

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 15 September 1988

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**Chairman:**

The Hon. T.M. McRae

Members:

The Hon. R.K. Abbott
 The Hon. P.B. Arnold
 Mr D.S. Baker
 Mr S.G. Evans
 The Hon. R.G. Payne
 Mr D.J. Robertson

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Engineering and Water Supply, \$16 458 000

Witness:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan, Minister of Water Resources.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D.J. Alexander, Chief Executive Officer, E&WS Department.
 Mr A.N. Killmier, Chief Operating Officer.
 Mr K.J. Shepherd, Acting Director of Business and Information Services.
 Mr R.E. Mander, Senior Finance Officer.
 Mr J.W. Bennett, Financial Analyst.
 Mr H.B. Gifford, Planning Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Mr Chairman, it is with pleasure that I present for the consideration of the Committee a budget that I believe is both balanced and responsible. My department has planned a significant real reduction in expenditure on its recurrent operations. These reductions will be achieved by internal cost savings generated by a leaner and more efficient organisation. These reductions have also allowed us to pass on to the water consumer financial benefits as the increase in rates approved for 1988-89 is significantly below the current rate of inflation. The department has programmed a range of capital works, and I would like to mention briefly some key projects and activities.

An amount of \$17.2 million has been planned to be expended on the construction of the Happy Valley water filtration plant itself in 1988-89. A further \$4.8 million is planned for distribution and other ancillary works associated with the filtration plant. The plant will be progressively commissioned from November 1989. On that date filtered water will be provided to a further 420 000 people in the metropolitan area, including suburbs not previously served by Happy Valley on a continuous basis, such as Christies Beach, Hackham, Moana, Seaford and Port Noarlunga South. The Finger Point sewage treatment works in the South-East of the State has \$3.3 million in expenditure planned for 1988-89. The treatment works is planned for completion in June 1989.

I am also pleased to draw attention to the increasing tempo of activity on asset renewal. The major impetus for these works commenced three years ago with the depart-

ment's study on the impending need for asset replacement. This issue has been subsequently addressed on a much wider basis by the Public Accounts Committee. The department is currently focusing its attention on key operational assets which include the Mannum/Adelaide pipeline and the metropolitan sewage treatment works. The sum of \$9.4 million is programmed to be spent on asset renewal this year, and nearly \$15 million is planned for 1989-90, with further increases in later years.

Planned for commencement of construction this year is the Woolpunda groundwater interception scheme. This project has major benefits for the future quality of river water, which is utilised by both irrigation users and domestic and industrial consumers across the State. The Woolpunda salinity interception scheme and the investigations in the Chowilla area are just two of a number of land management and salinity interception initiatives of the salinity and drainage strategy of the Murray-Darling Basin ministerial council. As a member of the council I had the pleasure of participating in its recent meeting, and the associated negotiations, when the principles of the strategy were approved, along with the Chowilla investigations, feasibility studies of possible salinity reduction programs in other areas, and the financial allocation for the Woolpunda scheme. All these initiatives are important steps forward for South Australia.

The Government of this State, through continuing active participation in the ministerial council, its work in support of and on behalf of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, and its own water resource management activities within the State, will give top priority to ensuring that progress continues to be made in water quality and quantity management, and in arresting land degradation throughout the basin, for the benefit of the community of users of both land and water.

One of the most important objectives for this financial year, and indeed for future years, is to ensure further progress towards a more consumer oriented approach on the part of the department, in every sphere of its activities. Members will already be aware of a number of evidences of this, including the customer-friendly 'one-stop-shop' facilities recently established on the ground floor of the State Administration Centre, and the new water use advisory service. More recently I have encouraged the further development of the department's consultative network, in regard to water resources management and water related services to the community. The references to performance in customer services contained in the Program Estimates before us today are further evidence of concern for the customer.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I would like to refer to page 77 of the Auditor-General's Report relating to significant features. He states that the net cost of recurrent operations showed a significant improvement, and that in 1984 it was \$35.5 million. As at 30 June it was \$14.2 million. Where were the major reductions achieved and, as they are massive reductions over that period of time, what was the problem before, if the amount was so high?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr Killmier to answer that question.

Mr Killmier: The principal reason is the improvement that has taken place in the department's business undertakings. Some years ago we broke even in the metropolitan area but there were significant country losses. More recently, we have reached a situation where the metropolitan area has a surplus, which offsets the country losses. The water works and sewer undertakings in 1987-88 actually made a slight profit. The main cost of recurrent operations, which

are not profitable, arise in the irrigation areas, where the deficit last year was about \$11 million.

Other costs associated with the management of the department, for example, water resources management, South-Eastern drainage and other minor activities, are not revenue producing. Generally speaking, there has been a significant improvement in the metropolitan situation, which has more than offset the country losses so that the business undertaking aspects are in a profitable situation. However, we believe that that is not unreasonable, because only recently we have moved to what the Auditor-General might call more appropriate depreciation arrangements.

Until several years ago our contribution to the National Debt Sinking Fund was the only provision made for depreciation. We now have an asset register and are depreciating all our assets on an historical basis. We are conducting further investigations in association with the Under Treasurer and the Auditor-General with a view to moving towards current value depreciation which, of course, is more realistic given the fact the cost of replacement of assets is constantly escalating. The day will come when agencies will have to consider moving from the traditional historical basis to current value depreciation.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: To what extent will the new depreciation formula provide for the replacement of assets, particularly in the metropolitan area?

Mr Killmier: We are making significant progress towards a specific objective. The business undertakings of the department will spend this year about \$60 million of capital; probably half that amount will be generated internally from depreciation and other sources of internal receipts. So, we will need to borrow about \$30 million. The intention is, as depreciation provisions increase over time, to try to reach the point where our capital works program is virtually generated from internal income so that we are not in the position of having to go to the Treasury and borrow fresh money. That is the situation which the British water authorities have largely reached. The Sydney Water Board has also virtually reached the situation where it has very little impact on the Government's capital requirements, and it is the aim of the E&WS Department to have a self-funded capital works program.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I ask that question because the Auditor-General in relation to the capital account and interest indicates that the outstanding balance of indebtedness has increased by \$14 million from \$877 million to \$891 million. Added to that figure are borrowings from SAFA of an additional \$4 million; so, the total indebtedness of the capital account has increased by \$18 million. If that amount was not offset by the \$9 million that the department has been able to save, it would have resulted in a \$27 million increase in the capital account, which is the problem area that Mr Killmier is addressing in trying to get away from that increase in total capital indebtedness, with the objective of trying to reduce or wipe out that indebtedness of \$891 million plus the \$52 million.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Is the honourable member asking Mr Killmier to comment or is he making a statement?

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Is the objective to break even and still retain the indebtedness of about \$950 million or is it the objective of the department and the Government to, by degrees, try to get rid of that amount of \$950 million? The indebtedness is close on a billion dollars and the interest on that amount is enormous. What is the long-term plan of the Government in relation to that billion dollar indebtedness?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr Killmier to respond to that question.

Mr Killmier: Some years ago when the department was mounting a much larger capital works program of, at today's values, about \$200 million a year, the provision for depreciation was only \$4 million or \$5 million, and so the indebtedness of the department was increasing at a very rapid rate. The present situation is very much better than was the case in those days, as can be seen by the Auditor-General's Report, which indicates that the increase in indebtedness was about \$14 million (at page 77 of the report). It should be remembered that we are trying to get to the situation of not having to borrow any fresh capital. Also, because of inflation, a debt of \$800 million-odd, in real terms, if it is not increasing, is declining at the rate of about \$50 million a year. So, if it can be held at its present level and if it does not increase at a rate as fast as inflation then we will do very much better than we have in years gone by. Of course, that has other benefits, as it assists to counteract high interest levels and to keep the rate rises below the level of inflation—which, of course, is everyone's ideal objective.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I now refer to the change in policy in relation to water rating. I note on the rate notices that have gone out that additional water rates for the first half of the year will involve payment in advance, an upfront payment if you like, whereas, in the past, additional water charges have been made at the end of the year. A charge will now be made half way through the year, whether the water has been used or not, with no meter reading to determine water usage. If a consumer has remained within his allowance for the first half of the year and has not gone into excess at that time, without a meter reading of actual water usage the further allocation will have to be made on historical records. Is that what the department will do, that is, go on past performance?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I think the honourable member has misunderstood what is actually happening. Bills for excess water usage are certainly being sent out half yearly instead of at the end of the year, and it would seem to me that it is a very positive move, rather than a negative one, as the member has suggested. If a consumer has not gone into excess water consumption at that half yearly stage that person will not be billed for excess water. Where a consumer has gone into excess, they must pay that excess at the half yearly point. So, people are not being billed for excess water that in fact they have not used within that half yearly time frame. People are not being asked to pay for excess water above their allowance at the half yearly point unless they have in fact used excess water.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: So, this applies only to additional water that has been used to the half yearly mark.

Mr Killmier: Domestic meters have always been read twice a year. In days gone by additional rates were billed at the end of the year. In some cases it was quite a large amount, particularly for people with low value properties who had small allowances. They received a large account at the end of the year. It was felt that it was more equitable and that it would assist people with their budgeting, and that it would also assist the department, to send out a bill half yearly where the annual allowance had been exceeded. So after the first reading those people who have exceeded their annual allowance receive an account for that amount, and they also receive a second consumption bill six months later. We believe that the process has advantages for the consumer, but also for the department because we receive payment earlier. We believe that that is equitable because we have already paid the power costs, anyway.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: To what extent is telemetry used to monitor or manage water services? Is it used to any

great extent, particularly in regional areas such as Strathalbyn?

Mr Killmier: Telemetry is used to a large extent and recently we let a tender for a \$6 million contract to greatly improve the telemetry system. In effect, telemetry enables information to be gathered at a central point with respect to the functioning of pumping stations, the levels of tanks, and so on. We also use it for sewerage ejector stations and a whole range of things. It is used in water resources to get information back to a central point. For example, the Murray Bridge to Onkaparinga, the Mannum to Adelaide, the Swan Reach to Stockwell and the Tailem Bend to Keith pipelines can all be operated from one control desk at the Murray Bridge pumping station.

So the days when operators were required at every pumping station along the various pipelines have gone. Today one person at a console can determine the tank levels, he can decide when to start and stop pumps and he can do all sorts of things. Over the next two or three years we hope, with our \$6 million investment, to improve the network in the metropolitan area. Recently we received Government approval to improve the network on the West Coast to enable us to bring information back to a central point. That will enable us to operate the range of pumping stations on Eyre Peninsula.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is a vitally important management tool for a utility as large as the E&WS Department. Telemetry has a complexity of uses.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: When was the technology first used by the department and has it been upgraded since then?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Part of that question has already been answered in that the Government has agreed to a \$6 million upgrading program. That is happening in terms of the contract having been let.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: When was the technology introduced so that pumping stations could be operated automatically?

Mr Alexander: This happened in the late 1950s or early 1960s. One of our officers developed a tele-alarm system over the telephone line, enabling a pumping station to ring up and advise what was wrong with any of eight faults. That was the start of telemetry and remote control—the demanning. This meant that a lot of our stations were patrolled by people driving utilities. This has become more and more sophisticated over the years, and this \$6 million is the edge of the new technology that we are introducing. As the Minister indicated, it is a management tool in terms of a more efficient management of the water system that records a lot of useful information, apart from just operating.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: So, the development of this system since the 1950s has really been part and parcel of the dramatic improvement in the recurrent cost of operating the department and its operating the water supply system, if you like? It has played a significant part?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The short answer is 'Yes'.

Mr ROBERTSON: Referring to page 422 of the Program Estimates, the subject of the Happy Valley water filtration plant gets a guernsey, and rightly so. In the specific targets and objectives for 1987-88, mention is made of delays caused by the letting of contract items such as the large so-called raw water pumps. I understand that the contract for those pumps has been let in the last three or four weeks, and that Weir pumps were chosen. These are judged by the department to be not only more cost effective to run but also technically superior to the other tenders, as well as being cheaper to purchase. In light of the fact that that

decision is now behind us, how much will be spent in the 1988-89 financial year on the Happy Valley plant, and what is the current revised total cost of the plant?

As a suggestion, might I add, as a local resident and consumer, that perhaps it might be an idea to do a tour of the plant around Christmas this year to allow the consumers to check on the progress and be assured that the plant will come in on time; in that way, one could see the marvellous strides that have been made to date.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: To put it into context, the estimated total cost of the water filtration plant for Happy Valley is in the order of \$87.8 million, with associated distribution works of \$26.7 million. So, we are talking about an enormous program and an enormous capital investment by the State in the provision of quality water for a very significant proportion of the Adelaide community. In 1988-89, this will be the year of highest expenditure for the project, with a total proposed expenditure of \$21.9 million, of which in excess of \$17 million will be directly for the plant at Happy Valley. The delays regarding the contracts are certainly behind us.

I have already raised the honourable member's suggestion with the Chief Executive Officer. I thank the member for, I guess, his endorsement of the suggestion. It is vitally important that the community has the opportunity to inspect a facility such as the one at Happy Valley, although it will be 12 months from completion at Christmas. However, it will certainly provide the opportunity for the community to see just what an enormous undertaking this is. I believe that many people, including some who live in my electorate, think that you can just construct something of the magnitude of the Happy Valley water filtration plant in a few months—that it is just a matter of having some extra money—and that there is no reason why the plant cannot be completed within a very short space of time. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

It is not just a matter of the financial commitment that the Government has to make to the construction of such an undertaking. A lot of the work is so complex that the contracts have had to be let overseas. An enormous level of expertise is required, and that program needs to be carefully assessed. It needs to be carefully put out to tender and we must get the whole situation correct from the very beginning because of the enormous capital input. It would be an incredibly important step to have the community come and have a look, through some form of tour over the plant, at its level of completion at the end of the year. I will certainly look at implementing the member's suggestion.

Mr ROBERTSON: On the subject of the whole package of improvements to water services in the south, as part of the announcement earlier this year of the accelerated program concerning Happy Valley, an undertaking was given that an announcement would be made shortly on the filtration of the Myponga supply. In the light of that, when will such an announcement be made and what action has been taken during the past six months to improve the quality of water coming from Myponga?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: A lot has been done to improve the quality of water. A very concerted program of back flushing of the pipes in a number of areas has been undertaken, and that has been very important in those areas that receive very poor quality water. Members will recall that the chloramination program that was introduced has ceased. We reverted to chlorination in an attempt to reduce the amount of material being precipitated from the water and the pipes, particularly from the sides of the mains, and this caused very great discolouration of the water. That program

was ceased under my predecessor's decision and that has added to the quality.

The intensive mains cleaning program involved flushing and air scouring in the areas most affected. This technique should remove the remaining biofilm in the mains being cleaned. Ideally, once the mains cleaning program is completed, we could introduce chloramination, if it was considered appropriate, to restore the microbiological quality of the water. The long-term strategy is twofold in respect of Myponga. The first is to provide destratification facilities at Myponga Reservoir to reduce taste and odours produced by algae and to reduce the levels of iron and manganese in the reticulated water. Put simply, this is actually a stirring of the water on a large scale.

It involves the use of a huge industrial type stirrer. This facility is commissioned and will commence operation before the summer of 1988-89, and it should reduce some of the taste and odour problems that people living in the southern area have experienced. The second longer-term strategy is to supply filtered water to the Myponga water supply area as part of the ongoing Adelaide metropolitan water supply filtration program. Members will be aware that ministerial approval of \$500 000 has been obtained to complete the concept design for the Myponga water filtration plant. We have to look at the announcement of whether we will move into that next phase. The honourable member is quite correct in saying that my predecessor indicated earlier this year that there would be an announcement regarding a timetable for Myponga.

Quite obviously, the building and construction of a water filtration plant and the engineering works for such is not something that we can do overnight. It will be my intention to make such an announcement, subject to Cabinet approval, within the next month. I would not wish to be tied to a time. It is important that I have the flexibility to ensure that when I announce a timetable it can be adhered to rather than my making a premature announcement and having to revise it. If the honourable member can bear with me, I would like to make an announcement within a month regarding a framework and timetable for the Myponga filtration plant.

