becomes problem solving in mathematics. Really, that is about knowing what to do when you do not know what to do. Clearly, in mathematics, our students have to be able to calculate. They have to be able to look at a maths question and go, 'I know how to do that,' and do it. We have to do that teaching, that instruction, but we would not be doing students justice if we left it at that. We have got to make sure that our students are also able to look at a maths problem and say, 'I do not know what to do,' and then construct a response to that problem, because that was the sort of thing that our employers were asking us for.

What we have also added in the South Australian Curriculum for Public Education is taking, as I say, the Australian Curriculum but recognising that there are dispositions that are really important as well. One of the things that employers said to us—and teachers, and students as well in an interesting way, but if I just focus on the employers for a moment—was that students lacked resilience, that graduates who are going through and then going to the workplace can often lack resilience. One of the places where we see that particularly is in mathematics. There is a little bit of maths anxiety that contributes to that, but sometimes students feel, if they have not been taught a thing, then they just cannot answer the question. Employers were saying that that means that people just will not have a go, they are not leaning in, they are not effective learners, they are not becoming problem solvers.

Again, rather than putting that on the side somewhere and saying to educators, 'There is the subject, and then there is and this,' what we were really focused on was to say, 'Let's bring that into the subject and interweave those things together.' In the Australian Curriculum, the achievement standards are fine. They talk about lots of what students know. They are probably underdone on what students can do, and there is nothing about dispositions and capabilities, really, in the

achievement standards. Again, for teachers, it is difficult to know in their assessment, 'Do I just focus on knowledge and skills, or do I help students to be really effective learners as well?'

What we did in the achievement standards was we just tweaked the achievement standards to make sure that the knowledge and skills that were required are still there, but also that we are making it our job to make sure that, for example, in mathematics students have some of that resilience, students have that ability to come across a problem, not know what to do, stop and think and then construct a response to the problem.

They are probably the main shifts that we have made. It is more a shift of emphasis. It is not whole new content or anything like that. Our students who are in public schools in South Australia will be learning the same content as other students across Australia, but we are just making sure that it makes sense for students and it make sense for teachers so that we can be more effective to get to those student outcomes.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: How much has been spent on this project? What is the cost? How much was spent last financial year, and how much is budgeted to be spent in each year going forward?

Prof. WESTWELL: I will have to take that on notice. I would note, though, that the work that we have done is not just new work for the South Australian Curriculum for Public Education. This was work that we would have had to have done anyway because the Australian Curriculum had been updated to version 9 of the Australian Curriculum. So we have taken the opportunity of having to do some implementation work anyway to do this work around the South Australian public curriculum.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It would be potentially within the scope of what you are already taking on notice, but can I ask how many staff have been tasked to assist in the preparation of the curriculum? I imagine from within curriculum and learning there would be a cohort, but also how many were seconded from schools or other areas?

Prof. WESTWELL: I will absolutely do that. I will have to take that on notice. I do not have that information in front of me. One of the really important parts of this is, exactly as you say, we have staff in the department, but we have also made sure, even with the Australian Curriculum for South Australian public education, in doing that work, we have also made sure that we were engaging with the community.

With regard to your point about the resource that has been required—absolutely we will answer that question—I think it is important to note that what we have been very careful to do is to not say that we have just got a bunch of experts in the department and that is all we are relying on. We have great expertise in the department, but we are also making sure that this is going to work for teachers. Even now, when we have put the first subjects out, we have been very clear that we are looking for input back from the field to make sure that not only is this high-quality curriculum but it can be delivered and teachers can engage with it. In the classroom it has to have the biggest impact that it can, so we are getting high-quality delivery. If we are going to make a difference, that difference only occurs in that space between the teacher and a student. It is one thing to have a beautiful curriculum, but it is another thing to make sure that it is impacting on that interaction.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: With that in mind, is there a program of support for teachers or professional development to help them implement that new curriculum? Will the department be paying for professional development, for example, to help teachers become familiar with 19 dispositions, is it?

Prof. WESTWELL: Can I just pick up on that point of the dispositions? There are a number of dispositions, but the dispositions all make sense within the subject. The reason why I am picking up on it is because there is a danger that we see curriculum as being lots of little pieces—so you have to teach these pieces of content, you have to teach these pieces of skills, you have to teach these pieces of dispositions, and we can make it look like it is overwhelming. In fact, that is what the Australian Curriculum really looks like. For the work around the dispositions, we are making sure that the dispositions are folded into the subjects so you have one subject.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Perhaps I can simplify the question, then, and just ask: is there support for professional development for teachers to assist in teaching the new curriculum?

Prof. WESTWELL: Yes. We are about to appoint a new director for a directorate around teaching and learning to do exactly this. Again, we are getting that balance right between people with expertise within the system—people who understand curriculum and learning, and I think there is something really important about assessment as well—to be able to influence the system.

What we know in public education in South Australia is that our teachers have absolutely fantastic expertise. Some of the best teachers in the country are here in South Australia, and they often want to stay in the schools and they want to stay teaching the students. One of the ways that we know we can make a huge difference and really add value is, yes, through specific professional learning that might be delivered by the department but also making sure that we are sharing the expertise that exists within the system.

That was something that I certainly learned when I was at the SACE Board—that actually, our educators in South Australia have a great deal of expertise. There is something about trusting our teachers and making sure we are drawing out that expertise and sharing it across the system, and that is exactly what we are doing through this process.

I think assessment is an area that we will need to focus on as well. We have the Australian Curriculum; we have our modified version where we have adapted it and put emphasis in different places. The assessment will be the same. Of course, in our assessment we want to know what students know and we want to know what they can do, but what we are increasingly finding is that the demands of employers include that knowledge and those skills but they are also including those dispositions and they are also including the way that students turn up in their learning and are leaning in.

That has not been a focus of assessment in the past, and I think there are jurisdictions around the world—and there is some great work going on here in Australia, particularly I would pick out Melbourne university for a local example and Cambridge assessment for an international example. I think the SACE Board actually has been doing some leading work in South Australia, and so we will draw on the expertise and experience of the SACE Board as well to make sure that we are assessing those dispositions and that is wrapped into our assessment in a meaningful way.

When you think about some of the changes and things like artificial intelligence, and we think about how artificial intelligence is going to influence teaching and assessment, we have to make sure that our teachers and our system are ready to move with changes as—

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: So the department will be providing support for that professional development?

Prof. WESTWELL: Yes.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Minister, is there a reason why the title specifically highlights public education? This is an issue that has been raised with me by some people at Independent and Catholic schools. They are wondering whether there is an intentional exclusion of those students in schools that are not in the government system when it talks about this South Australian Curriculum for Public Education.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Professor Westwell will answer that question for you.

Prof. WESTWELL: Across Australia and even within South Australia, education sectors will have frameworks that they will use around education and that flows into curriculum. So for us, the work that we did started with students, working through teachers, families and employers, which got us to a place where we were saying that there are some choices that we are making for public education. Those choices flowed through as focus areas of impact for the work across the department.

They were focusing on excellence and equity, wellbeing, because we know that wellbeing flows through into effective learning, and students' learning and students' achievement. Student agency, for exactly the same reasons, that notion of we want our students to be agents in their learning, not passive, so that they become really effective learners; we know that that flows through into achievement and then this notion of effective learners.

Some of the international work has shown us really clearly that some of the interventions that you can make in education to achieve better achievement outcomes might focus on things like student self-regulation and metacognition. So there are some choices across the department that then flow through into informing the curriculum.

This happens in all of our sectors. For example, in Catholic education, they have the Living Learning Leading Framework, which is their framing and then the curriculum within it, and if we just have a look at the Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) website, they talk about how all their curriculum areas have a religious dimension. That is appropriate for Catholic education, but it would not be appropriate for public education. They have a framework and that flows through into the way that they put their curriculum together.

Similarly, if we look at Lutheran education, they have their overarching framework that they call Lifelong Qualities for Learners. In their documentation they talk about how this is a frame to deal with changing content, and schools can use the Lifelong Qualities for Learners framework to align subjects beneath it and cluster outcomes and objectives. That is in their curriculum framework notion.

Everybody is still doing the Australian Curriculum, but what we are doing is we are making sure that when we are clear about what our purpose is for public education, and in these cases Catholic and Lutheran education, the curriculum can serve that so that we can get the outcomes we are looking for for our young people.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I might add a little bit in answer to your question, member for Morialta. There is absolutely no intention to exclude. I certainly would not support that. I have met with the non-government system leaders, Anne and Neil, about this on several occasions to do my best to answer questions. I have had many conversations with Professor Westwell about that and he has met with them as well. I do not want any situation where one of the sectors feels excluded.

I have been reassured by Professor Westwell, as he has just said in his answer there, that there is scope within the Australian Curriculum to have that kind of focus. It is used by other sectors in South Australia, which is entirely appropriate, and he would absolutely expect them to do so. We are not seeking to do anything different. Do you want to add something else as well?

Prof. WESTWELL: Yes. The work that we do in terms of the resources that we will produce around the curriculum, that description of the curriculum, as I said, and the way in which we are organising those concepts, all of that work that we are doing, as we have done before, all of that will be available across sectors and in the same way they will be able to use that and adapt it as they have done in the past.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: You pre-empted my last question on that run, so thank you for that. At page 180, and I will stay on expenses, I have some questions about some specific consultancies and contracts that were identified in the annual report this year that would have all been paid for out of that expenses line. There are some descriptions in the annual report but there are several where I am seeking further description.

The first is in relation to Aurecon: \$39,000 to develop a business case relating to the establishment of new high school accommodation within the Adelaide CBD and inner north areas to meet future enrolment demand. Is that a very late invoice for work that was done in 2020 and 2021 to assist in the development of the case for the Adelaide Botanic expansion, or is this further work that has been done in the last couple of years contemplating potential further accommodation being required in the Adelaide CBD and inner north?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am informed that is the work from previously.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That is probably the easiest one of them. Sayers Advisory was given \$915,000 to undertake research as part of our national leadership of an initiative in the National School Reform Agreement. Is the minister able to identify which reform, what are they doing and is there a reason it is being paid by the department rather than through the education council, to which I believe the department makes payments for national school reform work?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Member for Morialta, I am informed that we are leading the work nationally on the national formative assessment initiative. I understand—

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That sounds like something that I might have started.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: That would depend on who paid the \$915,000. In all seriousness, we believe—and we will check this—that the \$915,968 was paid to the state to do that work and then expended by us. We will double-check that, but it was certainly for the national formative assessment.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I see; we might have received funding from the education council to pay this.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Correct.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Excellent.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: That is what happened if I did it. If you did it, it is a blowout.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It is one of those irregular verbs. On the next page of the annual report is Deloitte Financial Advisory, which is \$342,000 to prepare a business case to support the case for change to guide life cycle infrastructure investment. The language notwithstanding, that sounds like it was contracted at late notice. Can you explain what that means?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes, happy to. I will pass over to Ben Temperly to answer that question.

Mr TEMPERLY: That work formed a component of the 20-year infrastructure plan. Specifically, what we were looking for in that work is the optimum way to prioritise and allocate funding for the sustainment of existing assets in the system. The 20-year infrastructure plan identifies investment for new facilities, where there are demographic changes and capacity increases required. One of the other components is the notion of sustaining investment in infrastructure, and that is the money that we invest in schools to renew and replace existing buildings and infrastructure in schools. This work was to assist us with that.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Were any other contractors or consultants employed to assist with the preparation of the 20-year infrastructure plan, or was this it, along with departmental effort, I am sure?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Member for Morialta, we might check. Mr Temperly informs me that there might have been some others, but we might give you a detailed answer on what they were and what the costs were, if indeed there were any.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That is very helpful, thank you. Is the business case prepared by Deloitte for the 20-year infrastructure plan publicly available or likely to become publicly available, or is that a cabinet document?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: It is a cabinet document.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Will cabinet release the document?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: No.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That is outrageous. Sorry for the commentary, sir. Can I ask then, still on expenses, contractors, there is \$635,000 for a company called Chamonix IT Management for 'professional services for departmental initiatives'. It is on page 40 of the annual report, if that helps: \$635,706.88. Are you able to identify which departmental initiatives those professional services are for?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand it is contract IT staff who would have worked on a range of initiatives across the department.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Throughout the annual report there is quite a lot of contractors in the IT space doing various IT work. My understanding is that the department itself also has a fairly large IT cohort. Why are there so many external contractors for IT services? Are these ongoing or are they individual, short-term projects that just benefit from having external assistance rather than employing ongoing staff for short-term projects?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take that on notice, member for Morialta.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: There is \$3.2 million identified for a company called Expose Data Pty Ltd for 'professional services for departmental initiatives (edAnalytics)'. That does not quite sound like IT to me. Is the minister able to explain what that \$3.2 million contract is for?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Ben Temperly, who can give you some details on that.

Mr TEMPERLY: Through you, minister, that engagement was in support of the edAnalytics project, which was a project to update and replace all the department's data warehousing capability. It included a bit more than that, so it was looking at the provision data throughout the agency to support the department's operations, and there was, obviously, data integration work as part of that as well. Expose was our key partner in that work.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: So presumably that is a transition cost required, but the ongoing benefits are either improved productivity or lower costs going forward?

Mr TEMPERLY: That is correct.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will trust that will be the case. There is a series of contracts for KPMG. Some of them are financial analysis, workforce management and EMS—relatively self-explanatory. There is \$625,000 towards the project that Mr Temperly has just described. There is another \$770,000 on top of that, which just says 'professional services for departmental initiatives'. Given that there are four other departmental initiatives separately billed to KPMG, what is the \$770,000 for?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take that on notice, member for Morialta.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: PricewaterhouseCoopers have also received a number of payments—they are separately identified—but \$200,717 specifically for professional services for machinery of government transition support. Which MoG change was this related to?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am informed, member for Morialta, that is for the skills into the education department machinery of government move.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Was this the only cost associated with that MoG, or were there other costs as well? I am talking transition costs, obviously, not just the added costs of things transferred over.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will check and take it on notice and get back to you. Mr Bernardi says he does not think there were any more, but out of an abundance of caution we will check.

The CHAIR: Member for Morialta, the question following this will be going to the member for Newland.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you. The Chair has again spotted when I am getting to the end of the run, so thank you for that, sir. \$200,000 strikes me as a fair amount to pay to a consulting firm or a contractor to assist with shifting one government agency into another. Maybe it is a perfectly reasonable amount. I am wondering if the minister is able to identify what services were provided; I assume they were not shifting desks?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take it on notice, member for Morialta.

Ms SAVVAS: I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 18, relating to the materials and services charge subsidy. At a time when many families are struggling with the cost of living, what is the government doing to assist families with the cost of children's education and schooling?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Newland, for your question. I am pleased to provide the committee with some information around what this government is doing in terms of trying to address the cost of living as best we can, in a difficult environment we know, around the cost of living, and there is a number of good, practical initiatives that we have implemented in our time in government so far to try to do that. Foremost, is the materials and services charge rebate or school fees for public school families?

We announced an additional \$24 million in the most recent state budget, to continue to the materials and services charge rebate for eligible families into the 2025 school year, and increased

that amount to \$200 per student, which I think is significant. When you consider it, if you are a family with three school-age kids, you save \$600 on fees. This brings the total investment to around \$60 million benefiting the parents and caregivers, we estimate, of about 120,000 government school students.

The prescribed materials and services charge currently is \$287 for primary and \$379 for secondary. That is, of course, before the \$200 rebate is applied, and that is applied automatically. It would be remiss of me not to give a mention here to all the bursars at our schools who do all the hard work to make sure it is a seamless process for parents that they do not have to involve themselves in but simply get the deducted figure to pay, which is excellent. They are often unheralded people in all our schools—Catholic, independent and public—and do a lot of important work, so I acknowledge the role they have played here in delivering this rebate.

There are, of course, other costs outside of fees that families incur when sending their kids to school. We must keep in mind here that those families who are eligible for the School Card, and I will speak in a moment around changes we have made to the eligibility threshold there, are not eligible for the rebate because they do not need to pay the materials and services charge.

The School Card income thresholds have increased by more than \$4,500 to \$70,994, which is the threshold if you have one dependent child in terms of what you can earn as a family and still be eligible for the School Card, up to \$76,066 for five children attending a public school. I certainly want to acknowledge in this place that \$76,000 as a combined household income with five children would be a very difficult place to be financially for a family, with the current cost of living. I acknowledge that it would be hard to make ends meet on that kind of household salary.

I think that speaks to why this is important. A saving in the vicinity of—if it was School Card and you had five children and they were in primary or secondary—\$287 or \$379 per child would make a really big difference to those families. It is something that I have spoken to the executive team in the department about a lot around trying to keep an eye on numbers in terms of those eligible applying and receiving a School Card. I think it is important that we keep an eye on that, given current cost-of-living pressures, and consider in the back of our minds whether or not changes need to be made in the future. Of course, a cost comes with that, because we are forgoing income that would come into state government coffers, but I certainly would hate to think of families who are out there and feel like they cannot even afford to send their kids to a public school where the fees are still very low.

I might just talk quickly about a couple of other cost-of-living things we have done outside of the materials and services rebate and the changes to the School Card income thresholds. One is the school breakfast program, which we know is really important. We made an announcement around increasing funding for KickStart for Kids and Foodbank so they can deliver more meals over the life of the agreement. The figure I have in my head is I think we increased it by \$1 million over the life of the agreement, up from maybe \$400,000 to \$1.4 million.

This is going to be really important to make sure that kids who do not get breakfast before they leave the house can have something at school, because we all know that they are not going to be in a position to sit and learn and listen and pay attention if they have empty stomachs. All our sites tell us that it is something they are seeing a lot and something they are seeing more of, given the current cost-of-living pressures that families are feeling.

The school device program is the one I might finish on, though, because I acknowledge that although we are delivering really significant rebates to the materials and services charge—as I said, if you had three kids it would be \$600, which is good—a lot of families do say that the biggest cost that they wear now in terms of sending a kid to public school is the cost of a device. We have changed from a position where it was something that you maybe needed to have: certainly, when I was at school and I would imagine when the member for Mordialta was at school it was not necessarily something you needed to have—

Ms HUTCHESSON: Was it invented?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes, very good. When the Chair went to school—

The CHAIR: Be careful what you say here.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I was going to say, I do not know whether they provided typewriters or you had to bring your own. I think we have to do something around—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We are trying to take action. I acknowledge the work of the member for Morialta on the digital device strategy as well. It was a really good initiative and we are continuing it. By 2026, all families on the School Card in public schools will receive their device free of charge. We are doing some good work here, and I acknowledge Dan Hughes' team.

It is part of why the EMS rollout is important, so the department has visibility from a procurement sense over what schools are buying and is trying to better use its purchasing power as a department to buy digital devices at a cheaper rate and then pass that cheaper rate on to families, who are forking out for one, two or three laptops. I see there are some real potential savings we can make into the future if we get that right, not just for families who are receiving a School Card and outside of the materials and services rebate.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Page 180 of Volume 1 shows expenses, and the next couple of questions are on this same budget line. I acknowledge the minister's answer before and, for the record, highlight the role of the Hon. Rob Lucas in identifying that Gonski allocation could be spent on cost-of-living relief measures. That appears to be one of his lasting legacies to South Australian public school families.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We do not acknowledge Rob enough in this place, of course.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: On the digital device strategy, I commend the government for continuing that work that I think was started under us but also particularly was the logical extension of the SWiFT internet program that was delivered under the former government, acknowledging that it was instigated as we were coming in.

With that positivity out of the way, the Labor Party promised at the last election 100 extra wellbeing staff. The former government had budgeted for and started work on recruiting a proportion of those, I think 55 or 60 of them. Last year, I think it was 58 who were either already employed or on the cusp of being employed. What is the update in relation to this project? As I understand, there were 42 roles where it was still being worked out what those roles would be, what the qualifications would be, where they would be employed and when they would be employed.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: As at 14 June, I think 94.5 FTEs have been recruited since the change in government, which is good because it is a difficult climate in which to do it. There are skill shortages left, right and centre, and there is always the risk, I think, particularly in a smaller labour market like ours, that you just move the workforce from one area of need to another area of need. I think we have done exceptionally well here to already have very close to the full 100 FTEs.

Within that figure, the School Mental Health Service accounts for 55, and other learning support specialist positions account for 45. I might get some more detail around what they are for you. We have the School Mental Health Service, as I mentioned; the Social Work Duty Line; a partnership with KWY, the ACCO, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation; a flexible service response team, which brings together telepractice and an external provider process to improve access and responsiveness of services; and a principal occupational therapist. That is a flavour of where we are at in terms of the positions that are being provided.

I think I should speak a little bit about the School Mental Health Service and the 55 FTEs that we have there. I am particularly proud that we have done that. It is really important. I think our young people's mental health, and probably the workforce's as well, is in bad shape. I think a lot of the dysregulation and poor behaviour now is driven by poor mental health. There is particularly a real rise in that at primary school level, which I have said before is the thing that really keeps me awake at night: primary-aged kids with suicidal ideation, which was either something that we did not have when I was at primary school, which is probably not true, or just something that we did not talk about very much.

It is impressed upon me and the leadership team by principals and classroom teachers all the time. I am really pleased that we have a dedicated School Mental Health Service there to provide

that support, because it is great for the individual, but I think it will really contribute to the general kind of climate environment of the school in terms of helping kids who are struggling with their own mental health to stay at school. We know it is a really big reason now for not completing school and not going to school, and school refusal and all those things, so I think it is a space that we need to move into. I am glad we made this election commitment. I want to commend the team from the department, who have been working so diligently to get us almost all the way there to that 100 FTE in what I have to say are difficult circumstances for recruitment.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can I ask, with regard to the School Mental Health Service that the minister so elegantly characterised just then, is that 55 FTE? Is that the total figure for the School Mental Health Service, or are there more than that?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Fifty-five is the total figure.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: To frame the next question, as to the 55 figure, I think Mr Humphrys might have been with Dr Croser-Barlow when they briefed me on the design of the program that they put together for this. It is good to hear that is rolling out, but I identify that is the group that were funded prior to the election. Can I ask about the extra 45 people who are the cohort that is new funding? The minister said the Social Work Duty Line, which certainly sounds like a useful sounding measure; the KWY partnership; the flexible service response team; and the principal occupational therapist positions. Is the minister able to identify—I am happy to have it on notice if he prefers—how many fall into each of those categories in the extra 45 positions, 40 of which have been filled? If there are any other categories, then how many are in those categories?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will take that on notice. As I said, I will give you the detail I can and come back to you on the rest. For speech pathology, psychology, social work, I think it is about five. This is in terms of the FTE recruited since coming to government, so not necessarily the total bucket but what we have recruited. In the School Mental Health Service, I think we are at 48.2 currently recruited. I am actually really pleased that we have managed to get that many, and it is very close to our target of 55.

Occupational therapy, psychology, speech pathology, developmental educator, Aboriginal cultural officer: 4.9. That goes under the specialist support to autism inclusion teachers through a multidisciplinary team, so that is separate to the AITs but is a team within this bucket to support the work they do.

Flexible service response team to increase access to specialist services comprises a speech pathologist, psychologist, Aboriginal cultural officer, seconded teacher, allied health practitioner (AHP), speech pathology team manager, and we have 12 recruited so far. The Aboriginal community-controlled organisation is three. On the others, I will come back to you.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Not wanting to dwell too long, with regard to the KWY partnership, is that three people working for KWY providing services to the department, or are they three departmental staff who are working on a broader partnership with KWY?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: On the same budget line, expenses, I have a couple of questions about truancy. Is the minister able to identify how many chronic truancy referrals has the department received so far, and how does that compare with previous years?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Mordialta, for the very important question about truancy, which remains an ongoing issue in the South Australian education system, as it does right around Australia, particularly post-COVID, which is something I know the member for Mordialta dealt with in excruciating detail. South Australia's attendance rate improved by 1.8 per cent from 84.5 in 2022 to 86.3 in 2023. That is still below pre-COVID rates but thankfully improving.

I know it was a real concern when I came into the role—and I am sure it had been something that the member for Mordialta, the previous minister, had discussed—that a lot of those who stopped attending school during COVID, for whatever reason, just would not come back and that we would not be able to lift our attendance rates back to where they were. Thankfully, I think what we are seeing

is that that is not necessarily the case and we can improve it, and the 1.8 per cent increase we have had I think is a really positive sign.

We are seeing some positive trends this year with internally operational data indicating a further 1 per cent increase in term 1 of this year compared to term 1 of last year, so it shows that we are on a good trajectory. From this same operational data the number of students identified as having 80 per cent or more of the term with unauthorised absences was 571 in term 1 of this year, almost a third less than term 1 last year, which is really good news.

What I might touch upon are prosecutions because I have been really, really pushing the team on that and I continue to do so. It is something I raise routinely with Professor Westwell and also the team within the department that looks after this. I have said I do not think there is any point in having clauses or powers under acts that sit idle and are not used, because people very quickly work out that it is a paper tiger and nothing to be concerned about and it therefore does not achieve what it was enacted to do, which is to change people's behaviour.

We know in terms of prosecutions what we are talking about here is using it in cases where parents, carers or guardians have played an active role in preventing their kids from going to school. I do not support—and I know that the member for Morialta did not either—a situation where we prosecute families that are amidst terrible dysfunction, because it will not get the kid to school and it will probably just compound whatever issues the family is dealing with.

But there are unfortunately cases out there where parents do play an active role in actually preventing their kids from going to school, or not doing what they should be doing as parents to get them to school. Since coming to government, the department has considered 46 families, which involves a total of 77 children. Of those 46 cases, 20 cases, which involve 29 children, are currently being closely monitored or are under assessment and investigation, or have been referred to the Crown for legal advice. That is really getting near the pointy end where we are progressing it through to the Crown for legal advice on the likelihood of a successful prosecution.

Of the 26 cases where prosecution will not be pursued at this time, 17 are cases where an improvement in attendance and engagement was seen, which is the best outcome here. You would expect any minister to say this, but I feel what has vindicated the position I have taken is that some families that fall into that category of playing a role in preventing their kids from going to school, or not actively encouraging them to go to school, have actually seen the whites of our eyes, so to speak, and seen that we are serious about taking it all the way. Magically, kids have gone back to school and re-engaged, which is a good outcome and I think shows why us going through this process is an important.

The remaining nine were not pursued due to a range of factors, including complex family situations, which I referred to: essentially a situation where we do not think a prosecution would have the intended outcome at all, such as the family moving interstate, the involvement of Department for Child Protection, or the child being above the age of compulsion to go to school.

I am pursuing a number of amendments to the Education and Children's Services Act to better manage attendance and participation. Addressing non-attendance is an ongoing priority. We have initiated a number of initiatives to do that: the collaboration with KWW, a new attendance outreach team which is supporting identified schools to track and follow up students with concerning levels of absence across 10 trial partnerships; 10 primary schools are trialling the impact of having a part-time dedicated staff member focused on attendance; a central attendance hub offering attendance training, resources and support to schools will be established in 2025; and an additional five senior social worker positions have been funded to meet the increasing demands experienced by schools to address complex matters of non-attendance.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: In relation to the minister's answer, would the minister extend his consideration for potential prosecutions to not just those families he has characterised as where they are actively seeking to suppress their students' attendance? One of the last prosecutions, I think, was in relation to a parent who was seeking that their child work in their business rather than go to school, so that would be an example of that.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Correct.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: But also, would the minister consider extending that prosecution possibility to those families who are just making no effort to engage in supporting their child to go back to school? With that in mind, I particularly have the example of the education family conference model that is now available. Parents who refuse to participate, or do not turn up to participate, in that model, would the minister characterise those also as being potential for prosecution?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I give this answer without having consulted the department about it, but yes, I would. My pragmatic approach on all these things, member for Morialta, is if the experts tell me that they think it can help and have the desired outcome—which in this case is get a kid who is missing out on their schooling to go to school—then I think we should consider it, and if we have powers available to us, where appropriate, we need to use them. So yes, I would.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can the minister provide, either now or on notice, how many students have been referred for an education family conference in the last year, and what has been the outcome of those conferences? If it is easier to provide it on a year-by-year basis, because I think some information was provided last year, for example, I am happy to have it in whatever format the minister is able to provide it.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We have come prepared for your question on this one.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Bravo.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Education family conferences have been implemented statewide as a new way to address chronic non-attendance. I know the member for Morialta knows all these things. They are structured, strengths-based and family-led planning meetings which ensure student and family voice are part of the solution.

They were independently evaluated in 2023 and it was found that the conferences contributed to a range of positive outcomes for students, families and schools, including increased connection and strengthened communication between students, families and the school—that is really important; increased connection to social and community supports; improved student and family wellbeing; building and repairing relationships between students, families and schools; and schools feeling more supported with a clear plan that is family-led.

Seventy-five per cent of students who have finalised an education family conference (EFC) have had improved levels of school attendance. The number of education family conferences: in 2021 the number of referrals to EFC was 19; in 2022, 23; in 2023, 22; and in 2024 to date is 13, so I am confident to say that by the end of this year that will be the highest number we have had in terms of referrals to an EFC, so I am glad it is being used.

For the number of students involved in the individual referral, in 2021 it was 36; in 2022 it was 39; in 2023 it was 27; and year to date is 20—again, I think we will get our highest number there. Where appropriate, the social worker—truancy service can work with families and schools to support re-engagement. The department has 34 FTE Social Worker—Truancy positions.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I go to page 179, highlights and targets, and just finish off this session with a few questions about technical colleges.

The CHAIR: Member for Morialta, I think after you the member for Florey would like to ask a question.

Mr BROWN: I will wait until after the member for Morialta, sir; that is fine.

The CHAIR: You can continue with your question.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I want to ask a question in relation to page 179, highlights and targets, on technical colleges. In relation to Findon High School, can the minister advise on the current status of enrolments? If it assists, I will just run through these quickly:

- How many year 10 students are at the technical college and how many other year 10 students are at the school?

- How many year 11 students are at the college and how many other year 11 students are at the school?
- How many students are engaged in the technical college who are not students of the school, and what courses are they doing?
- How many apprentices and trainees are there at Findon Technical College?

If the minister wants to take it on notice, then the member for Florey can have a go.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will take the bulk of that on notice. I am happy to come back to the member for Morialta on that. What I will say is we have filled Findon. As I said at the time of the opening, we had a lot of feedback from students from around the metropolitan area—and some, I think, from further abroad—who were very keen to go but did not want to leave their host school. Given this is the first one that we have done, there were obviously going to be a few learnings, so to speak, from that. That is why we accommodated the flexible model: some are part-time and some are full-time. That is a way to make sure those who want to come and benefit from the great curriculum, the industry pathways, and the state-of-the-art equipment can do so without leaving their school, so I think we were flexible and adapted to that in an appropriate way.

There was certainly no shortage of interest in going along and the feedback we have since had from the students there and from the team has been overwhelmingly positive. The first one is always going to be the most difficult one to do because we did not have an existing example of a tech college to show families what it looks like and what to expect, but now we do for all those who are going to follow which will greatly, I think, help those who are considering it as an option for their year 10 child to go and have a look at, for instance, Findon and get an idea of just how impressive it is and what is on offer there. On the other questions, I will come back to the member for Morialta.

Mr BROWN: I reference Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 179, the highlights that mention the specialist teacher workforce plan. My question is: how is the government delivering its election commitment on teaching quality?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: There are a number of things that we have done, some of which we have touched upon already, and the member for Morialta asked questions around, giving principals more say in choosing staff who are right for their site, truncating that process around addressing poor performance and giving earlier and better advice to staff, increasing permanency, making the country allowances ongoing, financial literacy, which is one I have been fond of talking about, and the ban on mobile phones. There are a number of things that we have done.

I want to also use this opportunity to thank SAPPA and the Secondary Principals' Association (SASPA) for some excellent work that they have done on—and the exact title escapes me—recasting the role of the principal. It has been a really good collaborative piece between them and the department around reconceptualising their roles, so looking at what it needs to be now because it has changed and it has become harder. School leaders are community leaders as well. We have done some good work there with those really important representative groups on sort of reconceptualising what the role should be moving forward and making adjustments that we need to make.

I have touched already on country allowances, which we have made ongoing. I have spoken about increasing permanency and we are doing that at a rate that we have not seen before. I am really pleased that we have managed to introduce our financial literacy materials. I have said before that that was directly inspired by the work of Scott Pape, the Barefoot Investor. I was fortunate to have a number of direct conversations with him where I pitched him ideas around the things he thought that needed to be in there.

I think it drastically and desperately needed updating. The stuff that was being taught was just not appropriate for 2024. For example, we need to teach kids around things like Afterpay, how do they make their money, how does it work, They need to know about mobile phone contracts. In relation to a lot of kids in the one-on-one sessions we have had, which Professor Westwell has stewardship of, the feedback from students in the senior high school levels, when you ask them, 'What is it you would have liked to see more of in your schooling?' is more stuff around what they describe as 'adulthood', the kind of things that I think many of us probably assume is taught at home,

which might not be now, such as how to do a tax return, some simple things like that that need to be folded into what we offer at schools. A key part of that is financial literacy and I am glad we have done that.

The CHAIR: One more brief question and brief answer.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will stay on the same page 179, technical colleges, has the minister continued discussions with Catholic Education about the use by public school students of the Western Technical College? Have we made any advances and are there any figures the minister can provide about the number of public schools or, indeed, the number of public students who are making use of the opportunity with the Western Technical College?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I do not have any figures, but I have certainly continued those conversations. I think I should put on the record, too—and I have said this to Catholic Education South Australia—I feel I have made good on the commitment I made before becoming minister to make sure that what we offered was complementing what the Catholic sector was offering. I have stuck to my guns on that and so has Clare Feszczak and her team. An example is what we are going to offer in Port Augusta, where I think Caritas wrote to me asking for the reverse, essentially, which was, 'Could our students please have a model where they can come to the tech college?' That is exactly what we are going to deliver, and I think that is a really good thing. As someone who grew up in a country area, the idea that a brand spanking new technical college is built and only some kids can get access to it is not a great thing.

On the Western Tech, I do not have any figures. I will seek to come back on that. I think I am in safe territory saying that we have taken a position which is not to discourage students in our system from potentially accessing Western Tech, and we are promoting access to hours in country areas as well. I think that is all underscored by the fact that, if we are to get on top of the skills challenges that we have got, we have to all be pulling in the same direction. That includes technical colleges at high school level, and I think we have found a way we have been able to do that.

The CHAIR: The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of School Education complete.

Sitting suspended from 11:36 to 11:50.

Departmental Advisers:

Prof. M. Westwell, Chief Executive, Department for Education.

Ms K. Little, Chief Executive, Office for Early Childhood Development.

Mr C. Bernardi, Chief Operating Officer, Department for Education.

Ms B. Curtain, Executive Director, Workforce Reform, Office for Early Childhood Development.