A misunderstanding exists within the southern community. When the Happy Valley filtration plant comes on stream it will be servicing not only the traditional areas that the Happy Valley reservoir has served in the past. I refer members to my introduction which stated that water from that plant would be pushed further south into some of the areas that have had Myponga water at various times of the year. This has caused significant problems because of the stronger colour of Myponga water. Those suburbs that were not going to have filtered water at the end of 1989, including some sections of Christies Beach, Hackham West and Hackham South (south of Beach Road), Moana, Seaford and Port Noarlunga South, will now get filtered water by the end of 1989. Part of the undertaking given by my predecessor to address the issues and problems of quality water for a number of suburbs in the outer southern area of Adelaide has already been announced, albeit in a low key way. That information has not filtered through to some people in the southern community, and I would be delighted if the member for Bright could assist in any way he can in that process. Mr Killmier would like to add something briefly.

Mr Killmier: Reference was made to Weir pumps. The reference in the papers to the raw water pumps relates to the big raw water pumps to pump water out of the Happy Valley reservoir in the first instance. They are provided by F.R. Mayfields and manufactured in Victoria. The Weir

pumps referred to are the pumps that go into the EL172 pumping station, which is being constructed to push the filtered water south. That pumping station, which originally was not scheduled to be completed until 1991, is the one to which the Minister referred when telling you about extra water being pushed south into areas that were previously served by Myponga. It is that work that must be accelerated, so they are different pumps to the raw water pumps referred to in this document.

Mr ROBERTSON: A paradox of laying down mains and servicing some of the hilly areas in the south is that many of the problems of the aggregation of detritus in the pipes seem to occur in some of the new suburbs. A reasonable problem to people in my part of the world is that in the Karrara subdivision there seems to be some spots in the network where accumulations of detritus occur, so much so that one street is known as chlorination street. When the Happy Valley scheme comes on stream, will a large flushing operation occur at some time, presumably towards the end of next winter, to clear the detritus out of the pipes so that the water coming in will no longer be a problem? I understand that the filter will be down to two microns. Will such a final flushing in the winter of 1989 clear the problems once and for all?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The question again shows the scientific and technical background of the member for Bright, who never ceases to amaze members with his breadth and department of general knowledge. However, certainly that would make sense if we are going to be spending this enormous amount of money on water filtration and a level of residue is left within the pipes. Obviously, costings would need to be done on the extent to which a concentrated flushing program could be looked at in specific areas at the end of the winter before the filtered water started to flow through the pipes. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to comment on that suggestion. It would certainly be my decision to ask the Engineering and Water Supply Department to address that recommendation, as it would seem to be a tidy housekeeping method of maximising the effect of the filtered water once it came on stream. I will ask Mr Alexander to give a more technical comment.

Mr Alexander: The Minister is perfectly right. The department would be falling down if it expensively treated water and did not distribute it through a reasonable system.

Mr ROBERTSON: Moving from water supply to sewerage schemes, I refer to page 415 of the Program Estimates where reference is made to the Aldinga sewerage scheme. Earlier this year the then Minister of Water Resources announced a proposal to provide deep drainage for areas of Aldinga Beach and Port Willunga. Will the Minister give details of the scheme and advise when construction of the scheme is likely to commence.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, I would be pleased to provide the Committee with details. Design work has commenced on a sewerage scheme to serve areas at Aldinga Beach and Port Willunga which have been most adversely affected by septic tank effluent disposal problems in recent years. The scheme will consist of approximately 10 200 metres of gravity sewer, three pumping stations, 4 100 metres of pumping main, and a temporary sewage treatment plant at an estimated cost of \$4 000 000. So, we are talking of a very big program indeed.

A concept design has been prepared for the treatment works, and soil testing has been carried out to ascertain likely trenching conditions. The majority of field survey work involved in preparing a preliminary design for the reticulation system has been completed, and it is anticipated that the scheme will be referred to the Parliamentary Stand-

ing Committee on Public Works by April 1989, with construction commencing in the second half of 1989. The rate of expenditure is expected to be approximately \$1 million per year.

The headworks for the scheme are being designed to serve ultimate development in the area, including a major land division proposed for an area adjacent to the existing established area at Aldinga Beach. It is possible that the land division may proceed before the scheme is referred to the Public Works Standing Committee, in which case construction of the headworks (including treatment works) will need to commence early in 1989. For this to occur it would be necessary to seek separate Cabinet approval for construction of the headworks late in 1988. To summarise the answer, the department is addressing this very real need and looking at the flexibility of being able to respond to the timeframe of development within that area.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I take up the point about the filtration of the water going south. I understand that water is pumped from Happy Valley through to the Hills at different times, and there are tanks to serve that purpose as well as to take it from the Hills back down to Happy Valley, perhaps. Given that there is to be good quality water available to be pumped to the south, when can the Hills people expect to have filtered water pumped through from Mount Barker down through the Mitcham Hills?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That was a good question, but let us not draw too long a bow in terms of Mount Barker. Let me reiterate my earlier point that stage 1 will be commissioned in November 1989, and will serve the areas on the plains that I have mentioned, right from Port Adelaide, including the people who are now on Happy Valley water, and taking in Christies Beach, Reynella and Morphett Vale. The second stage will serve the higher area and, as I am sure the honourable member appreciates, it is more difficult in some of these Hills areas in terms of providing the infrastructure. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to comment on the head shaking of the honourable member. The second stage will serve the higher areas including some higher parts of Aberfoyle Park, Flagstaff Hill, Blackwood and Belair, which are, I think, the areas to which the honourable member is specifically referring.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Stirling and Bridgewater?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Not quite Stirling and Bridgewater. At this stage work will be commissioned in 1991. I will ask Mr Killmier to comment on the technical aspect of providing filtered water into those sections of the Hills to which the honourable member referred.

Mr Killmier: With our water filtration program we have a desire to provide filtered water to the metropolitan area, and Happy Valley is the second last plant. Myponga will be the last plant to be constructed in the metropolitan system. That will mean that areas such as Mount Barker, Aldgate, Stirling and Crafers, which are served from the Murray Bridge-Onkaparinga pipeline, will not have filtered water even after the completion of the metropolitan system. There are no plans at this stage to do that work. The main priority at the moment is to complete the metropolitan area.

Mr S.G. EVANS: As a supplementary question, are we really being told that at the moment no water is pumped from the Happy Valley area back up to Stirling or Bridgewater at any time?

Mr Killmier: Some water is pumped back, I think through the Vimy Ridge Pumping Station. To the extent that water is derived from the Happy Valley reservoir, it will all be filtered and anyone who obtains water from that source will get filtered water after 1991. Of course, if the water comes

direct from the Murray Bridge-Onkaparinga pipeline, it will not be filtered.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would have thought that that was fairly self-explanatory. If the water is not passing through the Happy Valley Filtration Plant and is coming from a source that is not filtered, it cannot be filtered.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Perhaps the Minister does not understand what I am saying. I am saying that at the moment there are pumps which can pump water back to Stirling and Bridgewater. Whether enough can be pumped, I do not know, but the pumps are there to pump it back, and I do not see why all of the water cannot eventually be pumped back from Happy Valley in lieu of feeding off the Murray Bridge line.

Mr Killmier: Given the size of the mains which serve Stirling, Aldgate and Crafers, the source of the water, it would be quite impossible, with the present arrangements to obtain the water, and quite uneconomic. The areas around Cherry Gardens are serviced from water pumped back from Happy Valley, but the vast bulk of the water in the higher levels of the Adelaide Hills comes from the Murray Bridge-Onkaparinga pipeline. It would be a significant change of procedure and a significant cost to contemplate letting the water get to Happy Valley then bringing it all the way back to the Hills again.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Am I right or wrong in assuming that the dirtier the water is and the more impurities there are in the water the costlier it is to process, even when the plants are established?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr Shepherd, the Director of Business and Information Services, to answer that question.

Mr Shepherd: Within a given range of quality the cost of the processes does not differ substantially for treating water which would range within normally received levels of turbidity and colour. Some occurrences sometimes cause water quality to deteriorate further than those ranges, such as algal blooms in reservoirs and so on, which would make the treatment very expensive. That occurs, for example, when it is necessary to add special treatment compounds to the water. That does not happen very often, but the normal range of water quality encountered in Adelaide reservoirs at the moment is treatable at about the same cost.

Mr S.G. EVANS: What is the main problem with Murray River water? What are the impurities?

Mr Shepherd: Its turbidity—the suspended sediments which derive from the catchments in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Why can we not build a filtration plant into the Murray feeding line which pumps the water into the Onkaparinga River above Mount Bold and comes past Mount Barker and the other townships? It is fed to the houses with all its filth still in it and those people are now virtually being told that they will never have filtered water. We pump it into the river at a point where there is not much more pollution to be picked up from Hahndorf down, except for some discolouration from eucalyptus leaves and so on from the run-off, as the department has bought nearly all the land in that lower catchment area of the Mount Bold reservoir. I am amazed to be told that some communities will virtually never get filtered water because, I believe, we have put the filtration plant in the wrong place. A filtration plant could have been built in that area.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That question might in some ways have been better addressed to our predecessors, but I will ask Mr Killmier if he wants to comment.

Mr BLACKER interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I did not mean that in a Party political sense; I meant it in a broad sense of predecessors being all preceding Governments. I was not in any way alluding to any one Minister or Government.

Mr Killmier: When the South Australian Government contemplated the metropolitan Adelaide water filtration program, it resolved to get independent advice on the program. At that time I had the pleasure of participating in the work done with the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation to resolve the sorts of issues raised by the honourable member. The question of whether the filtration plants should be placed at Mannum and Murray Bridge rather than, as has been the case, at Hope Valley and wherever, was seriously considered. The problem was that, depending on the season, the quantity of water pumped from the Murray may vary from as low as 10 to 15 per cent to as high as 80 or 90 per cent. Had treatment plants been placed at Mannum and Murray Bridge and the water put into the reservoirs along with the local catchment water, it would have had to be treated again.

So, the decision was made that the lesser of evils, or the most logical thing to do, was to filter the water at the point where it is provided to the consumer to ensure that quality water would reach the consumer. It was acknowledged that this meant that a small number of people—and at that time in 1970 it was a small number of people—would not get filtered water where they were served directly off the major pipelines and would have to be dealt with subsequently by means of package plants or whatever is needed on the mains leading to places such as Mount Barker.

The attitude that was taken at the time—and has continued to be taken—was to serve the most people in the quickest time. The way the program was structured that could be achieved. Those people who at the end of the program will not have filtered water—and that is only about 10 per cent of what is deemed to be the metropolitan area, which goes right up to the Hills and down south—will, in due course, be dealt with by means of further plants, if the Government wishes ultimately to provide filtered water to the whole of South Australia.

The Morgan filtration plant, which has been completed, covers a large proportion of the country schemes—Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla—so the whole issue comes down to finance and economic use of available money to serve the most people in the quickest possible time.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Does the Minister think that there is a conflict between her department's philosophy of how the land should be used—and the involvement of human beings in the water catchment area—and that of the Department of Tourism? In the case of people not being able to fish in reservoirs and, for example, the run-off from the drain that runs around the Happy Valley reservoir, the department was not keen to have the upgraded road close by. This also suggests that we are inviting tens of thousands of people to inspect the treatment plants at the Happy Valley reservoir. If that can be done as a one-off exhibition of how great we are, can we not leave it open as a tourist spot for people to inspect?

I am particularly concerned about the Hills and the water catchment area and a possible conflict between the two departments. For example, tens of thousands of people are encouraged to go to the Hills. Property owners in Hahndorf have been told that they cannot have two houses because of the problems involved in putting their excreta through septic tanks or treatment plants. This indicates that the department does not think that tourists do those things or that they retain it until they leave the area. Is there a conflict between those two areas?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member has raised four or five philosophical issues and questions and I do not think it appropriate, despite the fact that I suppose I am the Minister for sewerage, that I should comment on the length of time that people have control over their personal body habits, including their bladders. I think that is outside the area of my expertise and jurisdiction.

The member has raised a number of issues with which I will deal one at a time. The question whether there is a conflict between my joint portfolio areas of land and water in terms of resource management—

Mr S.G. EVANS: And tourism.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am not responsible for tourism; I am responsible for land and water. From the point of view of the whole question of resource management of land and water, for which I am responsible, and tourism, I think that there will always be some very healthy tension in this area. In a community which wants to develop its tourism base, which is a vital part of an ongoing developmental scheme in any community, there will always be the need to sit down and resolve issues that relate to the proper conservation of land and water. For anybody not to acknowledge that that is a very healthy situation would be a foolish position to take. So, I acknowledge that there are very healthy tensions, but I do not believe that it is impossible to overcome those tensions in the sense that, at the same time, we can look at balancing the needs of the community in relation to tourism development and the needs of conservation groups and my department. I do not think that is impossible and that the Government has shown that it is serious about addressing these issues.

Let me give the member one example, of which I am sure he is aware. I refer to the Mount Lofty Ranges review which, for the benefit of the Committee, I would like to quickly outline. The objective of the review is to ensure that future development goes ahead in an orderly and integrated fashion, recognising the inter-relationships between land users. That will involve the whole area of the tourism industry. When this review is complete it will have established a clear direction for the future protection and management of the Mount Lofty Ranges. In my view, community involvement is vitally important in this process and workshops are currently being held to canvass community attitudes.

The ministerial advisory committee has responsibility for ensuring that adequate community consultation is incorporated into the planning process. As to the current situation, the first 12 months of the review have been taken up mainly with data gathering and project work. During the second 12 month period, community consultation workshops will be held (and these in fact are now being held) prior to an intense period of policy development. A draft management plan will then be produced for public comment, leading to completion of the review by June 1989.

In response to the member's previous question about which departments are funding the review, I indicate that it is being jointly funded by the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environment and Planning, the Engineering and Water Supply Department and the Department of Lands. The total budgeted cost of the review is in the order of about \$1.986 million. The proposed total E&WS Department contribution, to June 1989, is about \$237 000. That is just an example of one way in which Governments can address the, if you like, conflicting issues of land usage and conservation aspects regarding development and preservation of our natural resources.

To answer one other part of the member for Davenport's question, may I say that I cannot imagine that, even on

opening the gates of the Happy Valley Filtration Plant when completed and inviting people in the community to come in, would we see tens of thousands of people go there for a one-off inspection. I would be quite delighted if we then had to stage that over a number of days because people were so interested in doing that. But I really think that the honourable member may well have been perhaps exaggerating somewhat.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I was talking about the conflicts.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: No, the honourable member actually asked me about ongoing programs. I am commenting on the questions that the honourable member has asked: if he does not want answers to those questions one perhaps wonders why he asked them. The member for Davenport asked whether we should look at a tourism potential in relation to our reservoirs, and I am responding to that. Currently, in relation to the Barossa Reservoir we are encouraging some working together in terms of developing the potential of that facility from a tourist perspective. This aspect can certainly be examined in respect of the Happy Valley facility, although obviously we would have to wait until the whole filtration plant was completed before we look at some kind of link-up for tourists and visitors who would like to be shown over that facility to see what a filtration plant did. Certainly, I undertake to investigate this possibility, perhaps in concert with the Department of Tourism. In a moment I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to comment further on this.

Can I also say that, as part of opening up the whole process to the public, including visitors and tourists, and anyone else who may be interested, we propose to have an open day at the State Water Laboratory in the very near future—I can check the exact date, but I think it is 14 October. We are genuinely looking at opening up the department so that members of the public can see just what the Government is spending their money on in terms of providing quality water services and effective and efficient removal and disposal of sewage. So, I think I have answered the member's question. I refer the point about tourism development *apropos* the Happy Valley Reservoir to the Chief Executive Officer for further comment.

Mr Alexander: We encourage orderly parties from schools and places like that to undertake inspections. In fact, there are lecture rooms in the water filtration plants. We do not perhaps encourage people roaming around in an *ad hoc* way. It is a tricky question, this balancing of uses, and I have to wear a certain hat as head of the water agency. However, there are opportunities, and the Barossa Reservoir is a case in point, with the Whispering Wall, which provides an encouragement to people to visit the area. Downstream of the dams I have a problem with letting people loose to use boats on reservoirs, because the level goes up and down, and it is quite dangerous when the reservoir water level is low. But, yes, the Minister is supporting our view of encouraging the involvement of more people in the department's activities, within the safety limits of the operation.

Mr ROBERTSON: Good question, Stan.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I did not get an answer to the first part, though.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I shall take up the member's interjection: I believe I have answered the question. I am not the Minister of Tourism, but can I say that I have worked very closely with the Minister of Tourism for the whole time that she has been the Minister. In relation to the Minister of Tourism's proposals for development in the Hills, it is not my understanding that hundreds of thousands of tourists will be trampling willy-nilly across the foothills and the near Hills of the Adelaide area.