Ms J. Ellis, Executive Lead, Future Education Model, Department for Education.

Ms K. Jordan, Lead Director, Preschools and Early Childhood Development, Department for Education.

Ms L. Bills, Director, Policy, Provision and Planning, Office for Early Childhood Development.

Ms H. Turnbull, Director, Change Engagement, Office for Early Childhood Development.

The CHAIR: There are no changes to the committee. We are now moving to the Early Childhood Education and Office for Early Childhood Development portfolio. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. The proposed payments remain open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if he wishes to do so, and introduce his advisers. Then I will call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement, if they wish, and we will finish this session at 1.10pm.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Could I introduce who I have sitting with me. Again, we have Professor Martin Westwell, Chief Executive of the Department for Education. To my right is Kim Little, Chief Executive of the Office for Early Childhood and Development. To Professor Westwell's left is Kathryn Jordan, Lead Director of Preschools and Early Childhood Services in the Department for Education. Behind me are Chris Bernardi, Chief Operating Officer, and we also have Hannah Turnbull, Director, Change Engagement; Laura Bills, Director, Policy, Provision and Planning; Bec Curtain, Executive Director, Workforce Reform in the Office of Early Childhood Development; and Jessica Ellis, Exec Lead in DFE as well. I have no opening statement, Chair.

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

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will start with page 174 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 1. I am basically looking at the investing expenditure, although my first question will just require a little bit of explanation. There was an incident last week, which the minister is aware of, at a community childcare centre in my electorate—the Campbelltown Community Children's Centre—which is relevant to the department, because the department is the landlord. The centre is adjacent to the Campbelltown Preschool, which is within the remit of the various maintenance responsibilities of the department which are identified in this investing expenditure, or possibly on the next page.

For the record, the nature of the incident was that an intruder jumped a fence where the children were playing in the playground. The director kept him busy while the staff moved the children inside the centre, as I understand it. I have had very strong feedback from families that the staff—Sharmane Leonard, the director, and her team—did an excellent job, and so we obviously extend our thanks to them for the situation.

The intruder left the centre without causing any direct damage, as I understand it, other than the shock and fear of the incident and was arrested soon after. I understand the police attended very quickly and were able to arrest him. So that side of the situation was dealt with appropriately as far as I can tell by staff and by police. The Education Standards Board were notified, and I thank the minister's office for engaging with me on that.

The issue that has arisen since is that the fence that the intruder jumped over has been raised as an issue of concern by the centre with the department and the ESB—and again, since, with the department as the landlord. The fence was obviously capable of being jumped over by the intruder, and the centre is seeking support from the department in having an improved fence line. I understand the department is considering it, and I ask the minister if he will seek a briefing from the department on the matter and give favourable consideration to the support required to improve that fence line?

The CHAIR: Just before you answer, minister, I will allow this question to go ahead, but I just warn the member for Morialta he is straying from the examination of the financial budget in that line of questioning. I will allow this question to go ahead, but I just ask him that future questions be more closely aligned to the budget itself.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, Chair, and I thank the member for Morialta for his question. These are really, really serious events, and of course they cause a great deal of distress for staff, for the children at the centre and for their families as well. I accept the member's point that, although it was not a DFE site, we are opposite and we are landlords, and the responsibility of the fence may well sit with us. I will seek a briefing from the department around what is planned regarding that fence. When I am in a position to report back to the member for Morialta, I will do so, but I thank him for bringing that to my attention.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you. My next question goes to a budget line that may help; it probably is not directly relevant, but it might help. I refer to page 174, and this is related to the three-year-old preschool project, early childhood education and care. There is \$9.4 million budgeted for projects to be completed by December 2026. Is the minister able to identify the preschools and early learning services that will receive those infrastructure upgrades and the funding amounts and purposes for each of them?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will hand over to Kim Little, Chief Executive of the OECD to provide an answer on that question.

Ms LITTLE: There is going to be some infrastructure expenditure over the next period across a range of different projects. They will include projects to stand up the first two demo hubs. A specific site of one of them has already been announced, which is in Port Pirie. There will be some minor capital works involved in that. There will also, as government has announced, be three metro preschools, which are being stood up as demonstration sites for the universal rollout of three-year-old preschool, which may require some works.

There will be a particular focus on the government preschools which are coming into the rollout in 2026 and I am happy to say more about that rollout in 2026, as they may need some minor works, at least, to ensure that they are appropriate for higher volumes of three-year-old children. So there is a range of different projects which are focused on ensuring that we are in a good position for the 2026 year.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I turn to Budget Paper 5, page 19. The budget line relates to the broader \$715 million program over the forward estimates for the three-year-old preschool rollout. I have a series of questions on this page; it is a long page, and fairly detailed, so I will go for the questions but I am happy to bring them back to the page, if required. It is page 19 of Budget Paper 5.

Minister, I realise this is something spoken of before, but in the context of the series of questions to come, I suspect it is worth refreshing people's memories. The page identifies reforms taking place until 2032. The first dot point talks about the rollout of universal three-year-old preschool between 2026 and 2032.

I highlight the government's election commitment that there would be universal three-year-old preschool from 2026, and seek the minister's clarification on what the government's view is on the timing, which I certainly consider to be a six-year delay in the promise that was given to people before the election. Can the minister justify how the government would consider this election promise to be fulfilled when it will be an electoral cycle and a half after the original commitment date before it is fully rolled out?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We are obviously not going to agree on that point. I think the actual policy document or brochure—call it what you will—that spoke specifically about this government's, the then opposition's, commitment to universal three-year-old preschool spoke about it commencing in 2026, and that is exactly what we are delivering. The planned rollout between 2026 and 2032 which you have correctly referred to in your question is, without a doubt, the quickest and most ambitious rollout anywhere in the country for three-year-old preschool, and we are committed to delivering that.

The reason that we believe we can roll it out starting from 2026 to full completion by 2032 is in no small way due to the recommendation by the Hon. Julia Gillard in her royal commission report which recommended the mixed model of delivery, which, of course, is sharing responsibility between the government sector and private providers in the long day-care sector, and utilising their capacity in that mixed model. That is one of the key reasons, in fact, that the Hon. Julia Gillard recommended the mixed model; as she put it to me, it was the best way of reaching the maximum number of three year olds as possible and the fastest way of doing it, and the best way of being able to recruit the staff we need to do so.

I am firmly of the position, as is the Premier, that what we are delivering is in line with the election commitment that we made. We have made a lot of progress in a relatively short period of time, having Kim Little and her team on board, the Office for Early Childhood Development established and some very significant budget commitments made in this most recent budget that will enable us to bring to life the commitment. There has been a huge amount of work and modelling done by Kim and her team on how the rollout will occur and its sequencing, and also our workforce strategy and the things we need to do to make sure we meet the clear targets that we have in terms of the workforce that we need to deliver it.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: How many three year olds are enrolled in preschool now?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Approximately 700.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: When did those students comprising Aboriginal students and students under guardianship become eligible to attend public preschools at the age of three?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will take that on notice. What I can say is I have been informed that there has been delivery of 12 hours to Aboriginal children and children under guardianship, but as of this year that has increased to 15 hours. I will take your question around when their eligibility commenced on notice.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: For some years, obviously, we have had three year olds getting 12 hours if they are Aboriginal students or children under guardianship. This year, it has come to 15 hours, and in 2026 is what I would characterise as the next expansion of three year olds having some sort of preschool service. Can the minister identify, for those students who will have the opportunity to have a preschool service of some sort in 2026, how many will there be in public preschools and how many will there be in the long day-care services under the mixed model that has been described?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Kim Little to provide you with an answer on that question.

Ms LITTLE: Thank you very much for the question from the member. In the first year of the rollout, I will take you to the rollout schedule, which has recently been released as part of the budget announcements. In 2026, the plan for the rollout is twofold. We will be turning on government preschools in some rural and remote areas. That is around 40 services that we expect to come on board.

Obviously, there will be comparatively small numbers of children through those services as they are rural and remote services, so somewhere in the range of 100 to 200 children, noting of course that three-year-old preschool is a non-compulsory service. We will be looking to engage very closely with families in those communities to promote the benefits of their children receiving two years of preschool.

I will note as context that thus far if the rollout were only focusing on that geographical element it would be very similar to the Victorian rollout, and we would have similar numbers of children coming in in that first year, adjusted for the South Australian population relative to the Victorian population.

However, the innovation that Ms Gillard recommended and that has been embedded into the logic of the rollout is that, in addition to that geographical rollout of government preschools, which will be staged starting with remote and rural communities and building over the life of the reform, we are also engaging very closely with long day-care providers, who have latent capacity within their services as they currently exist. That was identified through some empirical work done by the royal commission. We are going to be working very closely with them over the second half of this year and into the first half of next year to see how many of those long day-care services can stand up a three-year-old preschool offer that will meet our requirements for 2026.

So while it is not possible to estimate in advance exactly how many children will be able to attend that offer through the long day-care space, we would anticipate that collectively, rather than having in the order of hundreds of children, which was the case in the first year of the rollout in Victoria, we would have in the order of thousands of children being able to come on board through both long day cares and government preschools, primarily long day care, in 2026. That is in addition to that 700 children that we mentioned before, who are eligible for the 15 hours from this year. I am happy to expand on any aspect of the rollout and the logic of that rollout.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Yes, I have 31 potential questions, so we will see how we go. A couple of them have been answered already. In relation to the answer that was just given, minister, can I clarify, with regard to the long day-care centres that Ms Little was talking about that you will be seeking to be brought on board from 2026, are they in those same rural and regional areas where the 40 government preschools are to be opening up their capacity, or are those potential thousands of students in 2026 also including long day-care centres in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Kim Little to provide an answer to that question.

Ms LITTLE: The difference in the rollout approach that I was describing earlier is, while there is a geographic rollout approach for what one might call 'sessional preschools', so whether they are run by government or run by the small number that are run by non-government providers, for the

long day-care sector, the proposal is one of readiness. When that long day-care sector has the staff in place and is prepared to meet the other requirements which we are going to have, which we are working closely with the sector on across the second half of this year, they will be able to turn on regardless of whether they are in metro, in a regional centre or in any other part of the state. That gives us the ability to harness that latent capacity within the long day-care sector as quickly as possible and have the reform move as fast as it can within those services.

The reason why there is that logic is obviously it is the case that long day-care services already have rooms full of three year olds. The royal commission found that 64 per cent of three year olds in South Australia attend a long day-care service for an average of almost 30 hours a week. So they already have the infrastructure, they already have the rooms full of three year olds, they already have the educator staff—the cert III and diploma qualified staff. In at least some places, as found by the royal commission, they also have teacher capacity available to be able to stand up a preschool program quite quickly. So we will be looking to work with each of the long day cares that are in that position, regardless of where they are in the state, in order to support them to begin the offer as soon as possible in the rollout.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will foreshadow that I will have some questions that go directly to those points about what then is going to be the nature of the difference between what those three year olds are currently receiving in their long day-care centres and what will change for them under the new model. My other question, directly to your earlier answer, was about the 40 government preschools in rural regional areas to be potentially offering 100 or 200 places. Have those sites been chosen yet? Have you come up with 40 because you know now that there are 40 centres that would be capable of taking the three year olds in 2026, or is it that 40 is an indicative number that you are now going to go and look for the sites that might be ready to go?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Kim.

Ms LITTLE: We have announced the specific locations for the geographic rollout—that is published on the website of the Office for Early Childhood Development—down to what is called statistical area 2, so down to quite a fine level of detail. There are also maps that people can go onto and determine whether they are living within an area and where it is intending to come on board. I will emphasise that of course that is in addition to the statewide long day-care rollout, so it is a mix of those two coming together. But, yes, that information about the locations that are going to be lighting up in each of the years of the rollout has been published along with maps.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The royal commission identified a fairly significant staff shortfall. We will get to the requirements for what three-year-old preschool will require, but obviously there has been a little bit of time pass since the royal commission reported. Do you have current data for what are our existing staff shortages for teachers and other qualifications in both the public preschool system and then the broader sector for those teachers and other qualifications too? I am just talking about under the current expectations for the early years—not 2026, but now.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I can advise in terms of government preschool current staffing waivers. I understand that our preschools are fully staffed, so we have no vacancies, which is really good news. In terms of staffing waivers, 12 teachers and eight early childhood workers; they are all in country locations. I might pass over to Kim to give an answer to the other part of your question.

Ms LITTLE: Through you, minister, the latest data that is available comes to us through data that is collected by the Education Standards Board (ESB), as you would know, which is also published periodically. That latest data shows that amongst long day-care services approximately a quarter of long day-care services in South Australia have a staffing waiver of some form. That could be a staffing waiver in relation to teachers—we understand that, in general, they are teacher staffing waivers—or it could be a staffing waiver in relation to another member of staff, including diploma-qualified or cert III-qualified staff. It is something that we are very focused on in terms of rolling out the reforms.

Historically, neither state governments nor commonwealth governments have been especially focused on supporting staffing, or indeed quality, in long day-care services. We see the advent of three-year-old-preschool—and the new relationships we are going to have into long day cares across the state, our investment in the workforce strategy, our investment in quality which will

include those long day services—as a real opportunity to directly engage with and help to tackle these issues within services.

I would also note that the commonwealth government commitment made in the most recent budget—which was to support new industrial arrangements through the multi-employer bargain that is being done through Fair Work nationally for the long day-care sector, and support higher wages and better conditions within long day-care sectors—will also be a contribution to that. But we see these reforms as a way in to work with long day-care sectors on lifting both the volume and quality of their staffing, while noting that broader issues about childcare workforce availability are, of course, ones the commonwealth is very involved in as well.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you for that. Can I just clarify the number: was that 12 teachers and eight early childhood workers currently with waivers across the whole of South Australia? Is that the number that was quoted?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: For public preschools.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: For public preschools. But your answer then, saying that there were quite a lot in long day care—

Ms LITTLE: The answer I gave was roughly a quarter. Roughly a quarter of long day cares have a staffing waiver of some form, according to the latest ESB data.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: My recollection is that there are probably a thousand services in South Australia. Is that in the order of what we are talking about? Several hundred, or—

Ms LITTLE: There are not a thousand long day-care services.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I suppose it includes OSHC and other things, I expect.

Ms LITTLE: Yes, indeed. I am not commenting on those, because that is not directly relevant to the three-year-old rollout, if that makes sense.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: But we are potentially talking 100 or more, but that data is on the ESB website; is that what you are telling me?

Ms LITTLE: The royal commission found that there are approximately 120 additional staff needed in the long day-care sector, relative to the national law requirements, so that goes to the staffing waivers. The ESB, doubtless, would have data in relation to other service types. I do not have that available on me.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Anecdotally—and this is directly on the same line—there are often discussions I have heard from non-government long day-care services about the difficulty for them in retaining staff. When public preschools advertise positions, sometimes the pay is higher, sometimes the conditions are better, and there are also, obviously, other benefits of being in the Public Service for those teachers who might one day want to work in a school. It is different from centre to centre, but certainly some centres struggle to retain staff on the basis of the demands of the public preschool service. Can I ask, from the public preschool's point of view, what are staff retention rates in government preschools? How many retire, or move out of preschools into schools or other service each year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take that on notice, member for Morialta.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: In the same vein, I would ask also how many public preschool teachers and other qualified staff are recruited each year, as well as attrited.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take that on notice, too.

Ms HUTCHESSON: Budget Paper 5, page 19: can the minister provide the committee with information about how the budget will support the development of an early childhood workforce?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you member for Waite for your question, and we know that significant growth in the early childhood education and care workforce is required to deliver on the election commitment we have made for universal three-year-old preschool. Kim Little has just given

some answers in response to questions from the member for Morialta around the magnitude of that workforce growth that we will need.

About \$97 million is being invested to recruit, retain and return teachers and educators to the ECEC workforce. We obviously need to build the local workforce, which will be the biggest component of that, as well as to attract other workers to South Australia from elsewhere. Going to the last question the member for Morialta asked about turnover, we need to do more in terms of retaining the existing workforce as well.

Last week Kim and I released the workforce strategy, which is a very clear document, of course, for the public, but also specifically for those we are seeking to work with and partner with to deliver on this election commitment around how we are planning on doing that. Of course, part of that will be attracting people to South Australia in terms of scholarships that we are going to be offering and that will be particularly important in hard-to-staff locations, and we have a number of those in South Australia.

We want to better support students during their studies and their transition into employment. That speaks to improving completion rates and lowering attrition rates, which are disproportionately higher in all these areas in the first few years of teaching.

In terms of retention, we want to have better career support, mentoring for provisionally registered teachers and professional development for existing staff. There is an innovation and local action fund and this has been a key priority of Kim's which we have spoken about at length, the capacity for individual local communities to apply for funding to address particular needs in their community to retain the workforce. That is going to be crucial to delivering this, particularly in a state like South Australia where we are a state with a large capital city and a lot of small, regional, remote and rural locations around the state which can make a reform like this challenging.

Having that innovation and local action fund to make recommendations around what needs to be done in that area and taking into account the things that might need to be done in that specific location may well be different to what needs to be done elsewhere, and I think it is going to be really vital in terms of us being nimble and having the flexibility we need to find solutions, particularly in hard-to-staff areas, which, as I said, by the very nature of our geography and the way South Australia is made up, we have a lot of those spaces.

There is also a dedicated Aboriginal workforce strategy. We know that attracting and retaining Aboriginal people to the early childhood education and care workforce is difficult as well, but it is important for a lot of reasons, including that we want to make sure that Aboriginal children access three-year-old preschool. Having good representation amongst our staff in delivering that will really help in terms of having that level of trust from Aboriginal families to use those services in their areas. That is why there is a carve-out there for a specific Aboriginal workforce strategy.

There will be a multidisciplinary workforce too. We recognise that the royal commission recommendations require an additional allied health workforce as well. That goes to recommendation 1, I think, around reducing the level of developmental vulnerability amongst five year olds and seeking to get that figure down from its current level of 23.8. The delivery of a second year of preschool will help with that, but it is not just about that. The Hon. Julia Gillard was very clear that we will need to wrap other supports around both three year olds and four year olds if we are to succeed in making good on our commitment to reduce that level of developmental vulnerability.

That is a summary of the things that we announced last week. I think it is safe for me to say that it was received well by the room who had been patiently awaiting the release of this document. I want to thank Kim and her team for the immense amount of work that went into preparing this because it will be an important document in terms of the delivery of this election commitment.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: We are all on the same budget line. I will go back to that other issue that we were talking about before: the three year olds who are in long day care at the moment. Commissioner Gillard recommended that they receive their new entitlement of three-year-old preschool within their current setting, albeit under the same payment arrangements as they would

be if they were just standard long day care as they receive at the moment, as in parent fees subsidised by the commonwealth.

Given the steps forward that we have seen in recent decades in the National Quality Framework being rolled out for long day-care service anyway, the provision of qualified staff and teachers in that setting, a fairly simple broad question: what is going to be the effective difference for a three year old in a quality long day-care service, as they are at the moment, and a three-year-old preschool type of program in the same long day-care service in 2026? What is the practical difference? What is the uplift that will be required for the service to be seen as one of the ones that gets described as a preschool in 2026?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: That is a good question, member for Morialta. A lot of work has been done on this. I am happy to pass over to Kim to take you through what those steps are going to be for services that are partnering with us to make sure they meet requirements so that we have consistency, regardless of where three year olds are accessing their dose of preschool.

Ms LITTLE: There are probably three key points to make. The first one is while, through the royal commission, it was identified that there were some long day cares across South Australia that would already have teacher and educator capacity in place, which would allow them to help stand up a three-year-old preschool program, the majority of services did not.

The majority of children in long day-care services in South Australia right now do not receive a teacher-led three-year-old program. What that means is whether or not you receive a teacher-led program in your room, either for all the days you attend or some of the days that you attend, is really a matter of luck.

One of the things that this reform is intent on doing is making it the case that it is not a matter of luck whether or not you, as a child, are able to receive a high-quality teacher-led program. That is the first clarificatory point to make about what is currently available within the long day-care sector. Absolutely we want to use latent capacity that already exists within that sector, but, by and large, the majority of long day cares are not running three or four or five days a week worth of a teacher-led three-year-old program.

For the ones that are, we will look to partner with them quickly and to move, but there is still a lot of heavy lifting to be done in relation to the majority of the sector, including those who currently have staffing waivers in place.

The second point to make is even if you are a child in a service right now that has some form of teacher engagement in your three-year-old room, whether some of the time or all of the time there is a teacher actually in the room helping to deliver, what you do not have access to is all the things that the royal commission recommended as part of its broader definition of preschool in South Australia. This is one of the genuinely innovative elements of what has been recommended by the royal commission and adopted by government.

What the royal commission says is it is not purely that there is a teacher available to the room—although that is, do not get me wrong, a good thing in and of itself—it is that that teacher is well supported, it is that that teacher has higher than the award levels of time off the floor to do planning, it is that they have both capacity and support for them to do professional development. It is that that service is able to engage with allied health and family support services, it is that there is outreach available to that service to support families who might not otherwise be served to come in and attend regularly. It is that that service is better connected to other players within their local area as part of a local system, facilitated by the local teams that the royal commission has recommended be stood up, but also has opportunities to run professional networks to work with other teachers and educators and other sorts of professionals in their area.

At the moment, with the exception of the government preschool system, by and large our long day-care services in South Australia are quite atomised. There are some that belong to larger providers, providers like Goodstart, for example, who might have the benefit of the sorts of things that I am talking about, at least in part. But much of the sector does not have the benefit of the funding streams, capacity building or the sorts of support that I am flagging that would help them to stand up a high-quality preschool program, defined, as Ms Gillard does, as not just teaching and learning but

also connections into other service systems and supports for children and family who need that extra support.

I think if you are a family right now who is going to a standard long day care in South Australia, you are most likely to be not receiving a teacher-led program, but even if you are a family who is going to a service that does have enough teacher capacity to have the teacher in the room at least some of the time during the course of the week, that service does not have the funding streams and does not have the support available to stand up this much richer, higher-quality conception of what preschool should look like for three year olds in long day-care services.

You can think of preschool, if you like, in long day care as a quality intervention. It is designed to help support long day-care services, along with our wonderful government services and non-government services as well. It is designed to help long day cares to do their best possible job in relation to those children, and that is a leap from where we are now.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can I ask, directly on the same line, then, and directly following: the two differences identified were a teacher-led program in the three-year-olds' room, say, and then those broader things recommended by the royal commissioner. I will not go through them; people can check the *Hansard*. Would it be correct to characterise that when we talk about a teacher-led program—I am trying to strip it right back to how you would assess whether this is a long day-care centre with an approved three-year-old preschool program or is it just a quality long day-care centre somewhere along the journey towards that but not yet at the mark?

Is it going to be the government's expectation in 2026 that of any of these first centres approved to be of the model would have a teacher delivering that 15 hours of direct relationship with the child or, given all the other things that have been described, is a teacher-led program just one where the teacher is present for a majority of the time and giving some direction to what the program is then being delivered by other qualified staff? I am not making any value judgement here. I am just trying to clarify at what point does a preschool program mark get the tick in that long day-care service as opposed to there being a teacher in the centre and meeting the requirements currently under the National Quality Framework?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am informed that there needs to be a teacher leading the 15 hours at all times.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: When you say 'leading', it is effectively in the room basically?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That is my understanding. I just wanted to make sure that that was the case. The second aspect are those broader things the royal commission demanded: a teacher being well supported, time off to do planning, allied health and outreach engagement being available. Are they things that the government is going to provide for the long day-care services or are they engagements and uplifts that the service has to find within itself before it will be eligible to participate in this program and get the tick?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Kim Little to provide an answer, member for Morialta.

Ms LITTLE: Through you, minister, thank you for the question again. It depends in part on what aspect of the support we are talking about. If we are thinking about additional support to services and providers in order to support the professional development of their staff in service, what the royal commission recommends is that funding to help support that, to help defray the cost of that, be built into the funding model.

At the moment, there is obviously no funding available for long day care services to do three year old, and the royal commission funding model builds up a number of elements. It builds up funding for teaching and learning. The royal commission recommends \$2,300 be available for teaching and learning, with some additional loadings around layered supports, so that is the allied health and connection to family services, loadings for outreach and so on. I will not go through the full funding formula as we would definitely use up the next half an hour, but I am happy to answer any specific questions.

In terms of funding provided to the service, the royal commission recommends that teachers be able to have some additional planning time each week and have two days per year off the floor to be able to go to professional development. That funding would flow to the service, obviously, for them to be able to support those costs.

In terms of broader professional learning opportunities, part of the announcement of the workforce strategy includes a full suite of quality initiatives which will be available free of charge out into the sector, so that will involve a calendar of professional development that will be available, whether in person or through webinars and so on. It will involve biennial conferences for the sector as a whole. It will involve specific coaching and mentoring programs, including for early career teachers. Those are things that we would stand up and we would provide to the sector. I will say that we will, of course, do that in very close collaboration with the sector because we want to ensure that the things that we are providing in order to support their staff to thrive and do their best possible work are fit for purpose, so we will work very closely with the sector on those.

In terms of your question about allied health and connection to family support services and so on, what the royal commission calls layered supports, we are going to do a consultation across the course of the second half of this year about what the appropriate mix is there. We are really keen to hear from the sector about what is the appropriate mix of, if you like, funding provided directly to the sector with a set of guidelines about how that money can appropriately be used to achieve its objectives versus any work we might do to centrally procure or commission, if you like, a service in order to use an economy of scale. We are very, very interested in hearing from the sector about what they believe the appropriate balance and mix of those things are.

I was fortunate enough to be in the gallery when the minister was answering a question about devices in schools. Sometimes using the purchasing power of the state in order to provide a service, rather than provide cash for providers to then go get that service themselves, is the most efficient and effective way of getting it done, and sometimes giving the money directly to services and to providers so they can work within their local ecosystem and purchase and pull down services within funding guidelines is the right approach. I suspect we will end up with a mix of the two, but we are really keen to design that very closely with the sector over coming months. I hope that is an informative answer.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It is, thank you. In what way will the three-year-old preschool program differ from the current program that a four year old will get? I suspect this is the second dot point on page 19: the \$30 million to align support offered through four-year-old preschool with three-year-old preschool. That might be it or it might be something else.

My understanding is that Aboriginal children and children under guardianship, who are currently accessing preschool services, are basically just accessing the same preschool services as the four year olds, which is beneficial for those students because it is better than the alternative in many cases. It is an opportunity for them to engage, to socialise and to have that development. If, as the royal commission has fully realised, you actually have a program that is designed and purpose-built for three year olds, where are we up to in identifying what that looks like, especially given the extra developmental needs that three year olds generally have but four year olds do not—nappy changes are coming to mind immediately.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Morialta, you have touched upon some good points there, and I will pass over to Kim to give you some more detail. I would say that layered supports is one that I would point to straightaway as being a difference and is something that obviously Kim has already spoken about in a fair bit of detail around things that we are going to need to do.

At the end of your question you touched upon, for instance—and it was a good example—nappy change facilities, which I think is obviously something we are very cognisant of as well in terms of the way that our four-year-old preschools are currently set up or not set up to accommodate and care and teach three year olds who, of course, by virtue of their stage of development will need to have that. If I recall correctly, we have discussed potentially spaces for kids to nap, and things like that as well, which might not always be present in the four-year-old preschool context, but I will pass over to Kim to give some more detail.

Ms LITTLE: It is a two-part answer to your question: the first is, complete agreement with the point that preschool for three year olds needs to be developmentally appropriate for three year olds. One thing that we are going to be very interested in doing in working with the sector is both long day care but also sessional preschools, predominately run by the government sector, to support the professional learning and professional development for staff who may not have had extensive experience beyond, perhaps, a small number of children who are currently eligible under the targeted initiatives and may not have had extensive experience working with three year olds.

Of course, that is not true in the long day-care sector. The long day-care sector does have extensive experience working with three year olds, albeit not with the level of support for programming that is proposed to be offered through these reforms, as I have addressed in a previous answer. So we will be doing that work obviously under the banner of the early years learning framework, which is the national learning framework for young children in Australia, and consistent with that learning framework.

I would anticipate, exactly as has been done in other jurisdictions that have introduced three year old, that we would be working closely with the department building on work they have already done in this space to build out resources and guides and professional development for staff about age-appropriate, obviously play-based, three-year-old preschool that is developmentally appropriate for that age group. So, absolutely, that is something we will be focused on doing through the reform, and that is something that has been a focus in other places that have introduced three year old as well.

In many cases, we can build on. You mentioned before that there are, of course, very high-quality day care services in South Australia. I will call one out in particular—that is not to say that it is the only one of its kind—for example, the work that Gowrie does in its service, which is a long-day service. It obviously includes three year olds drawing on that local expertise, the expertise from our universities and our researchers, and from the department itself, to ensure that we have that support for teachers and educators who may not have had significant experience previously in working with three year olds, and to support the new entrants into the workforce as well who are going to be taking on that program.

I think the second part of your question related to the line about the consequential impact on four year olds. To unpack that, the current funding model for four year olds in long day care in South Australia does not contain many of the elements that have been adopted for three year olds, so it does not contain, for example, additional support for professional development and for professional planning, it does not contain the layered supports money and neither for long day care nor for sessional preschools does it contain any outreach money.

One of the things that the royal commission recommended was not only that governments stand up and offer three-year-old preschool, with this new funding model and this more comprehensive definition of preschool, but to the extent there was a difference between that model and existing four-year-old funding models that they be normed so that we have essentially the same approach for both three and four year olds.

What that would mean, to take an example from the government preschool space, is right now government preschools do not have access to money for outreach, even in SEIFA 1 and 2 areas, to support families who might not otherwise engage or regularly engage to come into service. One of the recommendations of the royal commission is that that be available to the government system and to other aspects of the service system as well, working in disadvantaged communities, not only for three-year-old preschool but for four-year-old preschool as well, because it would be odd to put that program on and make it available for three year olds but suddenly have it not available for four year olds. So it is a consequential impact from the three-year-old reforms.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Is that the \$30 million in the second dot point to align those two together?

Ms LITTLE: Correct.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: My question goes to an issue that was, I think, very present in the recommendations of the royal commission, but the government in its response may or may not have worked out how to address it or not.

My concern is that the royal commission assumed that if a child was in a long day-care service they would get their dose of three-year-old preschool in a long day-care service—and the same long day-care service, presumably, where possible. At the moment, such a child is not at long day-care service at three years old, but many will go to a public preschool when they are four, potentially supplementing continuing in their long day-care service as well. It is attractive to families. They might see a quality difference. Many of them, I suspect, appreciate the fact that there are no fees other than the term-by-term fees of a couple of hundred bucks, as opposed to whatever they are paying per day.

My question is: what are going to be the rules for a family whose three year old is at long day care, and may have been there for years, but had wanted to go to a public preschool when they are four; are they still going to be able to? If that is the assumed case—if there is going to be room for those children in the long day-care setting to go to a public preschool at four—do they lose the benefit of having a two-year program, given that they will get one year of a preschool program in one setting and the second year in a different setting?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will answer the first question by saying that the entitlement to attend government four-year-old preschool will remain. In terms of the last question, I think you asked, for example—and you can correct me if I have this wrong—if a three year old is receiving their dose in a long day-care setting but receiving their four-year-old dose in a government preschool, do we lose the benefit of having two years of preschool?

I would say we do not, because of all the work that in some way Kim has already sought to explain about getting consistency around the provision of three-year-old preschool in long day-care settings compared to government settings. That would include consistency as best we can between a dose of three-year-old preschool in a long day care and a dose of four-year-old preschool in a government setting. We are confident that if long day-care providers meet the requirements that we are going to put in place before they can partner with us, we will get that consistency.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: My next number of questions go to the challenge of attracting workforce. The minister and the chief executive—congratulations, I should say—before talked about professional development for staff in the public preschool service to enable them to be more familiar with how three year olds operate, what is developmentally appropriate for them and how they can be best supported. Has the minister been overwhelmed with enthusiasm from current preschool directors and staff who are seeking opportunities to train for three year olds, and conversely, has the minister had concerns from staff who are satisfied with their current arrangements?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will do my best to answer your question given it is anecdotal in nature but nonetheless I think a fair question. I would say I have been met with a lot of positivity. I can certainly say that hand on heart in terms of the reaction from not just the government's existing four-year-old preschool workforce but also private long day-care providers who might be contemplating partnering with us, and that is a good thing because you can understand there being a level of apprehension.

I am reminded by those who have been around longer than me about the apprehension that existed when four-year-old preschool was first introduced, so it is not surprising that there is some here. What gives me the most confidence is that the value of three-year-old preschool has never, in any interaction I have had with our staff, been questioned in terms of its importance and its power in terms of better preparing kids for their first day of reception when they sit down, lowering levels of developmental vulnerability.

One of the concerns that is relayed to me, and you have already touched upon it in one of your questions, is around facilities in four-year-old preschools not always being fit for purpose to accommodate three year olds. That is certainly something that is relayed to me, and both I and Kim always seek to reassure people when that happens that we understand that. A lot of work is going into modelling what work, infrastructure or otherwise, might need to occur to make sure they can accommodate three year olds and funding this properly to ensure we can do all the things that we

need to. Certainly, I think a lot of the staff in four-year-old preschools are seeing this as an opportunity.

If I was to be perfectly frank, the other consideration I think which weighs on people's minds is that we are having children who were born during COVID coming through the system now, and they are showing higher levels of dysregulation, sometimes I think lower levels of continence and things like that, because of the nature of the time that they were born and not having the same access to the kind of socialisation and all those kinds of things. That will be something we will have to keep a very close watch on. But I would say, overall, I have been buoyed by the response from the sector in understanding that, although this will have challenges and have parts, including workforce, that are going to be hard, it is actually just something that we do need to do.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Given the challenges that we have already spoken about today, we are hopefully going to have a few minutes now to come to those that were identified by the royal commission—800 extra teachers and nearly a thousand extra other staff with other qualifications being required. There are some vacancies at the moment. I think the royal commission described 120 waivers at the moment, and the minister said that there were 20 waivers in place for public preschools at the moment. Given that, is a long day-care centre that is offering a preschool-type program able to provide that program if the teacher in the room is somebody who actually has a special authority to teach or is there under a waiver? At what point will the centre not be described as a three-year-old preschool-type program if they are unable to have a qualified teacher in the room?

The CHAIR: The next question will be from the member for Newland.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Kim Little to provide an answer to the member for Morialta on this one.

Ms LITTLE: In response to the question about teacher-led programs, the one thing I would say first about the data that comes out of the royal commission and, in particular, the issue of the fact that there are already a number of long day-care services that have staffing waivers in place, is that, of course, us working with them for them to be able to have a teacher in the service and have a preschool teacher in the service will resolve that issue in many cases. So the issues are not necessarily additive. Sometimes the solution to one is the solution to the other. I just flag that as part of the context for the answer.