The whole question of tourism development involves doing it sensitively, and I believe that this Government is addressing that. The Minister of Tourism has said on a number of occasions that that is her intention. While I recognise that tensions can potentially exist, I believe that these issues are being sensitively addressed by the whole range of Government departments, from the Department of State Development, the Department of Tourism, the Engineering and Water Supply Department, the Department of Lands, and by other Government utilities. I do not know how much more explicit I can be in my answer.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: I refer to page 417 of the Program Estimates. In relation to pensioner rate remissions, at page xiv of his report, the Auditor-General states:

The Engineering and Water Supply Department has reviewed its revenue files and identified ineligible persons receiving rate remissions amounting to some \$300 000 a year.

Can the Minister explain the problem referred to by the Auditor-General?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for his question. I think first there has been a small amount of misunderstanding about this whole question of concessions and eligibility checks. In 1986-87, it was estimated that rate remissions of about \$451 400 were overpaid. This amount was larger than usual because of delays that the department experienced in matching the eligibility checks with the Commonwealth Departments of Social Security and Veterans' Affairs. Because of the hardship caused by these delays in determining ineligibility, Cabinet approved the non-recovery of \$288 600 of overpaid remissions. However, \$162 800 of overpaid remissions was recovered. This relates to 1986-87. In the last financial year, 1987-88, the department undertook two eligibility checks with Commonwealth pension authorities. As a result, overpaid remissions of \$164 900 were identified and recovered. The Auditor-General reports these facts on page 78 of his report.

Initial inquiries of the Audit Office have revealed that the Auditor-General has in fact rounded out the \$288 600 figure to \$300 000—relating to the amount that was not recovered as a result of Cabinet's decision. The amount has no relevance. This was a one-off decision. It was not an ongoing decision by Cabinet to write off these concessions every year. Some honourable members have interpreted this as some kind of ongoing commitment by Cabinet to write off those remissions. I hope I have made that point clear.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: I asked whether it would be ongoing.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: No, it is not ongoing, because the \$300 000 has no relevance to the 1987-88 figure; nor is it indicative of the level of overpaid remissions now expected to be identified and subsequently recovered from ineligible persons. I understand that the Chief Executive Officer will seek clarification from the Auditor-General, because as it reads in the Auditor-General's Report it could be interpreted as a continuous forgoing of revenue by the department. That is not the case. I thank the honourable member for raising this matter because it is a very important point.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: I refer to page 415 of the Program Estimates. Can the Minister say whether the Finger Point sewerage treatment works will be completed on schedule in June 1989?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As we all know, this has been an ongoing issue on the political agenda for a number of years, and I think that all parties will be pleased when it is finally removed. The works program will be completed in July 1989. The project was approved in November 1987 at an estimated cost of \$5.442 million (at July 1987 values). Expenditure to 30 June 1988 was \$1.5 million and the

proposed expenditure in 1988-89 is \$3.3 million. The current estimate of the total cost is \$5 million. Two contracts have been let for the work. The civil contract, which was let in February 1988, has a completion date of March 1989, and it is currently expected to be completed in January 1989. Therefore, that contract will be completed slightly ahead of schedule. The contract for the buildings and plant was let in July 1988 and is programmed for completion early in July 1989. Commissioning of the whole plant will proceed after that date. So the simple and short answer is 'Yes', it is proceeding completely on schedule and it should be commissioned on the date publicly announced.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: I understand that the Murray Darling Basin ministerial council met in Adelaide only a few weeks ago. What is the total expenditure authorised by the council for 1988-89 and what is South Australia's share?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Once again (and I am sure that it was a mistake by some members of Parliament) the correct information has not been completely disseminated within the community. The total expenditure authorised by the Murray Darling Basin ministerial council for 1988-89 is \$22 979 500. South Australia's share through the E&WS Department is \$11 591 000. That expenditure is made up as follows: investigation and construction, \$1.633 million; operations and maintenance, \$3.438 million; salinity mitigation investigation, \$520 000; and salinity mitigation construction, \$6 million. Due to the various formulae for cost sharing by the contracting Governments of the Commonwealth and the three States, and after allowing for a small surplus held by the council in its account from the previous year, South Australia's contribution for 1988-89 will be \$6 million.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: That is \$6 million of the \$11 million?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, as a result of the way that the finances are organised.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: So it will run over two years?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, the remainder will move into next financial year.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: There has been considerable discussion about water filtration. What is the status of the Stockwell filtration plant, which is part of the Morgan/Whyalla total concept? The Morgan pumping station and the Swan Reach/Stockwell system are part of an integrated system. Originally, a second water filtration plant was to be built at Stockwell to complete the system so that all northern towns, including those on Yorke Peninsula, would have filtered water. What is the anticipated commencement date of the Swan Reach/Stockwell water filtration plant?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The Stockwell water filtration plant project comprises the water filtration plant and associated ancillary works. The ancillary works consist of upgrading storages on the Warren trunk main, which will receive filtered water from the water filtration plant. These storages include Bailey Hill, Upper Wakefield and Upper and Lower Paskeville. On the current proposed E&WS Department five-year capital works program, a total of \$3.2 million is allocated over the next four years with a further \$5 million in future years. On the proposed departmental five-year capital works program an allocation of \$2.26 million in the 1991-92 and 1992-93 financial years has been made for preliminary and detailed design of the Stockwell water filtration plant. In future years there will be a further allocation of \$20.54 million. It is anticipated that construction of the plant will commence shortly after the year the Myponga plant is completed. We are looking at a reasonably long time frame because, of course, there are quite enormous financial constraints due to the enormous cost asso-

ciated with building a filtration plant. We hope that it will be ready for commissioning in 1997.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: What is the Government's attitude with respect to filtering or improving the quality of water, particularly for those towns adjacent to the Murray River? Those towns receive water which is pumped directly from the Murray into their water supply, so it does not pass through a reservoir where the high levels of soluble clay suspended in the water would have time to settle to some degree. In periods of high torpidity, particularly with water from the Darling River, large quantities of suspended clay are pumped straight into the domestic systems of towns along the Murray River. These towns have far more suspended clay in their water supply than any other towns or centres of population in South Australia. Is it possible to build small filtration plants to deal with this problem? Alternatively, instead of pumping water direct from the river, is it possible from an engineering point of view to provide flocculation tanks or settlement tanks to dispose of 80 or 90 per cent of suspended clays in the water?

The effect on people living in those communities, particularly in households, of the water carrying enormous loads of clay going straight through washing machines and hot water systems makes many of the problems that we hear a great deal about in the metropolitan area really fall into insignificance.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I appreciate and understand the issue that the honourable member has raised. Before I ask for some comment from Mr Shepherd about the technical feasibility of the suggestion that the member has raised, I point out that Morgan is one town that has already been done. An enormous cost is involved in providing the quality of water that every South Australian would want provided throughout the State. I know the member is not asking for that. What he has asked for is something that I would like to have further investigated, and I would be prepared to ask Mr Shepherd, the appropriate officer, to comment on the suggestion that has been made.

Mr Shepherd: I know that Mr Arnold is fully aware of the rationale for the priorities that have been used in establishing a program of water filtration. The priorities have been first to deal with the very large centres of population and those which are supplied from very long pipelines. Thus, the priorities are on the filtration for metropolitan Adelaide and for the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline and the Swan Reach-Stockwell pipeline already referred to. The rationale for those pipelines is that it is very important to treat that water to make disinfection more effective and thus reduce the immediate risk of meningitis.

After that, one would look at the Riverland and other river towns. The problem of cost and engineering feasibility is the question that the member asked. Certainly, the construction of water filtration plants is feasible for those towns, but the problem will be cost. A series of towns along the river, with much smaller populations than those served by the existing water filtration plants and those now programmed, will not have the scale advantages that those plants have. Thus, they will be considerably more expensive per person to be served.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: There is no centre of population in South Australia that receives a greater suspended clay load than towns immediately adjacent to the river. I appreciate it is done in relation to the country lands water supply going to the north because of *Naegleria fowleri* and that sort of thing, but that was not the reason for filtering Adelaide's water supply. It was appearance. In the situation I am talking about, is it feasible to have three, four or five plain flocculation tanks built so that, before the water is

pumped into the system at any town along the Murray, it just goes through a flocculation process and drops as much of the clay out as is possible?

Mr Shepherd: That would certainly remove a significant amount of clay. However, the technical problems with that are that the floc which is produced would not be fully removed by that process and would tend to deposit in pipes and make intermittent sediment in the pipes appear considerably worse from time to time than otherwise. Furthermore, the actual cost of filtration plants, the cost of the flocculation facilities and sedimentation tanks is a very major component of the plant. The final filtration stage is not by any means a large expense when considered overall.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: If that is the case, does the Government have a longer-term answer to the problem that has to be resolved, because the sheer cost associated with hot water systems and washing machines, and the effect on clothes at certain times of the year, is quite devastating. Perhaps people can live with that situation for nine months of the year and expect to do so, but the major problems occur with the high flow coming from the Darling.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer if he would comment specifically on perhaps the longer-term situation.

Mr Alexander: In our long-term planning, we are obviously aware of the problem in the towns. We are getting over the hump of the present water filtration program. The solution along the river towns is probably to buy package plants to deal with the problem. As Mr Shepherd has indicated, I suspect that, financially and technically, the complete package has to be faced rather than part-treatment. On our current financial investment in capital works, I suggest we would start looking at it in the mid-1990s. That would be my sort of planning scenario for it, bearing in mind the major effort we have to make to complete the present program.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I make the point that I do not have a vested interest in this, as I live on the irrigation system, and I will never get filtered water if it is put into the towns. I talk about this because I have a large underground tank and, once the water has been in that tank for a week or a fortnight, a lot of the soluble clays certainly drop out and the water improves within a week if it can go into a settlement area. That is why I mention a form of settling or flocculation to help reduce the degree of the problem.

Mr Alexander: We will take that on board and look at the feasibility. We would be after a minimum cost solution, obviously.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Referring to page 418 of the Program Estimates and the recreational use of the Torrens, I notice a dramatic reduction in funding in relation to the Torrens as far as the whole program is concerned. Does that mean that the flood mitigation side of the River Torrens and the linear park concept has been wound down, or has the flood mitigation part of the total concept been completed? Is the completion of the linear park just being wound down?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will answer that question briefly and then provide some statistics. The flood mitigation program has been substantially completed. Whilst the linear park program has had an enormous amount already committed to it, it has certainly not had a very substantial allocation for 1988-89. In fact, the amount allocated in this year's budget is \$240 000.

It is not to be interpreted that the Government will not proceed with the completion of those areas of the linear park still awaiting completion. The allocation for the linear

park in 1988-89 certainly does not allow for any new construction work or land acquisitions, but does provide for the completion of current construction work at the Thebarton/Hindmarsh area. Extensive sections of the scheme have been completed in both the western and eastern suburbs and, while the flood mitigation has not been finally completed, certainly the major and substantial part of it has. To give the honourable member some figures, the estimated final cost in December 1987 values was about \$30.3 million—an enormous amount of money.

Expenditure to 30 June 1988 for flood mitigation was \$13.078 million and for the linear park \$4.453 million, giving a total of \$17. 529 million. The estimated cost (estimated after 30 June this year) is \$631 000 to complete the flood mitigation. Obviously it has been substantially completed if we look at the financial commitment it has been given. The linear park, however, requires about \$12.140 million to complete. I have indicated the commitment for this year. It is not Government policy to stop programs at all, but it is a matter of having to set priorities and move around funding from one priority to another. It is my wish to see the whole project completed as soon as possible but, as the honourable member would know from being a previous Minister, that cannot always be achieved in the time-frame in which we would like to see it achieved.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: It was started in about 1980 as a sesquicentenary project. I would hope that in cutting the funding for this project, as a large sum of money has been spent on it, it is essential that it continue to be spent. The concept was a linear park for the people of South Australia as a sesquicentenary contribution to the State. If the capital funding for this project is wound down to such an extent that it will no more than hold the line, we will never get to the end of it. In fact, much of the work completed at this stage will deteriorate and that is of concern as it was a commitment to the State. We saw the state the Torrens got into as a result of man's involvement. It was overgrown with exotic species and was an absolute disgrace. The work done to date has completely revitalised the Torrens and the trees planted will, in years to come, make it a tremendous area. If we do not complete it, it will never come to fruition.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The project was part of the Jubilee 150 scheme to provide the citizens of Adelaide and South Australia with this magnificent linear park. One of the most important aspects was flood mitigation which is substantially complete. It is my understanding that the original agreement (and I have not had any information to indicate that anything has changed) was that local councils are to take over the maintenance of those sections that have been rehabilitated along the banks of the river, forming large sections of the park. If the honourable member has any information about deterioration in those areas already completed, I shall be pleased if he shares it with me. I have not had any information to that extent. Any areas I have visited have been well maintained by local councils, as was the agreement. I do not think that in slowing down the program one could go further and say that we will see things deteriorate and will have wasted our money. I put clearly on the record that that is not my understanding of the situation. The areas that have been rehabilitated are being maintained as originally intended.

As with any setting of budget priorities, it is possible to slow down something and bring another priority up higher on the list when an amount of money is agreed to through the whole process of negotiation with Treasury and Cabinet, a process of which I have not yet had personal experience but am looking forward to. It is just as easy to move

something back up to a high priority. It is a jump in logic to say that because this financial year we have slowed down the rehabilitation program for the linear park that it will happen every year. My predecessor has taken a decision in consultation with the department and we have to set priorities. These are difficult financial times. As a State we have received less money from the Federal Government in a whole range of areas. The department has addressed a number of important projects. I have outlined quite a few this morning, including water filtration and the provision of adequate sewerage facilities in areas of dense population. It would seem that once those priorities have been met and completed, in an interim period a decision will be taken by a Government, with advice from the department, about how much we could accelerate to complete the flood mitigation work and move towards completing the linear park.

The Hon. P.B. Arnold: Unless we have a definite program for the completion of it, it heads off into the never never of not knowing when the project will be completed. Examples of that sort of thing come readily to mind. We get to the point where we are still putting money into a project but not doing much more than holding the line. We are not making any headway to the final conclusion.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member has just reminded me that I have raised this matter with the department.

The Hon. P.B. Arnold: So, I am on the right track.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, but I suggest the honourable member's conclusion will be vastly different from what I hope will be my conclusion and successful resolution of the matter. I have asked the department to undertake a serious review of the issues that the honourable member has quite rightly highlighted. It is not something that I want to see fall from the agenda. However, I am also mindful that my predecessor, in making these decisions, did so very responsibly in terms of priorities identified by the Government.

The department is undertaking a serious review which will address the issues the honourable member has raised. Once I have more information regarding maintaining the current levels of rehabilitation and so on, it can be looked at again some time in the future.

The Hon. P.B. Arnold: I would like to move to page 425, dealing with the Murray Darling Basin Commission activities. The Minister made a statement a little while ago about the funding which was going into the new Murray Darling Basin works. I am still concerned, even after her statement, and will continue to be concerned in relation to the commitment of funding. I am not talking about the funding from South Australia, from Victoria or from New South Wales. I am absolutely convinced—and I think that here the Minister would have the support of Victoria and New South Wales—that we should be endeavouring to convince the Federal Government of its responsibility in this area.

The funding being contributed by Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia is quite significant from the States' point of view, but I am yet to be convinced that the lion's share of the funding should not come from the nation rather than from the States. As long as we expect Victoria and New South Wales to put in a similar amount of funding, we will never really reach the objectives stated by the Murray Darling Basin Ministerial Council. Human nature being what it is, Victoria and New South Wales will never put up the sort of money—and in the longer term we are talking of approximately \$1 billion—to put those objectives into effect.

I totally support the objectives of the Murray Darling Basin Commission and the Ministerial Council, but they totally revolve around the funding of the proposals and objectives of that Ministerial Council. I believe that overseas experience indicates that until the Federal Government of the day contributes the major proportion of the capital funding required, we will be skirting the edges of the total concept which has been set down. The Directors will well remember the plan which was prepared by officers of the E&WS Department in 1980, which is the same concept as that of the Ministerial Council, which required about \$400 million in funding at that time.

Currently, we are looking in the vicinity of \$800 million or \$1 billion, but that funding must be largely contributed from Federal resources. I believe that there would be a great deal of value to the South Australian Government in discussions with Victoria and New South Wales, seeking their support for a greater contribution. I appreciate that the contribution of the Federal Government varies with certain projects. In the main, until the Federal Government contributes anything up to 70 per cent of the total moneys required and the States each put in the remaining amount required, many of the objectives will never get off the ground.