Obviously, we are going to be working very closely with long day cares that have existing qualified staff in place or, through the various measures that are invested into the workforce strategy, are able to acquire those staff. As a general proposition, those staff will be fully qualified teachers within service.

I do want to call out one thing, though, that we are very interested in consulting with the sector on over the course of the next few months. One of the strategies that is going to be used through the workforce strategy is around upskilling. As the member would know, currently in long day-care services, the three-year-old rooms would generally be led by a diploma-qualified staff member. That is someone who has received their diploma already and in many cases has had years worth of experience leading that room. We have already been bombarded with interest from those diploma-qualified educators who are interested in taking their next steps, supported by scholarships and supported by new pathways that are opening up, in order to become teachers.

One of the things we are very interested in working through with the sector is we would not want it to be the case that a service that had a diploma-qualified room leader who was well advanced in their journey to upskill felt that they needed to dispense with that staff member and hire another teacher from somewhere else in order to be able to participate in the initiative.

We do want to support women—it is not exclusively women, but mainly—often people who are first in family to go to university, often people from CALD backgrounds, people who perhaps have been overlooked or underappreciated in the past or have not had the opportunity to go to university. We do want to ensure that those diploma-qualified room leaders are given as much opportunity as possible to become the teacher who leads that program within that service.

We are interested in working with the sector on whether any flexibility is required there in terms of the funding stream for someone who may be mere months away from becoming a fully qualified teacher in the service, but that is something we will consult very closely with the sector on.

To the extent that there will be any funded three-year-old programs that are being led by someone who is on their journey to become a teacher but is not yet fully qualified, that would be entirely by exception, it would be governed by rules and guidelines, and we would work them through closely. It would also need to be transitional; it would also need to be for a time-limited period for us to be able to move to that person being a fully qualified teacher. That is a very well-recognised approach in early childhood.

As you may know, under the national law that governs early childhood education and care, people are allowed to be working towards their qualification but still be counted within ratio—you are very familiar with all of this, of course.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I helped make that happen.

Ms LITTLE: Congratulations. That is wonderful. We do have a particular context that allows transition and flexibility. We absolutely want to maintain standards. The goal of this is that every South Australian child by 2032 will be able to access a teacher-led program for at least 15 hours a week and with up to 2,000 children accessing a 30-hour program per week. But we do need to be working closely with the sector, and people within it already, to give as many opportunities as possible for that to happen. We will be doing that work closely with them, while safeguarding quality and ensuring arrangements are transitional. I hope that is useful.

The CHAIR: Member for Newland, we have time for a brief question and a brief answer.

Ms SAVVAS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 176, which relates to the Kindy Care trials. I do want to acknowledge and thank the minister for the Kindy Care trial at Fairview Park Kindergarten in my own electorate, which starts next week. Can the minister please provide the committee with information about that trial in preschools commencing this year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Newland, and it was great to announce this at Fairview Park Kindergarten with you. It was great to see the response of not just that kindergarten but of the families who go there and that the response to this Kindy Care—essentially, out-of-hours care for preschool-aged kids—has been really overwhelming, which is good.

It was a recommendation, I think number 43, of the royal commission report conducted by the Hon. Julia Gillard. It is important for a number of reasons and, given the short amount of time I have available to me, I might just touch upon the fact that I think it is really important that broadly, as a system, we do the things that are in our control to modernise our system to work for the families of today. These are families where, if it is two parents or one, they are all working and the notion of being able to drop off at 9 o'clock and pick up at three or quarter past three every day is not ideal and does not work for a lot of families.

We know that in the primary school context we have many great out-of-school-hours care services that are there in the morning to take care of kids, and there in the afternoon, up until 6 o'clock, to take care of kids, to fill in those gaps before and after the school bells ring. But we do not have the same thing in the preschool context, or at least in very few circumstances.

My daughters go to a school where the OSHC there has catered for the preschool kids, but it is the exception and it is not an easy thing to do. I remember my eldest daughter saying this herself, that as a preschool kid she was not particularly comfortable with being at an OSHC service with year 6, or back then year 7 students, which is another complexity that the OSHC staff have to manage.

Having this trial run of Kindy Care, where it is a standalone out-of-hours care service for the preschool kids, will mean that not only the kids will be happy to be there but the parents will feel a much higher level of confidence in using the service. This is what we need, in no small part because we need all those who are willing to participate in the workforce being able to do so and one of the absolute primary blocks to that is the ability to access not just child care but also OSHC or Kindy Care right across the state. I look forward to updating this place as that trial kicks off about how it goes and hopefully plans to expand it further.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I might wrap up a few questions together. I suspect we will spend quite a lot of the next year or two talking about workforce challenges. Confirming my understanding there is a target of 800 teachers and 880 diploma and other qualified staff, how many staff is the department seeking to add into the system through the following categories of project: the three-year zero to five university degree; the upskilling described earlier, encouraging diploma and certificate-qualified staff to do teaching degrees; extra young people being trained through the technical colleges; and other workforce development initiatives under this program?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you member for Morialta; we will take those on notice and come back to you with an answer.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: In relation to the Department for Education, is the Department for Education retaining the role of the early years leader in the local education teams and what other supports are being provided to preschools in that departmental setting?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The department is retaining the stewardship of those positions.

The CHAIR: The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of Early Childhood Education and the Office for Early Childhood Development complete.

Sitting suspended from 13.13 to 14:00.

Departmental Advisers:

Prof. M. Westwell, Chief Executive, Department for Education.

Ms M. Bensley, Chief Executive, SACE Board, Department for Education.

Mr C. Bernardi, Chief Operating Officer, Department for Education.

Dr P. Smith, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and External Relations, Department for Education.

Mr L. Fraser, Director, Strategy and Coordination, Department for Education.

The CHAIR: We are back for the session for Administered Items. There are no changes to the committee. The Minister for Education, Training and Skills is the minister appearing. The proposed payments remain open for examination. I will call on the minister either to make a brief statement or to introduce his advisers. I will then go to the speaker for the opposition to make a statement or go straight into questions. This session will finish at 2.30pm.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: To my right, can I introduce again Professor Martin Westwell. To my left is Dr Peta Smith and to her left is Chris Bernardi. Behind me is Luke Fraser, Director, Strategy and Coordination, and Michaela Bensley, the Chief Executive of SACE. I do not have any opening statement.

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

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Thank you sir. Most of the things we will be talking about are on pages 200 to 202. Let's start with page 202. There is a line of about \$2 billion for grants and subsidies to non-government schools. Most of that money is accounted for elsewhere as coming in from the commonwealth, so I just have some questions about non-government schools.

There are four topics. We may be able to move through them at pace so that we can get to some other topics as well. Firstly, this is one that we spoke about last year: there is the Non-Government Reform Support Fund, which was previously funding that came from the commonwealth supporting independent schools—I think in Catholic schools too—particularly in the wellbeing space.

The non-government sector was losing that funding from the commonwealth, is my recollection last year, and the minister undertook that he would seek reconsideration of that federal decision to cut that fund. Is there an update on that? Is there any movement from the commonwealth?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I can say that that matter is still under negotiation with the federal government. I might ask Dr Smith to add a few extra comments to that as well.

Dr SMITH: Certainly. As you know, the Australian government has formally paid that funding. Negotiations on the agreement are active at the moment and Independent Schools Australia and the National Catholic Education Commission are in dialogue with Australian government officials and, I believe, directly with the minister about the impact of the loss or non-restoration of that funding on their ability to carry out reforms, particularly as some independent schools are not part of systems and so they do not have the same economies of scale. At the moment, we understand those discussions are still happening, so there is no further update.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Prior to the last election, the minister committed, I believe, as the opposition did as the then government, that the non-government sector would continue to be able to rely on 22 per cent of SRS funding going forward, less parental capacity to pay, obviously. Does the government maintain that position, notwithstanding that there are negotiations about the National School Reform Agreement at the moment? Does the government remain committed to that position going forward?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The short answer is yes. I would add to that short answer by saying, as you referred to in your question, negotiations on the broader National School Reform Agreement are still underway, but, yes, there is every intention of keeping the commitment we made before the 2018 election and have honoured since.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: What is the status of the low interest loans for the non-government schools program? I understand that they would be operated out of SAFA and the Treasurer, but the education department obviously maintains a policy interest and participates in the assessment of those loans. I am hoping that the minister can give at least a broad answer to that broad question.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: This is handled through the South Australian Government Financing Authority, which is part of the Treasurer's portfolio; nonetheless, I am happy to answer your question. I think some questions were put by the member for Colton to the Treasurer in their estimates session around this matter. What I can say is that, from 2021 to 2022, priority was given to the infrastructure projects to support an increased enrolment capacity in geographic areas where there was demand for additional education provision, student retention and the refurbishment of existing facilities to provide contemporary learning experiences.

The latest update I have is that the Financing Authority has informed us that there has been \$148.75 million approved under the scheme and \$171.25 million remaining in the scheme. The total loan amount approved for round 1 was \$65.3 million, the total loan amount approved for round 2 was \$65.4 million, and the total loan amount approved for round 3 was \$18 million. I am advised that, whilst the program is still active, there are currently no dates confirmed for round 4.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can the minister confirm that there will be a round 4?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Although that is in a different minister's portfolio, my understanding is yes, and there are no plans to change the amount of funding offered in the program either. I just do not have the date of when round 4 will be.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I appreciate you taking the question. My last question on this one, although it may provoke some supplementaries potentially, is in relation to the midyear entry funding issue that we started touching on in the earlier session. There is a range of things I could ask, but perhaps it would be easiest if I just ask for an update on how that issue is playing out with the commonwealth, and we will take it from there.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We continue to lobby the federal government to reinstate the money, and we do that in unison with the non-government sector, but particularly the Catholic sector. I have not given up hope that we can, although it has not been an easy process. We know the non-government sector has used midyear intake to great effect. We have brought it back because we believe there is real utility in that as well. I can say that I get a lot of feedback from families out there who are pleased that it has been returned.

It comes as a complication to our school sites and to our classroom teachers, of course, because they have preschoolers and reception students starting halfway through. I commend them on being able to accommodate this, but it has certainly been welcomed by families. In light of that, we have been happy to stand with the non-government sector in the strongest possible terms, pushing the federal government to put back in what is, in the context of their budget, a very, very small amount of money. I have not given up hope that we will be successful in doing that.

Obviously things were put in place in terms of transition funding, both federally and state, to get us through, which we did as a sign of goodwill from us to support the non-government sector, and I think that was a pretty decent thing of us to do, given that we have stood to lose a lot of money ourselves, which Chris will tell me if I am wrong, but we have not had that bucket replenished, we have just found that ourselves. Yes, the campaign to have it restored is ongoing, and I certainly have not given up hope that we can be successful.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can I confirm that this calendar year 2024 is the first year that the commonwealth has ceased providing funding for these students, or are they funding this year and not next year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand you are right. This would be the first.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: So there is no funding from the commonwealth in 2024. These students in the last decade or so, or since it has been an issue, would have received presumably 22 per cent less parental capacity to pay from the state government. Is the state government funding that amount to the non-governmental sector for midyear entry reception kids this year or a different amount?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The state contribution is \$2.2 million subject to actual enrolments, calculated on a per capita funding basis, and I wrote to the Association of Independent Schools and Catholic Education I think to advise of that at some stage towards the end of last year.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Presumably that is based on the same calculation that it would have been in previous years?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I do not think it includes the loadings from memory. It is a per capita amount coming to \$2.2 million, which we have done as a sign of goodwill essentially, just trying to support them, given that we are certainly feeling the pinch of not having that money, but I understand for the non-government sector they are probably feeling the pinch even more. We did it as a gesture of goodwill, but it was on a basis of per capita funding, and excluding the student loadings.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The student loadings being the six areas that Gonski identified to provide extra for small schools, remote schools, students with a disability, etc.?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: That is correct. Give me one second, member for Morialta. I will leave my answer there. I was just trying to ascertain how we calculated the \$2.2 million.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: As it stands, is there any funding provision expected for this cohort of students in 2025 unless the commonwealth changes their mind?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I say this with all due respect, it is hypothetical in terms of how we go with that negotiation with the federal government. It is something that I will have to consider as minister. If we get to a point where we do not think that the federal government is going to change its position and, as I said, I have not given up hope on that, we can assume that there will be a federal election sometime in the next nine months I suppose, so hopefully decisions around this might be expedited somewhat by those political imperatives.

But if we do get to a point, which we are not at yet, where I feel as minister, and the state government feels, that continuing to petition the current federal government to put that money back in would be a fruitless exercise, and unlikely to be successful, then we would have to turn our minds to what we do moving forward on that. Currently, we have not budgeted anything, to more specifically answer your question, and I think that is right, Chris, in terms of that.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: We are still on the same budget line. My understanding of the way this was budgeted previously was that there was an assumed allocation every year from the

state government going forward because we have been paying this allocation as a state to non-government schools ever since the federal education act was passed, and presumably before, so I am wondering when the decision was taken—was it a Treasury decision or a decision within education to cease that funding, or was it a parameter shift from the commonwealth that triggered our state Treasury to have a parameter shift as well?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Dr Smith to give an answer to that question, member for Morialta.

Dr SMITH: As you may know, the amounts that are paid by both levels of government are calculated through a federal government funding estimation tool. South Australia uses the Australian government's funding estimation tool to calculate the amount due to all sectors in this state, because it is more administratively efficient for us to do that. The actual determination of the funding that each level of government is required to pay is determined by the August Census. The Australian Education Act and regulations actually set out the rules and the scheme for counting students in the August Census.

The Australian government determined that the method for counting students, which was being employed as a matter of policy, was not consistent with the regulation and the legislation. That was the trigger for it making a unilateral decision. As the minister alluded to, the funding support from the state government was partly due to the timing of that unilateral decision and its announcement, which left very little time for non-government schools in South Australia to make any plans.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I understand that. Thank you. So the federal government's decision changed the tool which automatically flowed to our Treasury assessment, and our budget assessment was always connected to that tool?

Dr SMITH: That is exactly right, so it became then a matter of policy.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I move to the advocacy bodies, and on page 201 there are some lines relevant. I note that if we look under employee benefit payments, there is an increase on last year's budget from \$5.6 million to \$5.793 million, and then this year's budget allocates substantially more than that. I think the increase in this year's budget is accounted for elsewhere, but can you explain why last year's budget had an overspend of about \$180,000?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I think we will take the bulk of the question on notice, but I will pass over to Mr Bernardi to give a bit of detail.

Mr BERNARDI: I will take on notice the specifics as to why that number changed; however, when there is an approved adjustment to the budget, we process that through Treasury systems, etc., so we will come back to you for the specific details as to why that budget adjustment changed.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am more than happy if the minister wants to take these next questions on notice, unless he has the figures to hand. I am interested in relation to this line; maybe not the employee benefit expenses but, in the overall lines for expenses and cash outflows for the advocacy bodies, can the minister advise what detailed level of oversight he has for these budgets? Is he, for example, able to provide the level of expense undertaken over the past year for travel by each of the relevant bodies for food and hospitality, for advertising and so forth? If he does have that level of detail, is it possible to be provided?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I do not have that level of detail to hand, but we will take it on notice and seek to provide you as many answers as we can to those questions.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: At the top of page 201, fourth line down, there is a transfer from contingencies of \$2.8 million. I am wondering if the minister can explain what that is for.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will hand to Mr Bernardi, and then potentially Dr Smith as well, to answer that question.

Mr BERNARDI: Thank you, minister. This is new funding to the Office for Early Childhood Development as part of the government's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Is that contingency within the education department or from Treasury's contingencies?

Mr BERNARDI: My understanding is that it is from Treasury and Finance. I will take that on notice, but I am fairly sure it is from Treasury and Finance.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I have some questions on SACE.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We have Michaela Bensley, the Chief Executive, joining us here.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Staying on the same page, there is a sale of goods and services line that shows \$5.9 million in 2022-23, going to \$5.4 million last year—which was above budget—and budgeted for \$4.9 million this year. Does this relate to SACE International? What does this figure relate to and why is it dropping? It is towards the bottom of page 200.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass to Ms Bensley to provide an answer.

Ms BENSLEY: It would be inclusive of all fees, so things like replacement certificates and visa 500 students, as well as some other charges that we implement, but I will be able to give you that breakdown at a later date.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I appreciate that being taken on notice. In a broad sense, it is a fairly substantial drop from nearly \$6 million to nearly \$5 million within two years. Is there a broad understanding of the reason for that drop? Is there some specific program that is not selling so well, or is it harder to define and needs to be taken on notice as to the reason for the drop?

Ms BENSLEY: I would have to take that on notice. I am not aware of any program or fluctuations that would be able to explain that.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Is it possible to get an update in relation to the operation of SACE International? Is there growth in the marketing and the sale of this program, or decline, or stability?

Ms BENSLEY: We are excited that there is actually quite substantial growth, particularly this year at the beginning of this half, with more schools interested in running students through our Northern Hemisphere program, which is making that much more viable from a cost per student perspective. We have also renegotiated our pricing model and run a number of schools through that different pricing model, so there is a lot of interest there. We recently, just last week, had a whole group come on behalf of and in partnership with StudyAdelaide to understand the benefits of studying here in South Australia and connect with our partners, particularly in the universities. So we are excited for that program going forward.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: In my mind, I have always thought there were three clear benefits of SACE International if it was working well. One is encouraging students from overseas to have our certificate, especially if they are going to come and study here; the second is making it convenient for people who are here and travelling overseas; and the third, which some might say is very important, is potentially turning a profit. I am wondering if SACE International is currently turning a profit and how that is going.

Ms BENSLEY: Yes, it is turning a profit. At the moment, it is about 30 per cent.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Are you able to give us an aggregate figure or the dollar figure on that?

Ms BENSLEY: I will take that on notice and come back with the aggregate figure, if that is okay.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I might add a bit more information that I have to hand about the performance of SACE International. As of 2023, it was being delivered through 25 schools in Malaysia, China, Korea, Vietnam, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Sri Lanka. A total of 1,131 students enrolled in SACE International cohorts during the 2023-24 year compared with 1,076 in the year before, so a slight increase, which is good. Pleasingly, the completion rate across those two years was 96.1 per cent in 2022-23 and 98.8 per cent in 2023-24, which is a very healthy completion rate.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: One last train on SACE. I am interested in—I have not written them down and I forget what they are called, not for the first time—the new PLP and the new research project. My understanding is they are now embedded in schools, but is there any further work to be done? Is there any feedback coming in, and is there any possibility that SACE or the minister might consider changing the names to something a little bit simpler?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: You must refer to Exploring Identities and Futures and Activating Identities and Futures.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I am not going to remember it.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Michaela will speak to the crux of your question. I take your point about the name. I will pass over to Ms Bensley.

Ms BENSLEY: I will certainly take the name into consideration. We have been piloting for two years now. Both of those new subjects have been accredited by the board. We have over 8,000 students now studying those in pilot. Full implementation for EIF will happen in 2025 and for AIF in 2026. The feedback we have is overwhelmingly positive. I am particularly buoyed by the improvement in the relationship between teacher and student in what happens with some of the assessment.

We are also excited that students are able to focus on an area they are really passionate about, reflecting on their own learning, and they are able to transfer their understanding of themselves into their other subjects. Unlike how we used to implement subjects, we are certainly not going with a 'set and forget'. Once it does hit the system in terms of full implementation, we will monitor and evaluate its progress, because there is a difference once you go to 11,500 from 8,000.

We will make incremental changes as we see fit and as the community says to us, but at the moment we are very confident around its success. We are spending a lot of time this year supporting schools in the implementation. There are 24 workshops for teachers that will happen throughout term 3, another 12 for curriculum leaders and a range of online resources so that they are ready, but what we are hearing in terms of the surveying is that people are really comfortable, ready to go and excited about the new subjects.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I do not mean to interrupt, but I just want to add something. I am not as expert, obviously, on the subject of EIF and AIF as Ms Bensley and Professor Westwell are, but the thing that has struck me that is important about it—and it may not be reflected in the name, but it is a really good thing—is that a lot of it has been designed around what employers have said is lacking, which I think was the genesis of the research project originally, too, but it is an important thing.

There is stuff around resilience and, if you are coming up against some problem, not giving up and stepping away. They are the things that employers want graduates from our system—from public, Catholic and independent schools—to have when they step into the workplace. I think EIF and AIF do play an important role in trying to address that and show those employers that we are willing to be flexible and change things within our leaving certificate to try to address what they see as deficiencies in the system.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I might just stay with SACE for convenience, and I can put questions on notice to the minister on other topics in due course. Going to page 201, in terms of both employee benefits and payments for supplies and services there is a drop in the cash outflows for SACE. Does that reflect cuts to their base funding, or is it simply a matter of time-limited projects coming to an end?

Ms BENSLEY: That would be projects coming to an end, particularly the stage 2 review funding.

The CHAIR: The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of Administered Items complete. I thank the minister and the advisers.

Departmental Advisers:

Prof. M. Westwell, Chief Executive, Department for Education.

Ms M. Richardson, Deputy Chief Executive, Skills SA.

Mr C. Baker, South Australian Skills Commissioner.

Mr C. Zielinski, Director, Skills, Planning and Purchasing, Department for Education.

Mr C. Bernardi, Chief Operating Officer, Department for Education.

The CHAIR: I now propose to open the payments for Skills SA, including the Skills Commission. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. I call on the minister to make a statement, if he wishes, and introduce his advisers. Then I will call on the lead speaker of the opposition to make a statement, if he wishes, or go straight into questions.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: There is no opening statement from me, but we are keeping at the table Professor Westwell. We now are joined by Madeline Richardson, Deputy Chief Executive of Skills SA, and Chris Zielinski, Director, Skills, Planning and Purchasing. Sitting behind me is Cameron Baker, South Australian Skills Commissioner, and Mr Bernardi is there as well.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Welcome, all. In relation to the National Skills Agreement, there are a number of different places we could look, but page 8 of Budget Paper 5 has a chart and a lot of dot points, and I imagine it will serve us well for most of the questions. Obviously, a number of the dot points would outline the things that have been agreed between the state and the commonwealth government. Are there other key performance indicators and milestone achievements required to receive funding under the five-year agreement with the federal government? If so, are they able to be outlined?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The information I have to hand is about what our obligations are under the NSA. Insofar as our ability to access money from the federal government and the parties who are part of the agreement, they include:

- deliver a national skills plan and jurisdictional action plan;
- provide low or no-fee foundation skills;
- meet VET student loan requirements;
- participate in and support shared system stewardship aligned with the objectives of the National Skills Agreement;
- allocate at least 70 per cent of commonwealth investment to TAFE;
- maintain state expenditure; and
- deliver on agreed policy initiatives.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I note the at least 70 per cent guaranteed to TAFE SA. Is there any minimum allocation required to non-government training providers?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Not from the commonwealth government. This is something that the Premier has spoken about publicly and I have on a number of occasions as well. If we are to first of all make a good fist of meeting the skills demands that we have in all sorts of things—including, as we have spoken about, three-year-old-preschool, but also things around AUKUS—and then plus all the existing demand we currently have, we need growth, obviously. That is not able to be delivered just by TAFE or the public system.

As part of this agreement, there are 160,000 funded training places across the life of the agreement, which I think from memory is an uplift over and above what we would have been doing had we not signed the agreement of something like 60,000 training places. They are going to be shared across the sector. TAFE will be a beneficiary, but so will lots of other training providers as well. In terms of what the federal government required of us as a state for us to be a party and access

their money, the conditions they put in place were a number, but included 70 per cent of the commonwealth investment to TAFE SA.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: What is our percentage this year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Of state funding?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: According to the KPI of the skills funding. I am struggling to recall: is that aggregate of state and federal funding? By the measure from which you have just read, that 70 per cent has to be going to TAFE SA; what is the comparable figure for, say, this year and last year?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I might need to take that on notice although, if I recall, in terms of the percentage of funding provided to TAFE in South Australia compared with the percentage provided to the public training provider—and it has a different name interstate—I think we are certainly in the bottom part of that list with a lower level compared with what other states provide. I will take it on notice and give you a more specific answer.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Given the minister is taking it on notice, can I ask potentially two things that can be incorporated into that answer? The first is, are you able to then potentially provide it over, say, each of the last four years? The second is, perhaps the definition on what are the inputs into that calculation. One thing I have discovered in some time of looking at NCVER data is that you can ask the same question and get a number of different answers, depending on which inputs you are specifically relying on. I am interested in the ones that are going to be used to calculate our meeting, or not, the KPI set by the agreement.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes, I think we can do that, or at least we shall certainly endeavour to. I accept your point that it depends on the things that you are including in the calculation as to what figure you come with. I might just use the opportunity to make the point that the amount of funding for training places in non-government training providers has gone up, not down, since we have come to government and since I have been the minister.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: So the amount of funding from the state government?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Again, that is not the only input, of course. Can I ask, of the 160,000 training places, is there any requirement—or, if not a requirement, is there any budgeted expectation or target—on how many of them will be trainees and apprentices?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: As part of the terms set by the federal government for the agreement and the funding of the 160,000 training places, there is not a target for apprentices and trainees as part of that set by the federal government. But, as you would know well from the budget papers, and as was the case when you were in government, we continue to set numbers of apprentices and trainees in training, which we have done in the 2024-25 target of 26,500. In terms of a federal requirement for the 160,000, no, but we will be looking very closely at what we need in the state context.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Out of those 160,000 training places, over the life of the agreement, obviously the KPI that we have talked about is that 70 per cent of the funding will be delivered by TAFE SA. What proportion of those 160,000 training places are anticipated to be delivered by TAFE SA?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Just to clarify, it is 70 per cent of the federally funded component.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Seventy per cent, so that is slightly different. So 70 per cent of the federally funded component is to be delivered there, but that does not obviously include the state-funded component. Nevertheless, what proportion of the training places are targeted, budgeted or anticipated to be delivered by TAFE SA and what proportion by the non-government providers?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We are still working on the allocation. I do not have an answer for you on that. I will not take that on notice because I do not think I would have an answer to provide you on notice yet because some pretty complicated calculations are still being done on where it is best attributed in terms of getting the best outcome the state can get and basing it on labour market

needs, where we have demand, what uptake would be, and all those sorts of things as well. So we are still working on that.

Obviously, that will become public at some point. I do not seek to dismiss your question, but I just do not have an answer for it yet because of the allocations of where it goes, and this will come as no surprise to you in terms of the priority sectors: defence and manufacturing, construction, infrastructure, education, technology, AI, health and care, clean energy, just to name a few. We are trying to be quite disciplined.

The uplift that has delivered the extra 60,000 training places over the five years is, I think, in the vicinity of \$692 million. I think \$440 million of that was actually from the state. It is an enormous uplift that we provided ourselves and greater than the uplift we received from the commonwealth government. For that reason, we are being very deliberate and precise in working out where they are used so we get a really good return on that money because it was a significant impost for us.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The minister listed some of the key areas: early childhood, defence and so forth, and some of them are blindingly obvious and long-term projects for our state that we clearly need to improve our workforce on, but sometimes things change more quickly than that. Should the state identify new or innovative opportunities that we need to change our priorities? Does the national agreement give the state government the flexibility to do that or do we have to get any such priorities agreed with Canberra?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Excellent question, and absolutely it does. We were incredibly firm on that because it is a five-year agreement, as you pointed out, and we are in I think what they refer to as a 'dynamic space' at the moment, where things are moving and changing a lot. I certainly would not want to lock the state into priority areas in perpetuity that could change quite quickly, so we absolutely have that flexibility to move things around.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Looking at the dot points on page 8, the first one we have dealt with. The second one is the \$62 million for quality training, including a boost to audits and investigations, and so forth. To whom is this \$62 million going? Who is conducting the audits and investigations?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand the \$62.6 million that you refer to, around a boost for audits investigations, is being split between Skills SA and the Skills Commission to do that work. I might invite the commissioner, who has been itching to have a go, to give a bit of information about how that will be used. I am happy to provide some more information about how Skills will do it at the end of that answer.

Mr BAKER: In relation to the South Australian Skills Commission's component of that total funding, it is \$36.32 million for the commission, and that relates specifically to our refocusing around apprenticeship and traineeship compliance. We have an expansion of FTE to meet that functional requirement. We intend to expand on existing initiatives that have been underway since the formation of the commission in 2021, but we are bringing in a considerable number of enhancements around having more of an active compliance approach for the commission.

That is based off an understanding that has come from the work that the minister has led nationally around non-completions, and that 65 per cent of respondents to that work have stated that the reason they are not completing apprenticeships and traineeships is because of workplace conditions and the experiences that they are having whilst on the job.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass to Madeline Richardson to give some perspective about how Skills will be using its component of the \$62.6 million.

Ms RICHARDSON: We have a really strong focus on ensuring really high quality in the training that is delivered in South Australia. As part of that, we conduct an active audit campaign. We undertake proactive education. Of course, we regularly communicate with the Skills Commissioner about the commissioner's priorities and have a strong focus on that through our compliance activities as well. We also ensure that the way we structure and approach our funded activities agreement is fit for purpose, it is responsive to maintaining those really high standards of quality.

Between active auditing, between proactive education and ensuring that we have sufficient resources to undertake those functions as well, those form the key elements of our really strong focus on quality and compliance. Part of that is also ensuring that we are working closely with providers to increase and enhance their levels of offering quality training. There are a couple of examples of where we are proactive in the audit activity we undertake, and where we do identify an issue we would need to undertake more detailed investigations. Those are sometimes things we can do ourselves and, on occasion, we might need independent support to do that. The commissioner has spoken about key functions undertaken within the commissioner's remit.

The CHAIR: The member for Unley.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: When you detail the increase of FTE resourcing within the SA Skills Commission, up from 13.4 to 27.6 for the 2024-25 budget, can you advise whether the FTEs are from staff existing within the Department for Education?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Can we just have that budget line again so we can find it in the papers.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: It is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 173. Basically, it is the Skills Commission. It has the numbers there under the workforce summary.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I might pass to the Skills Commissioner to answer that.

Mr BAKER: Again, thank you for the question. That FTE is from the functional realignment of the existing Traineeship and Apprenticeship Services division that sits within Skills SA. That division is being relocated to the commission and will sit within my management structure from 1 July. The FTE alignment relates to that process.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Can the minister advise how many FTEs currently sit within the Skills and Workforce Unit within the Department for Education after the MoG change?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Madeline Richardson to answer your question.

Ms RICHARDSON: Thank you, minister. Consistent with the budget papers in 2023-24, there are 116.9 FTEs we are planning in 2024-25 to be 127.1. The caveat, I would add, in relation to that is consistent with machinery of government processes. There is a process around discovery, so it is important to ensure that the receiving agency and an agency that is passing on those functions are really clear on that all FTEs are being captured, but I would refer to the budget papers as the most accurate current picture around Skills SA FTEs.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Are there plans for any further MoG changes, for more staff from the Department for Education and Skills SA to move into the Skills Commission?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Member for Unley, there are a couple of moving parts here around the machinery of government changes to which you refer, and then some functional realignment stuff, which I think is happening parallel but is separate to that. I might get Madeline Richardson to speak to those two and provide a bit more clarity.

Ms RICHARDSON: Thanks very much, minister. As you referred to, there is a functional realignment underway between some functions that have been undertaken under delegated arrangements within Skills SA, as the commissioner talked about, that are being realigned with the South Australian Skills Commission. That has been a process that is underway. We have reached the end of that period of consultation and those functions will be transitioning from 1 July. In parallel, you would also be aware of the broader move from Skills SA and the Skills Commission to the new Department of State Development portfolio. As the minister referred to, two things are happening in parallel.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Basically there will be an additional MoG that will move the Skills Commission out of the Department for Education?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The MoG is the one that was announced a number of weeks ago as under the auspices of the creation of the Department of State Development, which will see skills be a part of it. The Skills Commission and the commissioner and his staff will also move there to be a part of it.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Are you able to advise whether the Skills Commission has developed any new training pathways for apprentices and trainees since 2022?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to the Skills Commissioner to answer that question.

Mr BAKER: I just seek some clarification: when we are talking about accreditation of pathways, are we talking about Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications that apprentices and trainees undertake, or are we talking about the TAP Schedule?

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: For example, previously the Skills Commission was able to deliver with NECA and the union a double apprenticeship in electrical and refrigeration.

Mr BAKER: Correct.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: My inquiry is really whether any more pathways have been developed for industry in the last two years with the Skills Commission?

Mr BAKER: I can answer that and the answer to that is yes. In relation to the dual apprenticeship model, we have just recently announced with the Motor Trade Association a series of dual qualification/dual apprenticeship outcomes across light, mechanical, heavy mechanical and auto electrician, so that is the combined arrangement for those pathways. It is very similar to the model that was put together with NECA and run by PEER in the sense of a five-year program, and we have declared that on the TAP Schedule, which is of course our apprenticeship and traineeship register. That is one example of a recent dual trade outcome that the commission has endorsed and ratified.

The CHAIR: Member for Waite.

Ms HUTCHESON: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 184, outlines the release of South Australia's new skills policy. Could the minister please explain to the chamber what the policy changes are for South Australia and what the expected benefits are?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am very happy to do that and talk about the policy on skills that we released very recently. It was a long time in the works. A lot of effort went into crafting it. One of the key reform areas that we have included in it is a stronger focus on completion rates through a number of different pathways, the wellbeing of the people undertaking training being one of them. It is there because it keeps getting brought up by employers, RTOs and GTOs as the reason that people quit or cancel their qualification and do not complete it.

I think there is a fair bit of data around now that shows that that is accountable for a big chunk of those who do not go on to complete: it is around their own wellbeing. I think that the skills and training sector and all those fantastic institutions, whether they be public or private, that provide training in our state, need a bit of assistance in doing that because I do not think it was something that was regarded as their core business in years gone by. That was just the way the world was—and the world has changed. I have made it clear that I think there is a need for us to step a bit more into that space and assist.

I want to give credit in this answer to Madeline and her team. We put our hand up to lead the national piece of work on improving completion rates, which was an excellent piece of work. Sometimes, these kinds of reports or investigations end up being heavily bureaucratic and not the kind of thing, to be honest, that the actual sector itself or people working out at the coalface would pick up and use, and Madeline and her team did an excellent job of keeping it really practical around things that not just South Australia is doing, and wants to do more of, but other states should do as well.

It is important, because we only need to move the dial on completions a little bit nationally to get an enormous increase in qualified workers, whether that is apprentices or trainees, or whatever it might be. Such is the throughput that a percentage increase of one, two, three, four or five per cent actually results in a lot more coming out the other end who are therefore able to get work in all those in-demand areas.