That has been the experience overseas. When one considers that successive Federal Governments have acknowledged that the resource is worth approximately \$10 000 million annually to the economy of the nation, to be arguing over whether that resource can afford to put \$1 billion back over the next 10 years is an indictment of the whole system. I believe that Governments which do not come to grips with this problem will go down in history as not having lived up to what is required of them.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That is an issue which I am taking very seriously. I want to make a couple of general comments and, after that, I think it would be more appropriate to ask the Chief Executive Officer, who is actually a Commissioner with the Murray Darling Basin Commission, to comment on the specific points raised. First, there would not be a Minister in any State in Australia who would not believe that the Federal Government should be contributing more in each State's area. I would certainly like to see the Commonwealth Government contribute a much larger amount to this whole program. At this point I do not have any argument with the honourable member. Of course, we have much smaller budgets and much less flexibility to be able to put scarce resources into some of those programs, although we support the programs wholeheartedly.

Once again I get back to the point that if it is a matter of balancing priorities, if someone from the Federal Government was here today he would say exactly the same thing in terms of balancing the Federal budget and in terms of the overall priorities. The coming together of the three States and the Commonwealth is a move forward. It has not been happening for years and years, so we are moving, albeit slowly. Perhaps the next step we have to take is to look at how we divide the area of responsibility. We now have an agreement of one quarter from each of the participating Governments, but I have no disagreement with the overriding principle of wanting a greater commitment from the Federal Government to be able to complete this program within a reasonable time. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to make some comments about some of the matters raised by the member for Chaffey.

Mr Alexander: What the Murray Darling Basin Commission is doing for the Ministerial Council is preparing a series of documents. One which has already been considered and adopted in principle by the council was the salinity strategy.

Shortly we will be dealing with a natural resources strategy which looks more at the combined land and water management aspects, and there is also the environmental strategy. Speaking as a Commissioner, what we are trying to do is build up a watertight case for moving forward on the basis of these strategies and, I hope, enticing the Commonwealth Government to put in more money.

With the salinity strategy, we immediately got a significant contribution to the cost of Woolpunda which we otherwise might have had to bear ourselves. All the Commissioners have been pushing these various strategies and they will be putting a cost on it. I think the question of enticing the Commonwealth to pay more money would have to be solved in the political arena, but the evidence will be put there in no uncertain terms. It is the role of the Commissioners to do that.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I refer to page 422 of the Program Estimates under the heading 'Metropolitan public water supply—policy area: community amenities'. I believe that this is a significant and important step by the department in the area of public accountability. I refer to the table which indicates the performance in a certain indicator from the years 1983-84 to 1987-88. I point out that, in maintaining the level of service with respect to mains, the number of priority 1 bursts per 1 000 customers has been reduced from 2.4 per 1 000 in 1983-84 to 1.8 in 1987-88. That is complemented by the fact that the time to respond to 80 per cent of priority 1 bursts has been reduced and held steady to one hour over the past three years under consideration.

I am sure that the department has been doing research and keeping up with world trends, but I wonder whether there are any new developments. Water is distributed by way of mains in the metropolitan area in cast iron pipes (where they are still in existence), there is a large amount of asbestos cement piping and there have been some improvements in PVC piping where pressure ratings have been improved. Are there any other developments in that area such as salvage of existing mains by reinforcement?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for raising the fact that, despite reducing expenditure, the quality of service provided to consumers has either remained constant—particularly over the past three years with respect to priority 1 burst mains—or has markedly decreased the time factor involved. This highlights that the department is, with each passing year, moving towards becoming more efficient and effective in the delivery of its operations in terms of cost efficiency. I wanted, as the new Minister, to place on the public record that the community should congratulate the department—and I am pleased to be part of that. I ask Mr Killmier if he would like to comment on the specific aspects of the honourable member's question.

Mr Killmier: There are two relevant aspects: first, one reason for the decline of the number of bursts is, in the past two or three years, the department has spent a sum of money on relaying older mains in the metropolitan area. We have a system of recording where bursts occur and we are able to give first priority to relaying certain mains to ensure that when we spend money for this purpose we do it to the best advantage. In this way we have been able to eliminate many of the mains that burst more frequently than others. This does not necessarily occur because of age. It is quite ironic that some of the mains that have to be relaid are post-war mains because the quality of pipes in more recent years is not as good as that of pipes provided 100 years ago.

That leads me to the question asked about the quality of piping. We went through a post-war period of some 20 years of laying asbestos cement pipes. We would have continued to do so had the manufacturers continued to provide them. James Hardie, our supplier, because of problems related to asbestos, believed that the company should not be associated with that product. From a water supply point of view there are no health queries in relation to asbestos cement pipes, but the company did not want to be involved and ceased to manufacture them.

The department was faced with the choice of what to replace asbestos cement pipes with and it boiled down to a choice between ductile iron and PVC. The problem with PVC was that the Health Commission advised the department that the lead content in the water arising from the use of PVC pipes was above the limits that it was prepared to accept. We could have followed the practice of other States of extensive flushing following the laying of the pipes, but we could not be certain that where mains are laid by subdividers the proper flushing process would be carried out. So, we decided in the interests of public health to let a contract for ductile iron pipes.

It is pleasing to note—and I suspect largely as a result of the initiatives of the E&WS Department—that the suppliers of PVC have developed a virtually lead-free pipe which they have requested the department to purchase. We have indicated to the manufacturers that we will authorise PVC pipes for subdivisions—the choice then lies with the subdivider as to whether he uses ductile iron or PVC depending on his assessment of the cost of laying the pipes.

As to the future, it really depends on the assessment of the life of a pipe. The problem with ductile iron pipes is that they can be attacked both from within and without and we have to ensure that they are properly wrapped with plastic covering to try and restrict the external impact on them. Each manufacturer argues that his product is better than the next. It will be interesting to see the outcome of the Woolpunda scheme because in that case we are not only talking about attack from the outside, we are talking about water with a high saline content in the pipe. It will be a difficult assignment for the professional people to decide what pipe to lay, at what price and for what life span.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I refer to page 416 of the Program Estimates and to the program title: 'Waste Water Treatment and/or Disposal', the policy area being health. I indicate to the Committee my pleasure in noting under the 1988-89 specific targets/objectives that the rehabilitation of the Brukunga Mines tailings dam will be completed. I think that members, and possibly readers of *Hansard*, would understand my pleasure at seeing that there, because formerly as Minister of Water Resources and Minister of Mines and Energy I was involved over quite a long time in a public purse rescue of private enterprise efforts in years gone by, when the public sector and, for that matter, Governments did not have such strict requirements in relation to how mining activities were conducted. Certainly, they are more strictly controlled now. Does the Minister have any further details about the completion of the rehabilitation work?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am aware of the program that is proposed, but I will ask Mr Killmier to provide further details for the honourable member.

Mr Killmier: I think it must be made plain that this refers to the Brukunga Mines tailings dam and not to the total mine.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I am just happy to see some finality somewhere of a project that has cost a lot of taxpayers' money over the years.

Mr Killmier: Looking at it today, compared to what it was four or five years ago, one is impressed with the rehabilitation work that has been undertaken on the dam itself. The dam will not now contribute to the acid water that is leaving the site. However, the face of the excavations, which, of course, provides run-off, has to be treated, so the treatment plant will have to continue. We have been able to get cheap neutralising material to help keep those costs down. I think it will be some years before we will be able to walk away from Brukunga. However, it certainly has been a very successful operation in the past few years. It was one which we did not enjoy taking on but which we have pleasure in seeing resolved.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I now refer to page 425 of the Program Estimates and to Program Title: River Murray Activities on Behalf of the Murray Darling Basin Commission. In most respects this question is supplementary to one that I asked the Minister of Fisheries in another Committee two days ago. I asked the Minister whether there was any proposal by the Department of Fisheries to restock the Murray River with fresh water crayfish. In response, the Minister of Fisheries pointed out that his department was not directly involved in doing any research associated with this idea. He said that it was involved in the coordination of such a project, through a subcommittee of the River Murray Darling Basin committee, on which his department was represented. He said:

Following an assessment of the situation in the Murray, it has been recommended that funding be provided for research into developing offspring for reseeding in the Murray.

This includes our section of the Murray River as well. I understand that the Adelaide University has had some involvement in this area, too. Can the Minister tell the Committee what degree of involvement officers of her department have had in this matter?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am delighted that the Minister of Fisheries was able to provide the member with the information that he did. Certainly, I think the proposal has a great deal of merit from a number of perspectives, not the least of which relate to those people who happen to enjoy eating fresh water crayfish. As this matter relates to involvement of the Murray Darling Commission, I think it would be most appropriate to ask the Chief Executive Officer to provide us with further details of the department's involvement with the Department of Fisheries in this very worthwhile program.

Mr Alexander: As part of its broader role, the Murray Darling Commission is developing a fish management plan. Progress has been made in re-establishing River Murray crayfish upstream. The University's River Murray laboratory is doing an investigation for us. As part of the broader management of the river, we are trying to gather information about re-establishing these natural crayfish and the traditional fish in the river. A number of fish ladders have been put in to enable fish to get upstream from locks, and we are very keen to leave snags in unobtrusive positions for fish to use for breeding. So, a deliberate management planning is being developed for that aspect of the river.

The CHAIRMAN: That completes the first round of questions. With the concurrence of the Committee the member for Flinders may now ask a question.

Mr BLACKER: Can I have details of the program of replacement of main pipeline services on Eyre Peninsula? I understand that there is an ongoing program. That question can be taken on notice. Further, is there any forward planning in relation to the provision of a sewer outfall or sewer treatment works at Port Lincoln?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for his question. I acknowledge his interest in this matter

as it affects his electorate. The majority of the Port Lincoln township is seweraged, except for some outlying areas which use septic tanks and effluent disposal on site. Sewers are currently being provided in the Kirton Point area, but no further sewerage work is planned by the Engineering and Water Supply Department within its five years capital works plan. The collected sewage is pumped to a common point and disposal is via an outfall to the sea. Following an investigation by an engineering consultant into domestic and industrial waste water discharges into Boston and Proper Bays during 1975, the domestic waste water outfall of 180 metres was replaced by a new 500 metre long outfall in 1980. This new outfall discharges raw sewage into deeper waters off Billy Lights Point and into an area almost totally devoid of seagrass and with rapid mixing and dispersion.

Since 1978 the E & WS has undertaken six separate benthic biota surveys near the sewage outfall and in other areas of Porter Bay, the most recent survey having been carried out in 1986 by the Department of Fisheries. Water quality surveys have also been undertaken in these areas, with generally three or four surveys being conducted per year up to May 1988. Bacteriological, and on some occasions chemical, parameters were measured. A report on these surveys is currently being prepared within the E & WS Department, which is also assessing the data that has been collected over the last decade to determine what level of treatment, if any, would be appropriate for the Port Lincoln outfall.

However, the Minister of Health was reported in the *Port Lincoln Times* of 26 May 1988 as stating that, after consultation with senior advisers, there is very little potential of a public health risk and that there is no health problem with current levels. So, the information that I have received from the department and from my colleague, the former Minister of Health, is that at this stage it is not considered to be a priority. However, I am very happy to have further consultations with the department to ensure that that is the absolutely current position.

Mr Killmier: The only other factor that needs to be considered is the problem of the factories that also discharge at Port Lincoln. If a treatment plant were to be established, a solution would have to be found to the very high levels of wastes that they discharged.

Mr BLACKER: Following on from that, the concern of the local people is with the Porter Bay, Lincoln Cove marina development, which is in relatively close proximity to the sewer outfall. More particularly, as the yacht club is proposing to move its facilities to the Lincoln Cove development, many parents are not too happy about the thought of having their youngsters sailing in the immediate vicinity. In relation to Porter Bay and the outfall from the fish factories and meatworks, the meatworks effluent and offal disposal are obviously much reduced because very little activity is undertaken there, but the wastes from the fish factories are basically of a marine nature, anyway.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, I am aware of the proposed developments which are already occurring at Porter Bay, and they will increase. I would be very pleased to ask the department to reinvestigate this whole question of disposal of sewage in that area, taking account of the points that the member has raised regarding perhaps increased usage in that specific area and also in relation to whether there would be concerns for the health of our young people.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: How many cars permanently or regularly available to employees for travel between work and home have been or are to be fitted with private registration plates?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The answer is 'one', and that question was answered by the Premier during Question

Time in the House. That is the motor vehicle belonging to the Chief Executive Officer. The Premier gave a lengthy explanation as to why that is happening, and I will not repeat the reasons.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: During the last financial year, what was the total amount of sick leave taken by employees; how many of those days leave were not covered by medical certificates; and how many days sick leave not covered by medical certificate were taken on a Friday, a Monday or the day immediately before or after a public holiday? Finally, how many land or building sales occurred last financial year, and will the Minister provide an itemised list of those sales, giving the location of the property, the sale price, the name of the purchaser and whether the sale was conducted by auction, advertised sale or private negotiation?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I have some of the information regarding the whole question of sick leave. I do not have at my fingertips the detail and depth of information that the member has requested, but I will share the information that I do have. In 1987-88, under the GME Act, there was an average full-time equivalent employment of 1 499. The

paid sick leave taken was 9 776 full days or an average per full-time equivalent employee of 6.52 days. Under the award, the average full-time equivalent employment was 2 795 for 1987-88. The paid sick leave taken was 26 409 days, or on average per full-time equivalent employee of 9.44 days. Sick leave conditions for award employees were varied in October 1987. Employees are now allowed to take three days leave without a doctor's certificate, and these conditions also apply to GME Act employees.

I have other information regarding the sick leave question but, as the member has asked a number of other questions relating to that, I will give the member an undertaking that if it is possible to get the level of detail of all that information by the specified time, it will be provided to *Hansard* by the department.

The third question related to property sales during 1987-88. I have a very long and relatively detailed list of the amounts, the purchasers and reference numbers for identification purposes. I seek leave to have that table inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Nett Receipts for E & WS Property Sold During 1987-88

Settlement Date	Location	Amount \$	Purchaser	Reference
1.7.87	Sale of house 450, Lyons Street, Crystal Brook.	17 871.46	P.W. Matthews	EWS 6402/86
1.7.87	Sale of house 451, Lyons Street, Crystal Brook	17 871.47	P.W. Matthews	EWS 2056/86
30.7.87	Sale of lot 4, Bartley Terrace, Semaphore Park (to SAHT)	100 000.00	S.A. Housing Trust	EWS 7523/86
19.8.87	Sale of house 109, lots 191 and 192 Southwest Terrace, Owen	36 772.10	J.H. Hosking	EWS 802/86
26.8.87	Sale of Pipetrack, Walnut Grove, Dernancourt	5 000.00	M. Corradini	EWS 4549/70
28.8.87	Sale of lot 5, Pinefreezers Road, Port Lincoln (Old Construction Depot)	15 435.00	S. and L. Kropelj	EWS 6935/86
28.10.87	Sale of house 611, Corriedale Street, Naracoorte	26 571.48	Ms J.D. Sneath	EWS 6035/86
24.11.87	Sale of disused tram track, part section 389, hundred of Yatala	30 000.00	S.A. Housing Trust	EWS 1895/87
21.1.88	Sale of section 100, part section 16, hundred of Cortlinye (Water Conservation Reserve)	15 000.00	E.C. Liebich	EWS 3149/33
22.1.88	Sale of lot 11, Richmond Road, Richmond (Old Bore Site)	114 154.67	P. Vlassis and A. Diamantopoulos	EWS 86/87TC1
3.2.88	Sale of lot 10, Bishopstone Road, Elizabeth West (Portion of Elizabeth Depot)	68 000.00	S.A. Housing Trust	EWS 17/75
27.2.88	Sale of house 349, Palmer	19 927.84	E. and L. Anderson	EWS 4594/83
4.3.88	Sale of house 345, Palmer	27 940.05	N.M. Cook and K. Simpson	EWS 6152/84
10.3.88	Sale of house 150, situated on Old Fulham Gardens Depot	11 168.26	St Johns/Lands/ SAHT	EWS 4557/83
28.3.88	Sale of surplus tank site, hundred of Monarto	300.00	V.A. Tokmakof	EWS 6127/85
8.4.88	Sale of part section 12, hundred of Chandada (Chandada Well) (Water Conservation Reserve)	20.00	G.P. Moroney	EWS 4321/84
26.4.88	Sale of Booster pump site, part section 5, hundred of Moorooroo	112.00	I.G. and P.E. Schwarz	EWS 3125/81
3.5.88	Sale of lot 21, Butler Terrace, Naracoorte	11 951.28	R.C. Siegert	EWS 6143/86
25.5.88	Sale of section 113N, hundred of Kenmore (for police radio tower)	1 500.00	Department Housing and Construction	EWS 5322/85
8.6.88	Sale of lot 11, Gould and Mount Barker Road, Stirling	12 500.00	R.J. Coates	EWS 2718/73
8.6.88	Sale of lot 1276, Vivian Cock Street, Berri	16 320.00	A. and L. Monaco	EWS 666/87

Settlement Date	Location	Amount \$	Purchaser	Reference
8.6.88	Sale of Land at Cradock Well (Water Conservation Reserve)	500.00	G.B. Jordans	EWS 476/87
22.6.88	Sale of improvements on section 82, hundred of Wright (Water Conservation Reserve)	400.00	L.R. Guerin	EWS 1844/46
		<u>\$549 315.61</u>		

Mr S.G. EVANS: What new measures is the department taking to catch people who cheat and at times steal from the department, in particular, where they put run-off water into the sewer mains or replace the water meter with a short length of pipe while they fill their swimming pool or water their garden at night? Directing run-off water into sewer mains can cause blockages and unhealthy situations, particularly for young people. When the offender happens to be a registered plumber, is there power at present or is the department seeking any greater power to be able to remove that person's licence? One recent case brought to my attention involved a plumber who was found stealing water. I believe that he was fined a substantial amount. One would think that such persons should pay a higher penalty than the ordinary citizen.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is appropriate that people who have expertise, knowledge and ability to be able to dishonestly interfere with the correct and proper provisions of water and deny paying the amount that they should for their water be treated seriously. As with any professional group, people inside the profession who abuse the privileges and expertise they have are viewed very seriously by the community, and I certainly view it seriously. I ask Mr Killmier to comment.

Mr Killmier: Where we have evidence of infiltration caused by people putting stormwater down the drain (and that usually arises from surcharges in the sewers), we conduct a smoke-testing campaign to find who is doing it. Although you can sometimes see stormwater obviously being put into drains, others have gone to greater lengths to see that it is concealed. It is simple with smoke testing to prove that. These people are given an encumbrance advice and asked to desist. If they have been aided and abetted by a plumber, the matter is somewhat more serious. There have been occasions when not only have people been prosecuted but the plumber has also been referred to the Plumbers Registration Board, which has power to make recommendations to the Minister. It is a matter of how draconian we wish to be.

I agree that people have been and will continue to abuse the system, just as they put bypasses on meters. It is not confined to the public. There have been occasions when our own employees have done such things, so much so that several years ago I issued an instruction which made abundantly clear to any employee who stole water that their job was on the line. We have procedures, and things are working reasonably well.

Mr S.G. EVANS: At pages 414 and 415 the Program Estimates refer to metropolitan sewerage, as follows:

One of the issues to be addressed will be the identification of the real rate of return on assets employed. Provision of a value for money service will also become a higher priority with the department concentrating on doing more with less and maintaining the level of service.

I do not object to the general proposition, but have concerns. In Belair a few residents have asked for sewer mains to be extended, but there is some difficulty getting an extension to the mains. Will those people be expected to pick up

the full cost of an extension or are we talking of an overall service on a greater scale? I refer to ovals, churches and Government departments, which only pay for water at the normal excess rate and do not pay much as sewerage rates. They pay a nominal fee but such organisations do not pay the capital value sewer rate but rather a toilet rate. Are we moving down a path where we will ask for all such payments from those groups and likewise full recompense for installation of small extensions to sewer mains?

Mr Killmier: The honourable member is referring to Sheoak Road, for those who do not know. The problem with extensions of mains is very simple but very difficult. We have a limited budget and therefore attempt to provide services to as many people as possible within the budget. Normally we can provide sewers for \$5 000 to \$6 000 per allotment, but there will always be situations of long approaches to providing the services. The honourable member may be aware of Golflinks Road, which is a classic example of a pocket of people in an isolated area requiring a very long approach main to service them. Sheoak Road is also in that category.

The present arrangements attempt to ration available funds so that they service the maximum number of people and the return on capital is maximised, bearing in mind that it does not get anywhere near the cost of interest. Most extensions occurring these days are lucky to return 2-4 per cent. When we do such extensions we require the present consumers to carry the new chum and that has been going on for a long time. We cannot afford to add too many new consumers who are big loss consumers to the existing system and still hope to keep rate rises below the level of inflation—an objective that everyone advocates. When it is not achieved everyone wants to point out that the rate rise has been above inflation.

We cannot extend mains to all areas. Recently the question came up about indirect services. Even our own Minister has queried us on why we have not extended the mains. The answer is that probably several hundred million dollars worth of potential mains could be laid to try to pick up every property not directly served with water. However, funds are not available, it is not economic and we have a responsibility to make funds go round as efficiently as possible to ensure that maximum value is given to the maximum number of people.

Mr S.G. EVANS: What about community ovals, Government buildings and churches which currently do not pay the full rate? Are we intending to catch up on them?

Mr Killmier: Government departments pay full sewerage rates as do hospitals and schools. The only organisations that do not are charities and churches, which we would all agree would not make a great deal of use of the service, given the length of time people are there. I do not think anyone would be advocating that charities should pay. The WC charge has been increased at times and in many instances goes well down the track to being equivalent to a sewerage rate.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I must have been misled. I believed that if a school was worth, say, \$5 million it did not pay a sewer rate equivalent to a capital value of \$5 million. Is Mr Killmier telling me that they do?

Mr Killmier: Yes, they do.

Mr S.G. EVANS: What about community ovals owned by councils?

Mr Killmier: Ovals are different because they are council property. A school is usually a State Government property whereas, under the Local Government Act, an oval is treated as a non-rateable property. It is only charged for sewerage if it is connected.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Minister of Water Resources, Miscellaneous, \$728 000—
Examination declared completed.

Works and Services—Engineering and Water Supply
Department, \$36 690 000—Examination declared completed.

Works and Services—South-Eastern Drainage Board,
\$270 000—Examination declared completed.

Community Welfare, \$130 975 000

Chairman:

The Hon. T.M. McRae

Members:

The Hon. R.K. Abbott
Mr D.S. Baker
The Hon. J.L. Cashmore
Mr S.G. Evans
The Hon. R.G. Payne
Mr D.J. Robertson

Witness:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan, Minister of Community Welfare.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms S. Vardon, Chief Executive Officer, Department for
Community Welfare.
Ms L. Mann, Deputy Chief Executive Officer.
Mr G. Boxhall, Director, Administration and Finance.
Dr A. Graycar, Commissioner for the Ageing.
Ms S. Castell-McGregor, Executive Officer, Children's
Interests Bureau.
Ms C. O'Loughlin, Director, Domestic Violence Unit.
Mr P. Bicknell, Manager, Non-government Welfare Unit.
Mr R. Bos, Manager, Financial Services.
Mr A. Lohf, Senior Finance Officer, Home and Com-
munity Care Program.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination. Does the Minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes. As Minister of Community Welfare, I welcome this opportunity to consider the work of my department with members of Parliament and my

senior officers this afternoon. Members will be aware of my long-standing interest in welfare issues and the value I saw, as a backbencher, in pursuing this interest through the Estimates Committee process.

As the new Minister of Community Welfare, I can assure the Committee of my reinforced belief that the work undertaken by the department is vital to the welfare and wellbeing of so many families and individuals throughout this State. I look forward to constructively examining the Government's policies and the department's operations this afternoon and throughout my period as Minister.

I will, first, give an overview of our budget. Despite the many and varied pressures upon it, the department was able to live within its 1987-88 budget allocation after allowance is made for salary increases and other Treasury-approved unavoidable increases. The department's recurrent budget for this financial year totals \$131 million, a net increase of 5.3 per cent on last year's expenditure.

It is significant that the Government has been able to further increase funding for the welfare area, most notably through new funding for social justice programs. I will be announcing details of eight specific social justice initiatives in due course which total over \$1 million this financial year and more than \$1.5 million next year.

This year's budget also includes the full-year effect of last year's new initiatives and will therefore continue to provide further resources for child protection work, the work of the Children's Interest Bureau, and a range of programs conducted by the non-government sector.

Members will note that 60 per cent of the department's budget is spent on direct payments to individuals and groups, including 26 per cent on concessions, 19 per cent on the Home and Community Care program, 12 per cent on grants to non-government organisations and 6 per cent on other direct payments to clients. Salary and superannuation expenditure comprises 29 per cent of the total budget, leaving 8 per cent for operating expenses and accommodation and service charges now debited against the department.

Considering that the department provides its services through 80 locations throughout the State, it manages to keep its operating costs to a minimum. Despite this, the department has decided to further contain administrative costs this financial year to enable it to fund top priority initiatives in the substitute care program, which is predominantly run by non-government agencies. This will amount to \$180 000.

Several minor changes have been made to program structures and apportionment this year to reflect more accurately how resources are deployed to achieve the department's objectives. The three principle changes are as follows:

(1) Implementation of adolescents at risk program: Last year's yellow book foreshadowed the full implementation of this important program to assist young people to overcome their developmental and situational difficulties so that they could lead safe and purposeful lives. Page 459 of the yellow book records the formal establishment of adolescent support teams in the metropolitan area and the progressive establishment of youth development teams in country locations. I would be pleased to inform the Committee further on these exciting developments. In budgetary terms, \$1.68 million and 35.2 full-time equivalent staff, which were previously allocated to the Young Offenders and Services to Specific Groups (Youth) programs, have been reallocated to the more appropriate adolescents at risk program.

(2) Transfer of community welfare grants: Grants to non-government bodies from the Community Welfare Grants Fund have been shown against other programs where a single specific purpose for the grant can be identified. For

example, funding to two community based self-help groups to provide support to non-offending parents of children who suffered abuse has been allocated to the child protection program. Transfers have been made to the following programs: individual and family support; substitute care; welfare services for specific groups; community participation in welfare; child protection; and adolescents at risk.

(3) Social work apportionment: Staff employed at district and branch offices are engaged on a variety of subprograms. The cost of these offices are therefore apportioned across most of the department's programs, including a component for administration and clerical support which has previously been incorporated in the 'intra-agency support services' program.

The department, the previous Minister, and the Auditor-General considered that these field-based clerical and administrative costs should be reported as costs of providing welfare services and hence be allocated to welfare programs rather than intra-agency services. Further details on these program changes are available for the Committee's information if required.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: I have no preliminary statement, other than that the Opposition has many questions which we hope will be answered as briefly as possible. Last September, in the Estimates Committee the former Minister (Dr Cornwall) stated in relation to the operations and structure of the Department for Community Welfare and the Health Commission;

At this point, we are developing active proposals for amalgamation, having gathered momentum through a successful coalescence... I will recommend formally that we amalgamate and I would hope to take the submission and the timetable for amalgamation to Cabinet before Christmas.

Does the Minister share the former Minister's enthusiasm for amalgamation of the DCW and the SAHC? If she does, when will a submission be taken to Cabinet recommending amalgamation or some other form of restructuring the two organisations and what timetable will be proposed for any possible restructuring?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That submission was not taken to Cabinet. In fact, it was decided by my predecessor, after wide consultation within the department and within the Health Commission, not to proceed with the coalescence or amalgamation along those lines. In arriving at that decision, a wide range of people was consulted. Most of them wanted closer local and regional coordination, increased collocation of agencies, and greater opportunities for regional staff and consumers to contribute to resource allocation decisions.

At the same time, scepticism was expressed about amalgamating the central offices of the Health Commission and the DCW into one administration. It is important to note that the Government, and indeed my predecessor, accepted those findings along with the results of inquiries in areas, including the disability services and mental health and social and primary health, which have all confirmed the need for closer working relationships between the health and welfare sectors. A White Paper outlining strategies for further improvements to the coordination of the services will be considered by Cabinet later this year.

So, in short the answer to the honourable member's question is that, after an extensive process of consultation with all the agencies involved, it was decided that it was appropriate not to proceed with an amalgamation model in the delivery of health and welfare services in this State. It was decided to further explore the possibility and advantages of, as well as the opportunities for, the recipients of the services provided through health and welfare by both the major agencies working more closely together and collocating their offices and facilities where this was feasible and pos-

sible, and further exploring how services could be provided efficiently and effectively through working together rather than by amalgamation. That would be my position at this time.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: In relation to the Green Paper 'Health and Welfare Working Together—Options for the Future' (issued in November 1987), is the Minister aware of criticism expressed by the South Australian Council of Social Services and supported by the Public Service Association that the arguments presented are based on anecdotal information only rather than on hard data recording or tabulating complaints by clients about service delivery? Also, is the Minister aware of a resolution passed at a seminar for PSA members in the health and welfare sectors as recently as July this year (that is, after the period referred to by the Minister in her reply), highlighting the fact that they 'do not support amalgamation or reorganisation at this stage', a sentiment reinforced by the overwhelming majority of respondents to a PSA questionnaire initiated to help the PSA frame a response to the Green Paper?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The paper that the honourable member refers to is the one in which health and welfare worked together in November 1987 to canvass the potential benefits of more closely co-ordinated health and welfare services at the local level. As I said in answer to the previous question, it is because of that paper and the extensive consultations which followed that we are now looking at a white paper that will outline strategies. It is clearly recognised that the wishes of health and welfare PSA members have been taken on board in terms of a coalescence and amalgamation. I thought that I clearly explained that we are not talking about coalescence and amalgamation; we are talking about a cooperating model where both departments can cooperate with each other in terms of co-location of services and working together without being amalgamated in one unit.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: As recently as two months ago the PSA was still concerned about this matter. On 11 August and 8 September the shadow Minister of Community Welfare in another place questioned the Minister's predecessor about the grievances of DCW and Health Commission staff in relation to minimum floor space regulations and other issues including the issue of security arising from the plan to relocate and co-locate the central offices of the DCW and the Health Commission in the Town Acre 86 building on the corner of Pulteney Street and Rundle Mall.

I note that in yesterday's *Advertiser*, as far as PSA members are concerned, the issue remains alive and well on the eve of the move which is scheduled to take place this weekend. I ask the Minister if she is able to confirm that the relocation and co-location move will take place this weekend as scheduled? Will the move be ordered despite outstanding grievances by PSA members? What is the projected cost of the exercise and what, if any, contingency funds have been set aside to cover penalty payments if the move is delayed or if the accommodation lay-out needs to be redesigned?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I do not believe that the introduction had anything to do with the final question which is: what is the situation regarding the timetable for the completion of the Town Acre 86 building and the moving in dates? I want to share with the Committee the fact that I personally visited the Town Acre 86 building as recently as yesterday with a member of the DPIR, Mr Mike Schilling, the Secretary of the Public Service Association, Mr Kevin Crawshaw, and a number of other interested people.

It would be appreciated if the *Advertiser* could get the facts right about the completion of the building. The build-

ing was to be completed by this weekend when moving in was to start. Whether there are a number of issues that need to be resolved is quite irrelevant in one sense because there can be no moving-in for at least another fortnight as the building has not been completed. It is proposed that moving in will start with the first floor and progress through the other floors until it is completed. I have inspected very closely the first and second floors. The first floor is not fully completed and the second floor is in a state of even less completion. I hope that the owners of the building will be able to ensure that it will be completed before the end of the month. That is the first fact that we need to ensure is clear in the public mind.

The second thing is that in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer I have had a number of meetings and discussions with the Public Service Association, welfare representatives from the department, who are members of the Public Service Association, and representatives of the DPIR. A number of outstanding issues are being discussed in a reasonable and non-confrontation way and we are working collectively to resolve them. At this point the vast majority of those issues is resolved, but one or two issues need to be talked through.

There has been some misunderstanding about some of the issues because the Health Commission, before I was appointed as Minister of Community Welfare, had agreed to rectify things such as light diffusers and other fairly minor concerns. The concerns of the PSA are legitimate—that is its role and function and I welcome it—but to try and turn those concerns into some sort of political football is drawing a very long bow. There is no intention on my part or that of the Chief Executive Officer to order—I think that was the word used—people to move and relocate and co-locate. That is not the way in which we operate. We try to set about resolving the problems that have arisen and listen to what people are saying and act accordingly.