The other part of it was ensuring quality and integrity of training providers. That is important; we need confidence in the system. There needs to be confidence in the system for those students

who are seeking to use it to get themselves skilled up, and there needs to be confidence in it for the parents of those people. The Skills Commissioner has touched upon this already, particularly in regard to the parents of young apprentices and trainees—who are often vulnerable people in the workplace; in some cases, they have been taken advantage of—to make sure parents are confident sending their young person off to be an apprentice or a trainee. Of course, you have to have the confidence of employers and industry. They have to have confidence that what is coming out the other end is what they need and they have the skills.

I have to say, one of the things I very much enjoy about having these two portfolios together is being able to look at that continuum from high school. In the last session, we spoke a bit about EIF and AIF being crafted in response to employer requests, and then continuing that work in terms of making sure that what is in our training packages is a reflection of what employers need, because the moment we slip out of alignment there we have an enormous problem. Given the targets we have in so many areas now, in terms of producing more skilled workers, we do not have the capacity to get that wrong.

So, again, I commend Mads on her work, but also the broader Skills team and all those who put a lot of effort into putting this policy direction together in the skills policy. It is especially important now, given that we do have the \$2.3 billion National Skills Agreement—the biggest uplift that we have ever seen in skills money. I want to make sure that we get value for money for that taxpayer dollar, that we use it wisely, that we get outcomes and that we get qualified staff in the areas that the state most needs.

To do that, we have to have a really strong policy guiding document that sits next to that, which dictates what the priorities are for us akin to the 20-year infrastructure plan we have in Education to make sure that the much smaller amount of money we have at our disposal there, unfortunately, is also put to where it is needed most.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: A supplementary: you referred to the exploitation of apprentices and trainees. How many investigations have there been and how many employers have lost their approval to have apprentices in the last two years?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am pleased to have a crack at answering your question. I can give a bit of a broad view of the compliance work that we have been doing. We did a quality audit blitz, which reviewed payments to over 150 RTOs. Pleasingly—

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Minister, my question was specifically about employers who had been exploiting apprentices.

Mr BROWN: Point of order, Chair: the honourable minister is trying to answer the question.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: What about RTOs—

Mr BROWN: Stop interrupting him!

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: You may have misunderstood my question, or maybe I did not articulate it well enough, but I am interested in the number of employers who have lost their registration because of poor treatment of apprentices.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will just continue my answer, Chair.

The CHAIR: First of all, what was that reference in the budget again, please?

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: It was a supplementary to a government question, sir.

The CHAIR: What was the original budget line?

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: The member for Waite gave it.

The CHAIR: No, your question.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: It is the Skills Commission; it is Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 173, SA Skills Commission. That is what we are asking questions about. The Skills Commission

investigates inappropriate treatment of apprentices and complaints about employers, and apprentices, incidentally.

The CHAIR: What was the question you asked?

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Do you want to hear the question again?

The CHAIR: Yes, please.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Okay. My question was: how many investigations have there been into exploitation of apprentices and how many employers have lost their approval to have apprentices due to that exploitation?

The CHAIR: Minister.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, Chair. It would not be an estimates session without the member for Unley losing his bottle. I am happy to talk about this, though.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: You have made a claim: substantiate it.

The CHAIR: Order! Can everyone please just calm down and let the minister answer.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The South Australian Skills Commission (the commission) regulates the apprenticeship and traineeship system in South Australia in accordance with the South Australian Skills Act 2008 (the act), South Australian Skills Regulations 2021 and South Australian Skills Standards. The commission delegates the powers and functions necessary to undertake the day-to-day administration of the state's apprenticeship and traineeship system to Traineeship and Apprenticeship Services within Skills SA.

In the 2023-24 year to date, 26 employers were investigated for noncompliance with the act. Eleven sanctions were imposed on eight noncompliant employers. This year, powers under the act to declare an employer prohibited from employing apprentices and trainees were exercised for the first time, with Heritage Stone Restorations Pty Ltd declared prohibited. The commission will be strengthening its compliance approach and activities in 2024-25 and beyond to promote a safe, high-quality training experience for South Australia's apprentices and trainees, and to improve apprenticeship and traineeship completion rates in the state.

Complaints handling, dispute resolution, mediation and advocacy for apprentices, trainees, their employers, VET and higher education students, including international students, are also key functions of the commission under the act. In the 2023-24 year to date, 844 people were assisted with complaints handling and dispute resolution services. Of these, 726 cases related to an apprenticeship or traineeship; 10 of these matters were referred to the South Australian Employment Tribunal (SAET).

Ms SAVVAS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 184. That page highlights a continued focus on a quality training system. Could the minister please update the chamber on how the government is monitoring that quality amongst RTOs, and any previous findings?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I thank the member for Newland for what is a very timely question, and I am very pleased to answer it. Skills SA engages with learners, training providers and employers to raise awareness and promote compliance with their obligations. Noncompliances identified through audits and proactive monitoring are investigated by Skills SA and failures are addressed.

The quality audit blitz reviewed payments to over 150 registered training organisations. Of these, 83 per cent—so a very high number—or 131 RTOs were found to be compliant with their funding agreement. Fifteen per cent, or 24 registered training organisations, were rated unsatisfactory and formally advised of corrective action to be taken. Where corrective action is still to be taken, funding of approximately \$200,000 is being withheld. The remaining 2 per cent, or just three RTOs, were the subject of further investigation. There are two other significant investigations that are still underway with records and payments under active review.

Following the blitz, 56 providers rated as marginal or unsatisfactory were contacted to provide them with either educational advice or tailored feedback on areas for improvement as appropriate to ensure they comply with their obligations for contractual compliance as a result of their

audit outcome. Skills SA is ensuring quality and compliance through proactive education monitoring and outreach to prevent noncompliant behaviour before it causes harm, supporting employers and training providers to understand their obligations and demonstrate compliance.

I think this is obviously important work. It goes hand in hand with the work the commission has done around making sure that apprentices and trainees are treated well at their workplace as part of their apprenticeship or traineeship. Of course, the aim of the audit blitz was that if issues were identified—and pleasingly, issues were only identified in a very small proportion of RTOs; 83 per cent were found to be compliant, which is excellent news—the idea was not so much to be punitive but to work with those providers if issues were identified to make sure they can be addressed, and they can then be counted in the percentage of compliant providers.

I think it goes back to the answer I gave not long ago around confidence in the system. These things are all about confidence in the system, not just for students but also for families, particularly of young students, and for employers, who are either hosting those apprentices or trainees themselves or are relying on those qualified workers to come through the system and take one of the vacancies that many of our employers have. I am hoping that this excellent piece of work will mean that we can have an even higher percentage in the compliant category and that it will contribute to overall levels of confidence in the South Australian skills and training system.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I go to page 186, looking at the activity indicators, government expenditure per annual hours of VET delivery. The minister answered a question from the member for Waite before about the government's training or skills policy. That skills policy is very full-throated about putting TAFE at the centre. It has some pages on TAFE, then it has a page or thereabouts, half a page, on the not-for-profit sector, and then it has a small component on independent providers.

Basically, filling up where TAFE and, to a lesser extent, the not-for-profit sector are not able to support the system as it needs, the independent providers are part of the system as well. That is how I would characterise those pages in the policy. In regard to this budget line, it has \$21.32 as the government expenditure per annual hours of VET delivery for 2023-24. Is the minister able to update the house as to the average subsidy paid to TAFE SA and alternatively the average subsidy paid per hour to non-government training providers in 2022-23 and 2023-24?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We might have to take some of that on notice and provide a written answer to you about the different rates. I can provide you with the cost of government expenditure per hour of training in 2022, which was \$21.56. You might have referred to \$21.32 somewhere, I think.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It says \$21.56 was the 2022-23 figure, and \$21.32 is the 2023-24 figure, but I am sure the department can double-check.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Member for Morialta, while I am getting an answer to that question, can we perhaps add some extra information to an answer given by the Skills Commissioner previously in response to a question from the member for Unley about the machinery of government and functional realignment?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Sure.

Mr BAKER: Thank you for the opportunity to do so. It is because we confuse the language; I was talking about the functional realignment of TAS into the commission versus the machinery of government question that was posed back. I do want to submit that FTE split between the National Skills Agreement and what we are doing with TAS, just to provide absolute clarity. The uplift for 2024-25 for the commission as far as FTE is concerned relates to the National Skills Agreement. The additional staff who are coming from TAS are not captured in that line item. I am clarifying it now, but I am happy to put that through as a submission.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Let me speak a bit here, member for Morialta, around the cost of training delivery per hour. Since 2021-22, the per-hour cost to government of training delivery through TAFE has been reducing. This reflects government's reinvestment in TAFE and the government's skills sector, which has seen training volume increases over that period. TAFE SA's per-hour cost of delivery for government in 2021-22 was \$26.44 per hour, based on 8 million registered training hours delivered. TAFE SA's budgeted per-hour cost of delivery for government in 2024-25 is

\$21.40 per hour, based on 10.1 million registered training hours, which is a 19 per cent reduction in the per-hour cost for delivery at TAFE SA.

You mentioned, I think, in your preamble to the question the commentary in the budget around TAFE being at the centre. I am happy to speak to that here. Yes, as no doubt the member for Morialta and other members of this place know, the cost of training delivery at TAFE is more than it is in the private sector—although, thankfully, it is reducing, which is a good thing.

There are, of course, a number of things we ask of our public training provider—and so we should—that we do not ask of either not-for-profit or for-profit training providers. One of the ones that I am always struck by is the footprint or physical presence of TAFE in about 30 campus locations around the state, including some very remote places. I have been to the Pipalyatjara campus, which I think would have to be our most remote campus in South Australia, if not the most remote TAFE campus in Australia. Ceduna is another one I could mention. There are a lot in areas where you would not expect a not-for-profit or a for-profit training provider to set up, because it would be uneconomical for them to do so.

We are a state, particularly, that has a very big metropolitan population and smaller regional locations, which provides a complication for us that states like Victoria do not have as they have very large regional centres of 250,000 people that smaller regions around them can access to get training. We are a state full of thin markets, particularly when it comes to training. If those employers in those areas cannot access training, they will shut their doors and the town will disappear not long after them. TAFE has a role to play in keeping that footprint.

TAFE also has a role to play, when we say it needs to be at the centre of our training system, in the kind of course development work that needs to occur, and also working towards offering courses in areas that might not be high volume and might not be particularly profitable compared with other courses offered by TAFE or other training providers but that the state desperately needs, and if it was not for TAFE being the one providing it the state would not have access to that course at all. I think there are probably a number of examples that we could give of that.

Those things all do contribute to the cost of delivery at TAFE and contribute to it being a higher rate. But, as I think we have shown, there are things we can do to get that TAFE per-hour cost down. I am certainly focused on doing what we can to make it more efficient in that sense.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The other part of the question that I am happy to ask as part of a new question is on the average subsidy paid per hour to non-government training providers. I will tack onto that the question: are there any subsidy reviews underway? Is there any likelihood of some increases to those subsidies in the coming year? Will the government consider that?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Just to seek clarification, your question is: are there reviews potentially underway looking at the subsidy provided to non-government training providers?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Yes.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I think that is a piece of annual work, which is done currently, where that is reviewed and will continue to be done. Certainly, it is something that is raised with me by training providers all the time and I would expect them to do so. I think in the two and a bit years that I have had in this role, we have made a few significant commitments to certainly the not-for-profit training providers in bringing back the capital grants scheme that we have. We have already undertaken one round and there was a healthy level of applications, which was good, for good projects. There will be another round coming soon.

One of the things I heard loud and clear when I was the shadow minister was that both state and federal governments used to be involved in supporting those not-for-profit providers who invest everything that is made back into their training provision and into their capital equipment with the cost of some larger items. The example that was given to me by Simon Last from the Construction Industry Training Centre was when they need to change over the crane they use for training, it is a cost that they cannot bear. That was in response to that.

Obviously, the subsidy level is an area of interest for every training provider outside the public one. I certainly support us continuing to do the annual training reviews and, where we can, support them with increases where that is possible.

The CHAIR: The member for Waite.

Ms HUTCHESSON: Budget Paper 5, page 8, highlights a \$2.3 billion investment in skills as part of the National Skills Agreement. How is the government ensuring students enrol in the apprenticeships and traineeships the state needs?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you member for Waite for your question, an important question it is too. I have said in answer to a few questions today that given the national skills crisis and the skills targets we have in our state around a whole heap of projects—AUKUS as an example—we need to be quite disciplined in terms of making sure we direct the money going towards subsidising training courses, through the National Skills Agreement, for instance, to where the state really needs them and priority areas for the state. That is a tricky thing to do.

In no small part, the reason that we have not yet done those allocations around where they will all go is because it is quite a complicated piece of work that we need to do there. The skills agreement provides us with an enormous opportunity, if we get it right, for seeing the full benefit of those projects that are coming online, including existing demand, particularly in areas like construction, with the job ahead of us in terms of building more homes, for example.

We already have existing skills shortages in those areas for a lot of traditional trades that we will need to address as well. The complication here is getting the balance right between trying to ensure a heavy level of enrolments in apprenticeships and traineeships in the areas that the state is going to need in the future as well as trying to address the current shortfall that we have.

We are doing some important work in terms of making sure that alignment occurs, particularly in those areas of traditional trades and apprenticeships. We saw commencements in 2024 higher than in 2019, with trades especially up 47 per cent, so I would point to that as an example of an area highlighted by your question around areas of greatest priority and need. We are also seeing other key skills shortage areas being addressed: technicians, community and personal service workers. All these levels are above pre-COVID levels, which is a good sign, I think, and proof that we can have organic, sustained and long-term growth in these areas, which is what the state is going to need.

The CHAIR: You have time for a quick question.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Page 185 talks about the cost of government-funded training and everything that is done through Skills SA. How much funding is being provided out of that line to provide training for students at Findon and, in future years, the other technical colleges, or is all of that training paid for out of the Gonski commitment through the schools line? Further to that, how many trainees and apprentices are enrolled at Findon?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take it on notice and come back to you with an answer on those points.

The CHAIR: The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of Skills SA complete. I thank the minister, advisers and members of the committee.

Sitting suspended from 15:31 to 15:45.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Coltman, Chief Executive, TAFE SA.

Mr G. Rix, Executive Director, Finance and Performance, TAFE SA.

Ms F. Champion, Chief of Staff to Chief Executive, TAFE SA.

Ms N. Caon, Chief Financial Officer, TAFE SA.

Mr C. Azambuja, Director, Business Operations, TAFE SA.

The CHAIR: I open this last session for Committee A for the estimates for 2024. We deal with TAFE SA. The minister appearing is the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. There are no changes to the committee membership. The proposed payments remain open for examination. I call on the minister to make a statement, if he wishes to do so and, if he does not wish to do so, he can introduce his advisers. Then I will call on the lead speaker for the opposition to make a statement or go straight to questions. I am happy to advise the committee that, despite Committee B catching up a bit, we are still ahead of them in the ratings.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, Chair. There is no opening statement from me. Could I introduce the Chief Executive David Coltman to my left; Fiona Champion from the office of the Chief Executive to my right; Graham Rix, Executive Director, Finance and Performance, to David Coltman's left; and the Chief Financial Officer Natalie Caon sitting behind me.

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

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I will just indicate I have a few questions about the Mount Gambier campus, and I think the member for Unley does as well, so we might do two or three from me, and then I will shift. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 77. Under 'Investing expenditure summary' there is a line 'Upgrades to Mount Gambier campus', and there is a \$5 million project which previously had a June 2024 completion date and on this page it is now December 2025. Helpfully, there is a note down the bottom: 'The project timing has been aligned with the Mount Gambier Technical College to prevent duplication of offering.' I am unclear, though, how that works.

My understanding is that the Mount Gambier Technical College is adjacent to the TAFE rather than being part of the TAFE. My understanding is that we would have plenty of vision of what the Mount Gambier TAFE is offering and what the Mount Gambier Technical College will be offering. Why is the delay so significant for the Mount Gambier campus upgrade, which I recall a couple of years ago the minister and the local member being very excited about happening imminently?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Indeed, thank you, member for Morialta, and I am happy to explain that. I was there just last week to inspect the site of where the technical college is going to be built. To give members of this committee a bit of an idea, it is basically going to be built on the front car park, so it will be in front of—

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Next to the UniSA?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: If you are looking at the front entrance to Mount Gambier TAFE, to the left where that car park is will be the technical college, and to the right is UniSA. Work has already commenced on replacing that car park behind the existing TAFE, so there is going to be car parking there while the rest of the work on the technical college takes place.

This has been a laborious process because there are a lot of moving parts on that site, not just TAFE and the technical college but also, of course, UniSA. Also, LITA operates from there. It was for that reason that we appointed Peter Gandolfi as the project lead down there because I felt we really needed someone with local knowledge on the ground to essentially bang a few heads together to make sure we got as much out of the, I think, close to \$50 million all up being spent at that site. I think \$5 million in terms of the question you are asking, but more than \$30 million, including the technical college, and other things that are happening, too.