As I said, negotiations and discussions have taken place with the PSA and there is a genuine attempt on behalf of the DPIR and the two primary agencies—the Health Commission and the Department for Community Welfare—to resolve those issues. Like the Minister of Health it is my hope that these issues will be resolved very shortly so that when the building is ready to be moved into—which of course will not be for at least a fortnight—the move can take place in an organised and orderly manner.

The honourable member asked about costs. Costs are the responsibility of the Health Commission. I understand that yesterday the Minister of Health gave a detailed outline of the costing to the Estimates Committee. The Department for Community Welfare will spend \$60 000 on minor modifications, but major costs are the responsibility of the Health Commission.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: I refer on page 450 of the Program Estimates to the Commonwealth emergency relief program. In May this year the Commonwealth Government proposed a transfer of the emergency relief program to the States. At this time the program proved to be an important source of emergency financial assistance for needy families. Last year in South Australia over \$650 000 was directly distributed by the Commonwealth to 43 voluntary agencies including the Salvation Army, Port Adelaide Central Mission and Spark. When the proposal to transfer the program to the States was mooted, both the former Minister and the Opposition highlighted the fact that the move was dangerous because the funds would be absorbed into general revenue and not specifically identified. I note that earlier this week the Premier announced that the State Government

would return \$676 000 in emergency relief funding to the Federal Government.

Has the Minister or the Government received a response from the Commonwealth to the move by the State to return \$676 000 in emergency relief funding? Has the emergency financial assistance program operated by the DCW attracted increased pleas for emergency help by people in financial distress? Has a decision been made that funds assigned to this program will be used to help people in need while the wrangle over the emergency relief funding program remains unresolved?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The answer to the first question is 'No'. At this stage, as Minister of Community Welfare, I am not aware of a response from the Commonwealth Government with respect to the decision announced by the Premier that South Australia would return the funds because there has not been a successful resolution of a number of outstanding issues raised by the Premier with the Prime Minister on a number of occasions. Because I have been appearing before the Estimates Committee today, I am not aware whether the Premier has now received a response from the Prime Minister or the appropriate office in Canberra.

Any suggestion that somehow people in the community are being disadvantaged is quite erroneous. The funds from Canberra for Commonwealth-funded programs will see those programs through until October. Quite obviously, there is not a rush on Department for Community Welfare offices or groups of people who are concerned. I can tell the Committee that the non-government sector supports the Government's action. They want to be very sure. The Premier, and in fact the department, have received representations from a number of non-government agencies which were concerned about the initial proposal on a number of levels. One was that we needed to be sure that there would be adequate funding in an ongoing sense for these programs as they expanded and developed and that an inflationary factor would be written in to any agreement for the States to take over the actual distribution of that funding. So, I do not believe that this is a matter in relation to which the various sectors, the Department for Community Welfare, the Minister and the non-government welfare agencies, are disagreeing with each other. We have still to resolve this with the Federal Government. At this time, as I understand it, we have not had a response from the Federal Government in respect of the Premier's announced position.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: Further, in relation to the emergency financial assistance program (page 444 of the Program Estimates), in 1988-89 it is proposed that \$2.730 million will be allocated towards payments to recipients. That is an increase of \$747 000, from actual expenditure of \$1.983 million last year. How much of this increase represents additional funds for payments to recipients, and how much will be absorbed by the employment of 13 additional officers—making a total of 33.3 officers assigned to this program this financial year?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As I mentioned in my introduction, we are looking at this change in apportioning the way in which the funds are allocated. To answer the honourable member's question in detail, I call on Mr Boxhall to further explain.

Mr Boxhall: Payments to recipients in 1987-88 amounted to \$1.3 million, while the payments proposed this year will be \$1.6 million. As the Minister has just explained, there was an adjustment in the social work apportionment, the amount of time that is spent across the department in performing the emergency financial assistance work. That accounts for the \$750 000 total difference that the member

referred to. The actual increase in payments for this current financial year is a bit over \$300 000. There are quite separate lines. The amount of \$1.6 million relates to direct payments to clients, excluding salary costs.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: So, that would indicate a significant increase for the recipients over the last year.

Mr ROBERTSON: I refer first to federally funded programs. I apologise for not being present for the whole of the Minister's statement, but I had advance intelligence of some of it. I understand that the Minister indicated that the Home and Community Care (HACC) program comprised some 19 per cent of the Department for Community Welfare's budget. In the light of that, will the Minister provide details of the major projects funded through the HACC program, and can she indicate how these priorities have been determined?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We have with us Mr Alan Lohf, Senior Finance Officer, from the Home and Community Care program, and I shall call on him to provide details. Before doing that, I point out that the total HACC funding in South Australia doubled from \$13.4 million in 1984-85 to \$26 million in 1988-89. Approximately 42 per cent was provided in that way by the State Government. Generally, 250 discrete projects have been funded. Funding has been made available to other State agencies. The higher South Australian emphasis on funding is in the area of the young disabled, the ethnic aged, country areas, and in the area of supporting people with dementia. There is a two-tier advisory mechanism—the central policy advisory committee, which is chaired by Judith Roberts, and 21 regional advisory committees. I now invite Mr Lohf to give details of the HAAC projects.

Mr Lohf: The member wants details of the projects that have been funded and the amount involved?

Mr ROBERTSON: Yes, and how the priorities have been determined.

Mr Lohf: The priorities are determined in several ways. Firstly, broad priorities are determined on the basis of which types of services should be funded. Those priorities are determined on the basis of advice received from advisory committees, which have very broad membership, including consumer representation. That is then translated into what is the best response in meeting the need for that particular type of service. Details on the approach that has been taken there are contained in the annual report. That provides details of priorities in the HACC program for the year and the approach taken in determining how priority needs will be addressed.

Mr ROBERTSON: At page 452 of the Program Estimates reference is made to preparation of a report on the forms of care and quality of care required for children with disabilities. Is that an HACC funded project? How extensive will that report be? This relates to the Substitute Family Care for Children program and respite care and substitute care for children with disabilities.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member is asking whether that program is funded under HACC or straight from the department?

Mr ROBERTSON: The Minister mentioned in her response that there was an emphasis on children with disabilities, and I am asking whether that report will be funded by HACC and what it will attempt to do.

Mr Lohf: It is not funded under the Home and Community Care program.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: So it therefore comes under the normal departmental line of funding; that will continue in future. I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that this is one of the specific targets and objectives

for the present financial year. This in fact relates to one of the commitments that have been made, namely, to prepare this report on the forms of care and quality of care required for children with disabilities. The report has not actually been funded at this point in terms of being completed.

Mr ROBERTSON: Still on this topic of HACC funding in this area, on the following page of the Program Estimates reference is made to a further \$150 000 having been set aside in last year's budget for expansion of home support services through HACC and it is stated that this has resulted in further preventing the unnecessary institutionalisation of frail aged and younger disabled people. What is the department's view on the necessity to keep children and young adults with intellectual disability in the family home? In this context, it is worth pointing out that the first generation of children who tended to stay home with their parents rather than go into institutions are now in young adulthood and their parents are correspondingly entering old age. What is the department's view in relation to maintaining the trend of keeping those young adults in the family home? How does the department propose to do that, as the parents are increasingly getting older and older and less capable of handling their offspring?

Mr Lohf: The Government's policy is certainly to maintain both the frail aged and, in this case, the young and disabled in the community environment rather than an institutional environment. One of the major thrusts of the Home and Community Care program funding is to provide support for that group to which you have referred. The so-called target group of the Home and Community Care program is the frail aged—those at risk of institutionalisation, the young and disabled and carers of both those groups. In the instance cited, the now older parents would obviously fall into the category of carers, and quite a substantial amount of the funding for Home and Community Care is directed at that group.

Mr ROBERTSON: It would be a recognition that that part of the budget could be expected to escalate as time went on, as the number of children who remain in the family home increases.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Approximately 36 per cent of new funding has been allocated for this purpose in recognition that most care and support is provided through the informal networks of families rather than by a more formal professional service delivery structure. There is a commitment not just from last year's budget of \$150 000 as the member highlighted, but also an ongoing commitment to increase the amount going to carers. So, there is a recognition of the invaluable role that carers play in maintaining people and children in their home environment rather than in the institutional environment of bygone times.

Mr ROBERTSON: Referring to the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, can the Minister provide some details of additional expenditure for that program last year and say what is proposed to be expended under that program in this year's allocation?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I have quite a detailed amount of figures relating to the SAAP expansion in 1987-88. The rental increase program-wide was \$68 138; operating costs increased, general, \$14 400; and the youth figure is \$8 000. There were a number of additional salary allocations, including the Salvation Army, the Adelaide Day Centre, St Vincent de Paul, Port Pirie Central Mission and others, amounting to \$34 005. Included in the area of women's additional salary allocations are Whyalla, Lower Eyre Peninsula, Port Augusta, North Adelaide and the Migrant Women's Emergency Services, totalling \$69 523.

In the youth area, St Vincent de Paul, St Stephens and Westcare received \$15 500, \$24 752 and \$12 375 respectively. These were joined by a number of other increases in salary allocations, including a commitment in the Riverland, to St John's Emergency Shelter for Youth, the Joyce Schultz Youth Shelter, Judith House for Women, and to a pilot program called Cheap, at Murray Bridge, totalling \$532 855.

The honourable member asked about the priorities. The SAAP current priorities for 1989 were agreed to as recently as at the end of July. They are for operating costs and a salary oncost review, rent, reviewing the WorkCover situation, replacement provisions of assets and equipment, a pre-commitment to an Aboriginal men's service in Port Augusta, and a commitment to single women as well as to Aboriginal women. A priority is also highlighted with regard to a recurrent training component within the department, staffing levels within the area of Youth SAAP and the general SAAP area, and a 24-hour service across the different programs. There is also a commitment to the provision of support and funding in domestic violence and in crisis care services, services for young women and in the rural domestic violence service, looking at the areas of Ceduna and Coober Pedy. I will ask the officer responsible for the non-government welfare area, Peter Bicknell, to comment.

Mr Bicknell: In terms of expansion funding for this year, the priorities read out by the Minister are now being considered and transferred into allocations. Recommendations will be made to the Minister within about six weeks. At the moment we are consulting with the advisory committees and service providers to consider what moneys will be allocated amongst those priorities. The amount to be allocated this year in expansion money will be \$750 000, which represents a substantial increase on last year. It appears that a number of the priorities will be able to be met, but maybe not all of them. However, it is important that a major review is undertaken in the Support Accommodation Assistance Program, looking particularly at oncosts and a review in the rent structure. This will be affected considerably by the recent review of community tenancy rents undertaken by the Housing Trust, which has changed the operating base for many SAAP programs.

In terms of the several newer initiatives, the department has a longstanding concern about domestic violence in relation to Aboriginal women, and at the moment we are consulting with the Aboriginal community to look at establishing under SAAP a domestic violence service for Aboriginal women in the metropolitan area of Adelaide. There has also been a longstanding concern about the needs of single women who may not necessarily be victims of domestic violence, and under IYSH the Government was able to provide funding for the building of a program called Catherine House under the auspice of Sisters of Mercy. The department is now looking under SAAP to currently fund that program. I understand that it is about to start functioning. It may have started last Monday with some funding from the Catholic Church. We have undertaken that we will fund that program and backdate the funding as of the starting day. The third program is for a service for Aboriginal men at Port Augusta.

Mr ROBERTSON: Looking at the area of young offenders, in the Program Estimates on page 446, under the heading 'Young Offenders', there is an allocation in the current budget of \$12.998 million. I note that that is a reduction from \$13.777 million, the allocation for the last financial year. Does that decrease represent a declining number of young offenders or some form of downgrading of the service?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That does not represent a downgrading of the service. It must be noted that there has been a very pleasing reduction of some 10 per cent of young people appearing before the Children's Court or children's aid panels, representing a decline of young offenders in our community.

However, the reduction of proposed expenditure is not due to that. Neither can it be said that the department has or will be downgrading the services to young offenders. The reduction in proposed expenditure is due to the separation out from the offender services—that component of the program which targetted at risk adolescents. In other words, the money shown under this line for the previous financial year has now been extracted and is being used to target at risk adolescents. It is an attempt to move towards a model which looks at prevention, those people at risk, to put funding towards targetting those groups rather than waiting until they become offenders and then spending money on them. I highlight the fact that there has been no diminution in the quality of programs and services on offer to young offenders.

The young offender program now deals only with young people specifically assigned to DCW programs by the courts to address their offending behaviour. Other at risk youth are catered for by the adolescent at risk program. Members will note that, while the reduction in young offenders expenditure is \$779 000, the increase in the adolescents at risk program is about \$3.34 million. This incorporates the neighbourhood youth program as well as the 20 full-time equivalent staff and operating resources transferred from the young offenders program. The department is targetting those young people at risk and providing the necessary resources to offer the kind of services and quality of service that the community would expect from the department.

Mr ROBERTSON: In short there has been a reduction of about \$750 000 in one program and an increase of about \$3.5 million in the other, and therefore it is up by about \$2.75 million?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes. It looks as though there has been a reduction in the amount we are putting into the area of young offenders. We are actually highlighting a model which would look at more intervention and prevention rather than waiting for people to offend and then offering programs.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Does the Minister intend to oversee the functions of the Department for Community Welfare from the present office in the Department of Water Resources?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am not in the Department of Water Resources. I have an office in the Department of Lands and we are currently ensuring that there are adequate facilities so that the various departments under my portfolios are properly serviced by me and my immediate staff. The new Citi Centre has a ministerial suite, and I will not have a separate office in that building. I have taken that decision because of the space requirement and a number of staff have to be placed within the building. It is important that those staff have adequate working areas and space. When the building was designed there was one Minister for the Health and Community Welfare portfolios. Currently there are two Ministers, and it is most appropriate for the Minister of Health to be allocated the ministerial suite and be in that area.

Nobody should infer that it is anything but a sensible decision on the part of the Minister. It has been organised that I will be visiting the department regularly. I will be using the office of the Chief Executive Officer and meeting with staff. In the short time that I have been Minister I

have met with a number of staff in the current DCW building, GRE House. I have indicated to those staff that they will be seeing a lot more of me when they move into their new premises. I have also visited one of our country offices at Berri, and I intend to visit a number of country offices soon.

If the honourable member's question is whether I am planning to have a hands-on approach and be closely involved with the operation of the department, the answer is 'Yes'. To have two or three ministerial office suites around a town the size of Adelaide would not be a sensible decision in these tight economic times, and I therefore feel very relaxed about the fact that I will be able to work out of the CEO's office when appropriate and speak with staff at their own work stations in their own working environment.

Mr S.G. EVANS: His Excellency, in opening Parliament, noted that the Government plans a major revision of the Community Welfare Act 'to improve the quality of social justice for all South Australians'. Who has been appointed to undertake this review and what are the terms of reference? What are the Minister's objections to the objectives and provisions of the present Act?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will refer the question to Ms Leah Mann.

Ms Mann: No review is being undertaken presently on the Community Welfare Act. There has been a series of reviews over the past two or three years and a series of community-wide consultations from which the proposed amendments to the Community Welfare Act are being derived. Members would be aware of the recent amendments to the Childrens Protection and Young Offenders Act, and as a consequence of that legislation anomalies now exist between that Act and the Community Welfare Act. Such anomalies need to be addressed. Over the past 18 months we have had wide consultation on substitute care, and on the basis of those consultations, on advice from people in the non-government sector, departmental staff and from families with children in our care, we will be seeking to amend and move forward the legislation from the direction that it was going in the early 1980s when at that time the provisions seemed appropriate, but they are no longer appropriate.

We are looking at ways of increasing the optimism of families when they have their children come under our care. We are looking for a provision for shorter term orders so that families will see the light at the end of the tunnel and be optimistic about having their child returned to them. If that does not work out there will be longer term orders so that the child's welfare can be considered in the most positive terms and longer term planning will be available. A number of other areas of child protection also need to be addressed.

Some of these issues arise out of the Sexual Assault Task Force Report which made recommendations in relation to child protection panels. Similarly, there has been very wide consultation in the areas of child protection and the amendments we are proposing derive from that. There are a series of amendments to the existing Act. There was no particular review but a series of reviews over the past few years and a series of community discussion papers from which we will be putting forward the proposed amendments.

Mr S.G. EVANS: On page 444 the document states that expenditure provisions for council rates and taxes concessions have been increased by \$1.461 million to \$25.816 million. What is the basis of this increased expenditure? Is it the increase in the number of persons eligible for the concession or a change in the guidelines, or will it totally

be used in taking up the increase that might occur in local government rates?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr Boxhall to respond to that question.

Mr Boxhall: The \$1.4 million represents the inflation factor that Treasury provides across our total budget, which is 6 per cent for this financial year, so that that is a 6 per cent increase on last year's actual expenditure. This line is very difficult to budget for early in the year, because it depends on the demand during the year for rates remission. We find that each year we have an increased expenditure, because more people are getting to the maximum value of that concession, which is \$150 for the council rates remission, and \$150 for E&WS Department rates. At this stage it is unusual for us, in a given year, to actually need all that inflationary provision, but Treasury provides that for us in the event that it will be required.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Are emergency financial assistance transactions and records being computerised as part of the Justice Information System to help detect fraudulent use, and is it envisaged that only recipients of the assistance from the Department for Community Welfare will be incorporated into the system, or will it be all persons who receive such assistance, including assistance from Government-funded programs operated by non-government agencies?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The answer is 'Yes', but I will ask Mr Boxhall to elaborate.

Mr Boxhall: When the JIS was established it was proposed that emergency financial assistance be computerised as part of that system. It is still early days in determining just what will be computerised. We have started to work through the current procedures for assessing and paying that assistance and are starting to put it in a way in which it could be computerised when a decision is made to do so. I think it will be several years at least, before we make detailed decisions on that.

The department would be interested in computerising it, to see whether there is a need to check how EFA is being paid and whether it is being abused in any way, but it also gives us the opportunity to have an idea of which clients are coming to our department and which categories of client are looking for assistance in that particular program. As a department, we do not have any involvement at this stage with the non-government bodies who also handle emergency relief, so no thought has been given to including them in the computerisation at this stage of our planning.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: The Program Estimates at page 444 show an increase of \$1.8 million or 23 per cent in proposed expenditure in providing substitute family care for children. This is a very healthy increase. Can the Minister give more detail about that program?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Some of this is the effect of the program transfers and reapportionment of the field clerical time to which, again, I alluded in my introductory comments. It now better reflects and therefore informs people as to how much time is actually spent in providing substitute care. In terms of real increases, more field time is being spent on this work. In relation to the full year effect of expansion funds to the non-government sector, there is an increase in subsidy payment to foster families and residential facilities, and an internal reallocation this year.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: Both the Program Estimates at page 449 and the Auditor-General's Report refer to savings made from reviewing the eligibility of pensioners for concessions. What eligibility reviews have been undertaken? Can the Minister assure the Committee that the various concessions will continue to be available to those who need them?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am aware that a number of eligibility reviews have taken place, as highlighted in the Auditor-General's Report. To give specific details of those reviews, I ask Mr Boxhall to flesh out the answer.

Mr Boxhall: A procedure has been arranged with the Electricity Trust, which keeps the computer records of concessions, and with the E&WS Department for the comparable rates remission concessions so that they are able to check whether recipients for concessions are still eligible, because our eligibility requirements are largely determined by people's eligibility for pensions and benefits through social security. For the past couple of years we have been able to do matching runs on computer systems to check whether people are still getting their social security entitlements and are therefore still eligible for the State Government concessions.

If there appears to be some *prima facie* reason why a person might not be eligible, that is followed up by the department asking people to explain whether they retain eligibility and, if it is shown that that is not the case, the concession is stopped. That program has highlighted a relatively small number of people who, just through failure on our part to keep the records up to date in the past, have continued to receive the concession. Through being able to make sure that the records are up to date, there is a recurring saving to the budget of about \$400 000 a year.

I guess the other part of the honourable member's question is answered by saying that we are only reviewing whether people remain eligible, and there is no intention of restricting the access to those concessions of people who meet those criteria.

The Hon. R.K. ABBOTT: There will be a continual review?

Mr Boxhall: Yes, we do it quarterly just to make sure that someone who has ceased to be eligible does not remain on the system. That is something we have been able to develop in conjunction with the E&WS Department, which started the process. The Auditor-General's people saw it and encouraged us to go down that track, and we now have it as a quarterly review process.

Mr D.S. BAKER: At page 449 of the Program Estimates under the heading '1988-89 specific targets/objectives', there appears the following statement:

Assist in the establishment of particular concessions initiatives. Can the Minister say what is contemplated by that statement and whether it is expected that the transport concessions will be extended to include all retired people over 60 years of age?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member quoted the target for this year. A number of new initiatives are contemplated, but they do not include the extension of transport concessions to all retired people whether or not they are pensioners. That is not the intention of the department. In fact, such a move would be counter to the continued investigation of how to direct concessions to those persons considered most in need, because those most in need are those to whom this initiative is targeted. To open transport concessions to all retired people would be contrary to that specific objective. After all, some retired people in our community are incredibly wealthy and this objective does not include such people. Rather, it targets direct concessions away from the wealthy.

Mr D.S. BAKER: There are some retired people who are not wealthy.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That may be correct, but we cannot open up the whole field of transport concessions to all retired people without some form of means testing. Many people in our community are incredibly poor and it would be agreed by both sides of Parliament that such people

should be targeted. The Government is considering other initiatives and probably one member of this Committee (the former Minister of Mines and Energy) could say quite a bit about energy concession because he was involved in developing it. I do not wish to take the time of the Committee in discussing that in great detail, but I will ask Mr Boxhall to elaborate on the concessions involved here.

Mr Boxhall: The concession referred to by the Minister follows our concern that the existing electricity concession does not always help those most in need and who find themselves faced with a heavy electricity bill which they cannot pay immediately. The former Minister of Mines and Energy appointed a working party to consider the whole question of tariffs and pricing structures with the object of helping low income families. It is pleasing to all concerned that the Electricity Trust in particular has been most responsive in considering ways in which it could help low income families with perhaps a significant concession or some other form of help. Indeed, the officers of ETSA have been most cooperative in this matter. It may well be that the new Minister of Mines and Energy will have the glory of announcing a new special scheme in this area.

Mr D.S. BAKER: That is the only concession initiative that has been proposed for the next 12 months?

Mr Boxhall: That is the only one which I am aware is being considered at present.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is appropriate that the appropriate Minister respond on this matter. That will be an incredibly significant initiative and it is appropriate that we recognise that it has been publicly canvassed by the former Minister of Mines and Energy and that it has met with much understanding and support from people working in the areas concerned that come across people who get behind in their payments because of a large bill, and it becomes a vicious circle. The member for Mitchell wished to help people get out of that position and I intend that such people are offered the kind of financial counselling that the department has developed as an important comprehensive service. We are not just talking about giving money to people in this predicament: we are giving them ongoing support in managing their finances. Indeed, some of these people are managing on an incredibly low income for a family unit.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Last year, a stated initiative was to investigate the impact of the proposed Australia Card and other Commonwealth Government initiatives on State concessions. Was such an investigation undertaken and, if it was, will the Minister release a copy of that report? As the section headed '1988-89 Specific Targets/Objectives' does not include reference to an investigation of the impact of the Commonwealth Government's current proposal to enforce a wider and more vigorous use of the tax file numbers, does the Minister consider that this new proposal will not have the same or similar impact on the recipients of concessions as was predicted in respect of the Australia Card?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We do not have an Australia Card. It would be most appropriate if the officer of the department involved in such a review answered that question, as I was not Minister during the last financial year. I will ask Mr Boxhall to reply.

Mr Boxhall: I guess that our review has become a watching brief on what is happening concerning the final details of proposals of the Commonwealth Government and to assess the impact of those proposals on State concessions, so no report has been prepared. At this stage we will not take action until we receive the details of the alternative to the Australia Card. We have kept abreast of Commonwealth policies in the whole income security area and a group of

senior officers from all the State Community Welfare Departments talks regularly with Commonwealth officers about the impact of changes in pensions, benefits, and which people should receive such benefits. We are encouraging the Commonwealth Government to consider the impact of such changes on State concessions.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The Chief Executive Officer may wish to comment further.

Ms Vardon: We have no intention of using a tax file number. We have been satisfied with using the pensioner's health benefit card. As Mr Boxhall pointed out, discussions have been held with the Commonwealth in this area. The State does not want to develop its own assessment procedure because that would be costly, so we would like to hitch ourselves to the Commonwealth assessment form. There have been problems with that because every time the Commonwealth opens up a new group for eligibility to use the pensioners health benefit card the State has automatically had to pick up that new group of customers. That has meant that we have not had much control over the money that we would like to re-target to people perhaps in greater need. However, at present we are continuing to negotiate on the pensioner's health benefit card and that will continue always, we hope, to be the form of access to our concessions.

Mr D.S. BAKER: For many years the Family Maintenance Branch was responsible for the collection and distribution of child maintenance payments from noncustodial parents. The record of the branch in relation to collections was excellent, particularly when compared with interstate services, recording a 70 per cent success rate compared with 27 per cent interstate. The dismal interstate record prompted the Federal Government with the concurrence of all State Governments to establish a new child maintenance authority based at Treasury on 1 June.

An article in the *Advertiser* of 10 September noted that 47 per cent of non-custodial parents registered with the new child support agency in August had failed to make their payments. The shadow Minister of Community Welfare has received numerous calls from anxious custodial parents who have not received payments. They and their children find they are worse off financially because of the new taxing arrangements that now apply.

Is the Minister or her department maintaining an oversight of the new child maintenance arrangements to ensure that the scheme meets, not aggravates, its desired aim to help eliminate child poverty by the year 1990? Is the Minister aware of the number of non-custodial parents in South Australia who are registered with the CSA but have not made their payments? What arrangements apply for custodial parents who separated before 1 June 1988?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: This whole question of the establishment of the Child Support Agency, as the honourable member has highlighted, is a Federal initiative and therefore the Federal Government would have access to most of this information. I am aware that since this question has been highlighted in the community—particularly by the Federal Government taking this initiative, which has been applauded across Australia—the Department for Community Welfare in South Australia has had an increase of the number of people seeking details about the scheme and help and support to ensure that they are now able to get maintenance.

It has highlighted for the department at State level the fact that a large number of people—particularly women, as it is mostly women who are custodial parents, who have received absolutely nothing in the past—now feel that some sort of justice will be done for them and that they will have access to a form of maintenance. The member of the depart-

ment who has been working most closely in this area and who would have the answers to some of the honourable member's questions is Mr Boxhall and I will ask him to answer as many of the questions as he can.

Mr Boxhall: I am able to respond to most of the member's questions. It is true that the South Australian Family Maintenance Service, which is largely Commonwealth funded, has had a much better success rate in enforcing maintenance orders and agreements than had been experienced nationally. To a large extent the architects of the Commonwealth scheme took a particular interest in the South Australian arrangements, visited us quite regularly and continued to follow up on a number of detailed matters. About eight of our officers—that is, about 20 per cent of the people who work in this area—were offered jobs and decided to transfer to the Commonwealth Child Support Agency. My department facilitated that arrangement to enable the new agency—at least in South Australia—to carry forward some of the experience that has been built up in this State over the years. We have a continuing interest in liaising with these officers and a few of them still work out of the DCW central office.

As the Minister mentioned, our workload has been increasing rather than declining. I was given some figures today which suggest that we have increased our workload in the family maintenance area by 27 per cent in the period September 1987 to July 1988. That is a reflection of people wanting to get their maintenance arrangements up to date or in place in conjunction with the transfer to the Child Support Agency. I have not seen any figures about the number of non-custodial parents in South Australia who have registered with the agency. I think that we will be able to obtain that information and advise the honourable member.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Those figures are, of course, Federal figures. If we can obtain them from the relevant Federal agency in time to insert them into *Hansard*, we will be pleased to do so, but when you are dealing with another Government you cannot always have complete control over, and make decisions about, the kinds of information that it wishes to release.

Mr Boxhall: I will also get details of the arrangements which currently apply for custodial parents who separated before 1 June.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I refer to page 451 of the Program Estimates. I commend the department and the Ministers involved for the statement under the heading 'Broad Objective(s) Goal(s)' which states:

To enable individuals and families who seek help to function in society to the best of their ability, and to preserve, strengthen and, where possible, restore the family unit; by counselling, advising and assisting families and individuals in need and by identifying and developing community support.

That is a very succinct and excellent choice of words which describes the department's goals very well. Under the heading 'Issues/Trends' it is stated that:

Users of the Financial Counselling Service have traditionally been pensioners and low income earners. However there is an increasing number of people on 'middle incomes' who have excessive debt and who are now seeking professional help from financial counsellors.

Does the Minister have any figures or statistics on the proportions contained in the overall figure of 3 754 clients and whether there are any plans to highlight the dangers of entering into debt beyond one's resources, which is now inveigling people on middle incomes into this parlous position which has been outlined in the information before us?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for his acknowledgment and recognition of not only the broad objectives and goals of the department but some of

the strategies which it has adopted to meet those objectives and goals. It is always gratifying for people working very hard in a department to receive some recognition—particularly from the Parliament—of the work that they do. I am sure that all members of the staff of the DCW will be gratified when they read the words of the honourable member. So often people are only prepared to criticise and do not acknowledge some of the positive initiatives.

I do not have a detailed breakdown of the number of middle income earners who have found themselves in over their heads, but I will be pleased to get those figures for the honourable member. Before handing over to the Chief Executive Officer, I would like to say that I am aware of the many programs and the public information that has been used to highlight the fact that people can get into debt by over-using and over-relying on credit cards particularly. I am aware that my Federal colleague, the Minister for Consumer Affairs, the Hon Nick Bolkus, has run a number of campaigns and has quite often spoken out in the media to try to highlight to people how important it is to ensure that they do not use their credit cards irresponsibly or that they do not get carried away with wanting something and putting it on credit card.

Of course, a number of other campaigns have been mounted, and particularly in the non-government sector. From memory, I think The Mission has been involved publicly in counselling people and acknowledging the dangers to families and the pitfalls involved in what is now becoming a credit society. We have always been a consumer society but we are now becoming both consumer and credit oriented in the way in which we purchase goods and services. I ask the Chief Executive Officer to comment further on the points raised in the honourable member's question.

Ms Vardon: We have recently upgraded what we used to call the Budget Advice Service to a Financial Counselling Service. The purpose of this upgrade was to move away from just being a client service, which is still important, but to incorporate community education as part of the objectives, and to do that well. The department with the support of our ministers has placed a major emphasis on increasing the consumers' understanding of debt. We have put our money where our mouth is. We have trained our people on the ground to issue people with resource kits about debt. We have issued about 5 000 resource kits. Staff are giving talks in all the schools that invite them and to any other social groups where they are invited. We have allocated \$30 000 to the Ethnic Community Council to develop an ethnic media campaign to tell people for whom English is not a first language about the dangers of getting into debt. We work very closely with other State departments. We have representatives on a working party which has been convened by the Attorney-General and which is looking at the causes of debt and over-commitment and means to address them.

We work very hard with all the other non-government agencies. We are now putting our information and statistics together for the first time so that we will get a comprehensive picture of how many people across South Australia are going to counselling services. I think that in many ways it has been the DCW's financial counsellors who have contributed to some of the public debate that is going on now. We attend national forums and present papers on debt. We consider it to be one of the most important jobs that we do, and we will continue to do it.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I appreciate very much the breadth of that answer. It is reassuring to know that approaches are being made at the level of youth, where prevention at that stage might lessen problems in future. I

refer to the Substitute Family Care for Children Program (page 452 of the Program Estimates) and to the 1988-89 specific targets/objectives, one of which stipulates:

Following consultation, to formulate and implement a policy statement which outlines the directions for substitute care services and addresses achieving permanence for children.

With whom is it proposed that consultation will take place? Secondly, I realise that the Minister has been in this portfolio for a very short time, but has she been able to give any thought to this area? Has she any preferences for the directions that such substitute care might take?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: A policy discussion paper called 'Substitute Care and Planning for Permanence' has been released. Obviously, that paper has been provided, but, in answer to the member's question, consultations regarding the paper are occurring within both the Government and non-government sectors and, importantly, within the Aboriginal community as well. I think that is something that needs to be focussed on and highlighted. A substitute care manual, covering principles, standards of practice, standard procedures and practical guidelines, has been developed as a joint Government and non-government initiative. That also is very important. I have the manual here with me. It is very detailed, and looks at all these principles of establishing the way in which substitute care should be decided on and how it should be implemented. I invite Ms Leah Mann to comment further on the directions that the department is considering in respect of substitute care.