In that process, we have identified some opportunities for a bit of sharing of facilities, which is good, but that is the reason that the delay until December is occurring for the \$5 million of work. There has been a lot of back and forward in deciding what things can and cannot be shared between TAFE and the technical college. Given the opportunities having the technical college there also presents to TAFE, rather than the other way around, where do we best spend the \$5 million as part of that project? If we had spent it at the start two years ago, it is likely that we would have spent it on something potentially that was not as necessary or needed now. I am glad we have held off, but that is the reason, just to try to get all those moving parts exactly right to maximise the benefit on that site for all the occupants and tenants.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: With that in mind, can I ask what the current plan is for that \$5 million at TAFE SA? I am interested and seeking reassurance that it will be applied towards a

benefit for TAFE SA and TAFE SA students, rather than providing enabling infrastructure for the technical college, which would have potentially overlapping but ultimately a different set of students.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes, I can. Some of the things that are being considered—and I think this is getting near the pointy end now where a decision will be made on where it is spent. There is some removal of asbestos that needs to take place. TAFE was very keen to have some of this money go towards that. There is upgrading of equipment and the learning spaces to make sure that they are modern, in terms of the equipment, and what the agency needs to deliver training there, and there is upgrading of some of the learning spaces as well. They would be some of the examples as to where we will probably land in terms of where that \$5 million goes.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: What is the formal relationship in a governance sense between the technical college and TAFE SA? Is there some sort of MOU between them? I assume that the technical college is still meant to be largely funded through Gonski allocation through a connection to the public high schools. What is TAFE SA's engagement beyond being a neighbour?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: As you said, the infrastructure is funded separately to Gonski for the tech college. We got new appropriation, as I recall, for the tech college.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: But the Gonski, I think, was funding the operation of the technical college.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I think that is right, member for Morialta, you are correct. In terms of the formal kind of governance process, there is a heads of agreement that is being finalised now and the parties to the heads of agreement will be TAFE, the Department for Education, UniSA—I do not know whether LITA are on that or not. I can take that on notice and find out, but there will be a formal heads of agreement around how the governance occurs in an ongoing sense.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Kevin Scarce for the work that he did and then passed over to Peter Gandolfi, who has taken up that role, to make sure we maximise what we can out of the money that has been put in there and try to really make it the kind of educational precinct that it was supposed to be.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: My last question—I know the member for Unley has some questions too on this, or on a related matter. Is it anticipated that students from the technical college will use the TAFE facilities and students from TAFE will use the technical college facilities in an ongoing way, or are we too early to know?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: My answer to that question is we are looking for an appropriate way that we can do that given that the TAFE will have adults and the technical college will have minors.

In an update to my last answer regarding the heads of agreement, LITA are not on the heads of agreement, so I thought I would just clarify that last answer. So, yes, we are looking at a way of doing both those things in terms of the tech college sharing TAFE and TAFE sharing tech college equipment, so we do not duplicate.

Again, if we had raced off and used that \$5 million straightaway in 2022, we may well have bought equipment that might actually be part of what is going to be offered at the technical college and we would have had identical equipment sitting next to each other, which would be a waste I think. There are considerations that we need to make around having adults using spaces where minors study, and vice versa; and keep in mind, too, that we are going to have accommodation for 44 people on this site, because the commitment that we made was that this would be a technical college for the Limestone Coast area. We said that the technical college in Port Augusta would be a tech college for the Upper Spencer Gulf but, in order to make that real, we need to make sure that there is accommodation.

I met last week with leaders from schools in the area, in the Limestone Coast. I had schools as far as away as Lucindale and Kingston SE—I think Kalangadoo might have been there—and they all impressed upon me the need to make sure those accommodation options are there because, in the example of Kingston, it is a long drive that young people are potentially doing to try to get to Mount Gambier to access the technical college and then get back again. So that is something that

we added that was not part of the original election commitment that we have since added for both Port Augusta and Mount Gambier technical colleges.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 78, under targets, dot point 5:

- Re-establish TAFE SA's position as a trusted partner in regional communities, with increased regional delivery, enhancements to campuses that contribute to regional vibrancy and courses that deliver essential skills.

Does TAFE Mount Gambier have the ability to deliver the new Capstone training and testing?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Electrotech is an area that is experiencing significant skills demands, including down in the South-East—that will not come as a surprise to anyone here—due to this increased student demand and challenges in recruiting staff to be lecturers or conducting the Capstone exam, for example, as well as what has been a bit of a spate of staff illnesses. As the member for Unley knows, there was a delay that occurred for some students there who wanted to undertake their Capstone so they could complete it.

TAFE SA presently has 11 apprentices in this certificate III in electrotech at Mount Gambier who are prepared to commence their final Capstone assessment and any gap training they might need to do. TAFE SA has advised that they have contacted all the impacted students and their employers, and that all students will be supported to undertake their Capstone assessments either at the Mount Gambier campus or an earlier option, which will be provided at the Regency campus. In regard to Regency, TAFE is covering the cost of transport and accommodation for the two students who have opted to do the Regency option.

Call-up notices were issued on 13 June for nine apprentices to attend Mount Gambier between 12 and 14 August for gap training, and Capstone between 15 and 23 August. In combination with their employer, two apprentices have opted to attend the Regency campus for a Capstone on 22 July to 2 August, as that was able to be offered at an earlier date there at the Regency campus than it could be at the Mount Gambier campus, and two have opted to have it done there. As at the 14th of the sixth, one employer of those impacted, who I mentioned at the start of my answer, has submitted a training contract extension request with Skills SA as the training contract has expired, so we are anticipating one of the 11 to have a contract extension. The others will have it done either at Mount Gambier or Regency in time to complete within the original time frame.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Will TAFE be conducting the Capstone testing?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand that is right.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Is TAFE delivering the most up-to-date or endorsed Capstone testing from ASQA?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Can you just refer me to the budget line again, member for Unley, for that question?

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: It is the same. It refers to re-establishing TAFE SA's position as a trusted partner in regional communities. That is on page 78 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 4. It is my understanding, minister, that the old capstone training needed to be taught out by the end of 2023, so I am asking whether TAFE is delivering the new capstone training or whether it is in a technical breach with ASQA in delivering old capstone training.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Sorry, I did not hear the part about ASQA; would you mind repeating that?

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: My understanding is that the old capstone training had to be taught out by the end of 2023 and that the new capstone training that was approved by ASQA was to replace it. My question is: is TAFE delivering the most up-to-date capstone training?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The advice I have been given is that we—TAFE—are delivering the latest version of the capstone exam.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: How many TAFE lecturers are working full-time at the Mount Gambier campus? How many of those are residents of Mount Gambier and how many fly in or drive in from other regions to conduct training?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will take that on notice. If we can find that information, we will provide it to you.

Ms HUTCHESSON: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 78. Can the minister provide the committee with information on outcomes from the fee-free TAFE initiative?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Waite, and I would be very happy to do so. To provide a bit of a recap on how we came to have fee-free TAFE, 12,500 places were signed up to in a joint agreement between what was then the new Albanese Labor government and the pretty new Malinauskas Labor government at the end of 2022.

We decided in South Australia to have TAFE deliver, I think, 10,500 of the 12½ thousand fee-free places, but we opted to have other providers, including some for-profit private providers, provide some of the other 2,000 places—which, from memory, was not a decision that many other states, if any, made. We made a conscious decision based on wanting to make sure that whoever was delivering those 12½ thousand places had the capacity to do so and had a good record of completions, so we took a different path there in terms of sharing the 12½ thousand fee-free places courtesy of the federal government with not just our public provider but other providers as well.

I am advised that we have basically expended or used all of that first tranche of 12,500, which is excellent. The uptake was really strong. I certainly always made a beeline, whenever I was at a TAFE campus, to those students who had accessed a course under the fee-free arrangements, and I always had a conversation with them asking how important it was in terms of them actually choosing to do that course, or to do a course at all—because, of course, if you offer anything for free you ideally do not want to be providing it to someone who was going to do it anyway. The idea is to capture people who felt that they were unable to afford a career change or the course they wanted to do by virtue of the cost of it, even if it was a subsidised cost.

Pleasingly, the feedback I have always had is that it has made a huge difference, even if that fee relief was in the vicinity of \$2,000 to \$3,000. A lot of people said that there was a course that they had long wanted to do, or they wanted to change career, perhaps, but the money they were going to need to pay for the gap between the subsidised fee and the full fee was going to be restrictive in terms of them getting to do it. So that is excellent.

It has enabled more South Australians to study and gain the skills they need for their future. It is also allowing us to target industries where we know we need more skilled workers: early childhood, nursing and building and construction, for example. Of the 37 qualifications, 34 are aligned to the state government's priority sectors, including nine courses in the care sector, two courses in clean energy, two courses in construction and infrastructure, three courses in defence and manufacturing, six courses in education, two courses in tech and artificial intelligence, two courses in foundation skills and eight courses in multiple priority sectors.

Earlier this year, I visited the Victor Harbor TAFE and the early childhood students. I spoke to numerous students who said that without fee-free TAFE they would not be undertaking the course. It was pleasing that we have been able to give them that opportunity in what is a high-priority sector for this government. As at the end of March 2024, of the students enrolled in fee-free TAFE, 3 per cent, or 416, were First Nations Australians; 10 per cent, or 1,265, were people who self-identified that they live with a disability; 22 per cent, or 2,853, were people who speak a language other than English at home; and 5 per cent, or 620, were women undertaking training in fields where women are under-represented.

I think that is all great news and speaks to why a fee-free TAFE provision was important, particularly in an economy like ours, where we are very close to full employment and those who are not employed are not going to simply walk into a job or a job interview, ace it and then step into a job. By virtue of being unemployed at the moment in a jobs market where there are opportunities, we can probably make a safe guess that some extra support is needed to help them into that job, and part of it might be fee relief like this.

I think those figures around where the students undertaking fee-free have come from and their backgrounds show how important it is for reasons around supporting people in those more marginalised communities but also particularly in an environment like the one we find ourselves in now, where if we are to find more South Australians to take vacant job positions, we need to put in some extra support and work around mobilising those people who remain unemployed and giving them the support they need to find a job.

Mr BROWN: I will start off by providing a reference: Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 78. On that page, TAFE is described as providing publicly delivered VET learning opportunities that are aligned to South Australia's workforce and economic needs. Can the minister update the committee on the reintroduction of care courses as part of that initiative?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: It was an election commitment we made to return delivery of training opportunities to support aged care, disability and early childhood sectors at metropolitan TAFE campuses. I think it was the first press conference I did with the Premier upon becoming minister. The 2022-23 budget committed \$3 million per annum to restore the community services courses across the metro area.

As a result of the return of these courses, 577 additional student enrolments have been able to access subsidised training and commence their study with TAFE SA in the 2023-24 financial year to date—that was at the end of May—in community services, mental health, aged care, disability and early childhood. These student enrolments will assist in meeting demand for skilled workers in these key industries. I will just finish what I plan on being a short answer by saying we were joined at that announcement by representatives—I know Helping Hand was one, and I think Rembrandt Living was another—who spoke very passionately about why they wanted to have TAFE back in those areas, which was pleasing.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 76 on workforce or page 79 on FTE count. I have a run on this workforce issue, then I am hoping we can move to the member for Finniss for the omnibus questions, if that is alright.

The CHAIR: Ominous or omnibus?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Omnibus, the large volume that gets taken on notice. Are there any matters where TAFE SA is currently in dispute with the unions?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The advice the chief executive gives me is he is aware of one, which is a dispute with the PSA around processing of enrolment applications or inquiries.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can the minister advise what commitments have been given by the minister, the government or TAFE SA to the unions in relation to skills policy? I say 'unions' because there are at least two in TAFE SA, the AEU and the PSA, that I am aware of; there may be others. Over and above those included in Labor's publicly announced election commitments, are there any other commitments that have been agreed with the unions?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am casting my mind back. I do not think there are any, but I will take it on notice. I will thoroughly check and come back to you, but off the top of my head I am not aware of any.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Are there any matters that are either presently before the SAET or have been in the SAET in the last 12 months between TAFE and one or more of its unions?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes. We might take on notice what it is, but I understand there is, we think, one.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I just have a couple of questions in a similar vein on the EB. Where are we up to? From memory, there are separate EBs for the teaching staff and the non-teaching staff.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: That is correct.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Where are we up to on those, and what is the time frame for their next sessions to be resolved?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The formal negotiations have not commenced on that yet. I have some dates around when enterprise agreements expire. The South Australian Public Sector Enterprise Agreement for salaried employees expires on 11 November this year. The TAFE SA Educational Staff Enterprise Agreement 2022 expires on 14 April next year. The South Australian Public Sector Wages Parity Enterprise Agreement 2023, which is plumbing, metal and building trades employees, expires in February 2026. Those are the three, I think.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The first one of those expires in five months' time. I am wondering whether the board or the TAFE management has requested of the minister any particular changes they wish to pursue ahead of the next EB.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: At this stage, member for Morialta, we have just discussed broad parameters of what might come up, but there is nothing yet on preferences. It will no doubt come, and you might ask me a question on that at the time, but we are still kind of in the infancy of negotiations even on this one. I am still recovering from the education one. I just need a bit more time.

Mr BASHAM: I will read 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 Hon. D.G. PISONI: In relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 76, workplace summary, TAFE SA, how many of the TAFE lecturers recruited since March 2022 were recruited without a training assessment qualification and how many of those have since had their qualification gained through TAFE?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: We will take that question on notice.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Referring to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 78, can the minister advise when legislation will be introduced to parliament and will it be publicly released for consultation prior to its introduction?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The Roadmap for the Future of TAFE SA, which we released in August of last year, set out the state government's vision for TAFE SA over the next 10 years to reposition and rebuild TAFE SA to support the economic and social transformations that are needed for South Australia. In response, the state government committed to consulting on potential changes to the TAFE SA Act, with TAFE SA and Skills SA jointly supporting this process.

The TAFE SA Act and the associated government framework were established under different training market settings where TAFE SA was expected to compete with other training providers for funding and deliver commercial outcomes. This framework is no longer fit for purpose and it is holding back the rebuilding process that we want to undergo with TAFE. A change in the TAFE SA Act will ensure a modern TAFE SA with a legislated commitment to delivering high-quality education and training as its core purpose. This commitment is being delivered within the existing budget and service delivery.

Yes, consultation is underway already, I believe, and is continuing. In terms of the question around public release, was that for a draft? Is that what your question was?

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: It is planned that it will be on the Premier's department website for public consultation or is it a targeted consultation and when will it be introduced into the parliament?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The decision, of course, on exactly when it will be introduced is a decision for cabinet, but I would be keen to have it introduced as soon as we are able. Unless my colleagues know about the specifics of the consultation process and whether it will be released or not, I will take that part on notice and come back to you.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Will the legislation seek to abolish the TAFE board?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: No, I do not believe it will.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Publicly reported last year was the minister's intention to change the design of the organisation to make it easier for the minister to direct TAFE and its board on what the government's priorities were.

I note that the minister and the Treasurer tabled on 11 April a new performance statement for TAFE in which was set out reporting requirements and a range of instructions to TAFE on its budget, its FTE cap, and so forth. Can the minister identify whether changing the reporting relationship between TAFE and the minister remains a priority for the legislation, given that he has seen fit to use the existing legislation's mechanism just in the last couple of months?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to the chief executive to address that question.

Mr COLTMAN: The relationship of reporting to the minister under this government has been a closer relationship that sees myself reporting directly to the minister on a fortnightly basis in addition to a relationship that exists between the officers of Skills SA, the minister's office and ourselves, where we collectively work to provide an integrated system that meets the needs of all South Australians in terms of vocational education and training.

What has been identified in the review of the act is that the authorising environment and the legislative constraints are not enabling TAFE SA to deliver to the purpose and not allowing us to align

fully our training profile to the skills priorities of the workforce of the future. That is what we are looking to do with the board. What the minister is considering as part of the legislation review is how to enable a more efficient and effective TAFE SA by focusing more on purpose and less on profit—I think that is the way the minister has directed us—to continue the use of the board and to maintain the high standards of quality that TAFE has achieved.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Page 79 provides the expenses budget line. Based on that, and noting that the new performance statement tabled in April seemed to suggest an extra \$2 million being required in the financial year nearly finished for a higher FTE cap, is the minister able to identify what the circumstances were that led to the requirement for this revised performance statement?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I will pass over to Mr Rix to have a go at this one.

Mr RIX: The change in the performance statement associated with the revised budget through the estimated result for 2023-24 was largely due to changes in the operating result associated with changes in accounting standards, which need to be followed in the financial reporting. There is also a small operating result impact related to updated depreciation of TAFE SA's assets.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: When you say a 'small' one, is that the \$2 million difference that we are talking about or is that an accounting issue?

Mr RIX: Largely an accounting issue in the \$2 million.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Who requested the updated performance statement? Was it the minister, was it TAFE or was it Department of Treasury and Finance?

Mr RIX: Department of Treasury and Finance.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Getting the old gang back together. In relation to page 78, there is a highlight about fee-free TAFE. Is the minister able to identify whether there are students under the fee-free TAFE at TAFE SA who have withdrawn from their courses without completing them? If so, how many? In that circumstance, are those students able to access another fee-free TAFE course or are they limited to one or an alternative number?

The CHAIR: That, sadly, will be the last question.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Morialta; I have some positive news on that front. The current withdrawal rate for the fee-free TAFE cohort is 9.9 per cent, compared to 23.2 per cent for non-fee-free TAFE subsidised students over the same period, so it is actually despite the fact that the course is lower—

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Within TAFE SA or is that across the board?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: That is TAFE SA, so considerably lower, which is good. In answer to the second part of your question, I believe applicants or potential students are restricted to one fee-free TAFE offering.

The CHAIR: The allotted time having expired, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the Department for Education and Administered Items for the Department for Education complete. I thank committee members, the minister and the advisers for your contributions. I lay before the committee a draft report for Estimates Committee A.

Mr BROWN: I move:

That the draft report be the report of the committee.

Motion carried.

At 16:31 the committee concluded.