Ms Mann: I think I mentioned earlier in response to a question about amendments to the Community Welfare Act that one of the problems we have at the moment is that the range of orders available through the Children's Court is fairly restrictive and orders are not always available in a way that makes the best decision for permanency planning for a child. In relation to permanency planning, where there are families with children we first do an enormous amount of work in helping families better manage their parenting task and to provide, from within their own families, the appropriate care for children. As we all know, that is not always possible, and despite all the efforts that are made there are occasions when children need to be placed with other families as an alternative. Initially, when a child is placed it is our goal that such a child be temporarily placed and then returned to his or her family as soon as possible. At the moment we have had variable success with that.

Similarly, because we are not able to have sufficient long-term orders, where it is clear from working with a family that it might not be possible to return a child in the long term, we would like to have better opportunities to make long-term arrangements so that a child knows that he or she will be in a stable and caring family for a long period of time and also so that the foster family knows that the child will stay with them for a longer period of time. That avoids a child being in limbo and it also avoids the possibility of a child having placements with a series of families. So, the permanency planning principle is really about making sure that children, whether in their own family or the other families, are cared for in a stable and ongoing environment, with as little disruption to their care as possible. That is the goal we are seeking to achieve.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: In relation to the Community Participation in Welfare Program (page 455 of the Program Estimates), a 1988-89 specific target/objective is that:

The model for consumer and community participation will be implemented, monitored and evaluated at the Elizabeth Community Welfare Centre and will form the basis of the program to be implemented across all units.

I welcome this approach in the delivery of welfare services. A further target/objective is:

All units will change one aspect of service delivery at the local level based on user feedback.

I suspect that the Minister would be able to provide additional details to the Committee on this very exciting and innovative topic.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I ask the programs director, Ms Mann to answer that question.

Ms Mann: This is the year that we have decided to place a major focus on consumers and client service. One of the things of which we are all aware is that it is very important for people who are recipients of services to also have a say in the nature of the service that they get. We have tried different models over the years to have consumer participation in both the planning and delivery of community welfare services. We have certainly found that some of the models, where we have had publicity and where we have asked people to attend to raise their issues of concern, have not been effective.

So, we have been looking at a number of alternative models. We have set each office the objective, that they should identify within their own community their most appropriate way to get feedback from their clients. They should similarly act upon that so that they change their service in one of the major things in a way that responds to what the clients are saying. There will be a range of changes in response to this consumer feedback and we will have a better idea 12 months from now when the district officers are able to report back to us on what the consumer participation has been.

In addition, we are also setting up for the first time a consumer advocacy program. We have set up within the department a senior planner for consumer advocacy and participation. This officer's role is twofold. The first is to ensure that, where a client is dissatisfied with a departmental service, the client is made aware of the processes by which they can have that dissatisfaction addressed. In other words, it is taken up with the local person first, then with the most senior person in that office, up the hierarchy to the Director and ultimately to the Minister. Through that process the consumer advocate is there to assist a client who is dissatisfied with the service. As members would be aware, many of our clients are not always most comfortable in dealing with big agencies when taking on the authority as they may see it. We have set up this person to fulfil the role that will assist the people to take up their complaints. The second role is to provide advice and consultation to the various officers whom I mentioned earlier on how they might get consumer participation in their services. It is in relation to this Elizabeth project that the consumer advocate has developed, together with the Elizabeth staff, as a trial project.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I welcome that, and I suspect also that Mr Peter Bicknell had those same goals and objectives when he was a district officer. We discussed it at that time, and it is really great to see it come to fruition.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would be quite happy to concur in that statement; it shows that change does happen, albeit sometimes more slowly than we would like. The honourable member, who was a former Minister of this department, has acknowledged the work of one of the members who is here today in another role. I thank him for that. Once again, it is really important to acknowledge the work that people do within the department and the way in which things are followed through.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: My question is supplementary to one asked by the member for Mitchell. Can the Minister clarify what appears to be a contradiction between the answer to the member for Mitchell in respect of longer stays for children in foster care and a degree of permanency

in respect of their placement, and the answer by Ms Mann to an earlier question by the member for Davenport with respect to the revision of the Community Welfare Act, in which Ms Mann said the revision would be looking at ways to increase the optimism of families through shorter term orders for foster care.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: There is no conflict. Ms Mann was saying that it gives the Children's Court a greater flexibility. Initially, the department says that it would like short-term placement orders which would enable the department to work very closely with the family from which the child came so that every attempt to re-establish the child in that family could be made. I do not believe that anyone in the community would disagree with that, because that is fundamentally the principle and philosophy under which the department operates. However, if it becomes apparent that this situation will not be resolved in the long term after intensive counselling and working with the family, rather than having the child 'in limbo' (I think that was the term used), where the court cannot really make a long-term placement in the interim, it will provide the court with the flexibility of a long-term order.

Surely the good of the child has to be considered and, in consideration of the child's future, it must be taken into account that there needs to be longer-term planning. The term is a 'permanency planning principle', so the child can then be placed with a foster family which knows that the child will be there until whatever age the court has decided. Long-term planning for the child can be undertaken, and this gives the child a sense of security and of belonging. It would hopefully minimise the situation of a child going from one foster family to another, something that has happened in the past. I am not talking so much about the immediate past, but people whom I have met through my work have been in a number of foster homes, because nobody took that decision initially to say that the family might not want the child back. So, continuing to have short-term orders made is not in the best interests.

Most importantly, it is not in the best interests of the child, and that is one of the department's fundamental principles. I will ask Leah Mann to comment further on that, because that is an area that she has been working in very intensely. It is an important issue, and it is important that we do not get into a situation where people misunderstand or misinterpret what is being said and what are the intentions and objectives of such a discussion.

Ms Mann: I think the Minister has answered it very fully. I am not sure that I could add to that very excellent answer.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: From page 452 of the Program Estimates under 'Major resource variation for 1987-88 and 1988-89', it is noted that the children's payments rates will increase by \$350 000. What is the total amount allocated to subsidy payments to persons providing foster care? Does the increase of \$350 000 reflect an anticipated increase in the number of children in foster care or an increase in the level of payments to foster parents? What is the anticipated number of children to be supported under foster care schemes during the current financial year, both departmental and private placements?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That is really an important question. It is an increase in the level of payments, not an anticipated increase in the number of children who will be needing foster care. The figure that the member was looking for is about 1 200, which is a stable figure. The annual CPI figure has to be taken into account as well as those on-costs.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: Last Sunday the television program *60 Minutes* featured a family's encounter with the

Department for Community Welfare and the Children's Court following the notification that a babysitter suspected from a drawing by one daughter that both daughters had been sexually abused by their father. Is the Minister concerned about the recent finding by a judge of the Children's Court that some DCW workers were encouraging children to describe not facts but fantasies, or does she endorse the statement by the Acting Director-General on the *60 Minutes* program that, 'It is a nice and convenient excuse in some situations that children are fantasising.'

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am aware of the program last week. I have a copy of the judgment brought down in the case. I have studied that judgment in great detail. Before specifically answering the honourable member's question, I point out that, from thoroughly reading the 36 page judgment, I found nowhere in the judgment the senior judge of the Children's Court making any criticism of the Department for Community Welfare. I would hope that the honourable member would acknowledge that there is not one word of criticism about any officer of the Department for Community Welfare or of the department itself. I am not being critical of the honourable member, because anyone who has not read the judgment but who watched the program last Sunday could be forgiven for thinking that the whole judgment revolved around criticism of the department and its officers. Nothing could be further from the truth. I certainly do not support the premise that DCW officers are encouraging children to make up stories about experiences involving any form of abuse, including sexual abuse. Indeed, I support the comments of the Acting Director-General, who is here with us today.

With some of the questions being put by the investigative journalist from *60 Minutes*, I raise the question of why officers of the department would want to ascertain if child sexual abuse is taking place if it is not. It is certainly not in the interests of the department for it to be creating an enormous workload. More importantly, I put that case and the allegations about the department into context. The Children's Court makes the decision about 'in need of care' applications. The department does not make those decisions. If we look at the record in the Children's Court, from 1 January 1986 up until the case about which we are talking, the statistics are relevant. There have been 378 cases brought before the Children's Court as 'in need of care' applications. Those 378 cases involved 505 children. If one had watched the *60 Minutes* program one would have thought that almost every second case was dismissed, that the evidence was flimsy, that the department was bringing cases willy-nilly and that they were being rejected or dismissed by the court. The reality is far from that. Of these 378 cases involving 505 children since 1 January 1986 only two cases involving four children have been dismissed.

I spoke with the producer and the journalist involved—Jennifer Byrne of *60 Minutes*. I offered to appear on the program as the Minister as it is an important policy area for this Government in terms of the protection and care of children. Obviously, she did not wish me to appear. I asked whether she was going to put the program into the context of what has happened within the whole framework through the Children's Court. I was told that they do not use statistics. It is important, if we are going to raise this whole question in the political context, that every member of Parliament does so with the facts and figures before them and not simply raise it in an emotional way based on a program that rejected every attempt to provide some balance. The program did not show any families whose children had been sexually abused and where 'in need of care' orders were not dismissed with those children being removed

from a situation of continued abuse and a situation of being powerless. Whilst this is a sensitive and complex issue and provokes emotional responses from a wide cross-section of people, we have to look at it calmly and within the context of reality.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: I refer to page 457 of the Program Estimates where reference is made to the data base notification of child abuse. During the Estimates Committee last September questions were asked about whether all notifications of alleged child abuse were retained on file and, if so, for how long the entry is maintained. In response Mr Rod Squires on behalf of the Minister, stated:

Currently we must determine how long the names of children will remain on the notification index and registration index. We have not yet firmed up the time period. We need to address these issues and finalise the time period by about the end of November this year.

On 2 March this year in the Legislative Council the former Minister advised that he remained unhappy with the current data base, which he considered was too excessive. He went on to advise that new guidelines would be promulgated and put to Cabinet for formal adoption on or before 30 June. Have the new guidelines been presented to and approved by Cabinet? If so, what are they? If not, when will they be adopted, and has work commenced on incorporating the data base on child abuse notifications and registrations into the Justice Information System?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer of the department to answer.

Ms Vardon: We have a number of registers, but I believe the honourable member was referring to the maltreaters register involving those suspected or nominated as persons who may have abused a child. All of those issues have been part of the whole reform of our child protection statistical collection and the transfer of that on to the Justice Information System data base. We have made defunct the maltreater register. The whole of the program of statistics is being reset and we have a user committee working with the justice information people. We hope to have that up by about the middle of next year.

There will be a complete cleanout of the whole system and questions about how long a child's name stays on will be fixed by them as we are applying great rigour to the new system. The existing computer system being what it is, a complete wipeout or deletion of sections of it at this stage is impossible, because it is an old fashioned computer system. All we can do, as we have done with the maltreater register, is make it defunct or disappear. The information is in the machines but we are not accessing it. We have eliminated the register but have to get all information out of the machines and will do that when the new system is set up.

The JIS people are now working out with us guidelines for confidentiality in access. The guidelines about the maltreater register are clear. We do not keep that information and do not have it accessible to anyone, but the other guidelines as to privacy and access and how long people stay on are still being negotiated. Hopefully, this time next year we will be able to say that it is all clear. It has taken a little longer to get on to the JIS than we thought. Last year we thought that by this time it would all be fixed, but it has been quite complicated because the system is unique. We are going well and we hope that it will not be too long. We do not plan on registering maltreaters in the new system as a list or any sort of register. Individual maltreaters may be on individual case files, but will not be accessible as a list. There is no way we will access alleged offenders.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: Under the program entitled 'Individual and Family Support', the Program Estimates at

page 451 deal with financial counselling. In 1987-88, \$100 000 was distributed to six non-government agencies to provide financial counselling services. On 29 March this year the former Minister acknowledged that the allocations were made notwithstanding the fact that no specific call for submissions was made. In 1988-89, how much of the proposed expenditure of \$432 000 for financial counselling services is to be allocated to services operated by the non-government sector?

Does the Minister propose to call for submissions from non-government agencies before these grants are allocated, and does she propose to maintain the current guidelines for determining the allocation of funds for financial counselling services operated by the non-government sector which, in part, includes a reference that it appears desirable to acknowledge funds to agencies with an existing knowledge base in financial counselling and a capacity to expand their current operations?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr Bicknell to answer these questions.

Mr Bicknell: Last year, the Government allocated \$100 000 for financial counselling for the non-government sector, and that was allocated for a half year. This year that \$100 000 will be allocated for the full year. We are not calling for submissions for that, because we are continuing the allocations we made last year. With 6 per cent inflation added to the figures, these are as follows: \$20 000 to the Bowden and Brompton Mission; \$20 000 to the Noarlunga Community Legal Service; \$20 000 to the Norwood Community Legal Service; \$15 000 to SACOSS; and \$5 000 for training.

Last year, because the money was available as a full financial year but allocated after the budget, there were considerable savings, which were allocated as one-off cash allocations rather than recurrent expenditure. Those allocations were as follows: Adelaide Central Mission, \$19 880; the Ethnic Community Council, as the Chief Executive Officer said earlier, to conduct an ethnic media campaign, \$30 000; and a series of Aboriginal Programs were funded, particularly to run home management courses for Aboriginal women, and those were the Far West Aboriginal Progress Association, Kura Yerlo at Largs Bay, the Aboriginal Community Affairs Panel at Port Augusta and the Port Lincoln Aboriginal Organisation.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: I have a supplementary question. Does the Minister not agree that the financial counselling service operated by the Adelaide Central Mission is a most appropriate and worthy agency for the receipt of grant funds under this program?

Mr Bicknell: Perhaps I could answer that in terms of the department rather than the Minister. The previous Minister, on the advice of the department, took the point of view that the initial allocation of \$100 000 should be used to expand the client contact with financial counselling services. That is why there was an attempt to fund organisations which were not currently in the field of financial counselling. The department recognises that the Adelaide Central Mission runs a very important financial counselling service and, in fact, the mission made a submission to us for more than the \$100 000 that we had to allocate.

Recently there have been further discussions with the Adelaide Central Mission about its financial counselling service, and the department is currently considering a further submission from it. At this stage it is too early to indicate the outcome of that submission, except to say that the department gives very high priority to the maintenance of the Adelaide Central Mission's program and will consider its recent submission.

The Adelaide Central Mission is a very effective advocate for clients because of the strong moral base they have as an important non-government agency in this town so, whilst we did not allocate expansion money to it out of the last round of funding because we sought to expand the services that were available to clients, nonetheless we recognise the importance of the Adelaide Central Mission's program and are currently having discussions with the mission as to ways of ensuring that that program continues.

Mr ROBERTSON: On Keith Conlon's talk show this morning, Keith's guest was Eric Willmot from the Australia National University. Eric Willmot is famous for a number of things, but primarily as possibly our foremost Aboriginal academic. He made the point that the only part of Australia where Aborigines generally were statistically indiscernible from the rest of the population was in the Australia Capital Territory, where levels of crime, health and employment were the same. The clear implication of this is that, if people have access to adequate jobs as most of the Aboriginal public servants have in Canberra, they will not be manifested in other types of social indicators. In other words, if they are paid and treated the same, the kids will tend to behave the same as the rest of the community. In this context I note that at page 458 of the Program Estimates, under 'Young Offenders Program' in respect of the targets and objectives for 1988-89, the following statement appears:

Low rates of participation of Aboriginal children in existing community programs in the metropolitan area.

I should have thought that in the context of what Eric Willmot said that statement was rather sad. How does that augur for the future? I am drawing on the assumption that social indicators tend to be indicators of wealth and opportunity. What does the department conclude from the low rates of participation among Aboriginal kids in the city in the various community programs that have been set up to aid young offenders?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to answer the question, but it would be my understanding that what the honourable member says is correct. On the face of it, programs offered in the past have obviously not been appropriate to the desires, needs and interests of Aboriginal youth.

Ms Vardon: This relates especially to our great concern about the level of participation of Aborigines in institutions. Aboriginal children are more likely to be placed in institutions than are white children—up to 28 per cent of young people locked up. We have satisfactory community program alternatives for white kids and we have been concerned that the Aborigines have not been comfortable in those programs and that the programs have not been able to be used as a diversion from lock-up. However, we have been able to get successful Aboriginal type community programs going, and this year we intend to have an all-out blitz on the figures for Aboriginal kids in lock up and to get appropriate Aboriginal community programs.

So, we have deployed a couple of staff to get a program off the ground. We have had some successful boat building programs, which we still have, whereby Aboriginal people are employed. In the last year we had a number of Aboriginal young people build a house boat on the Murray River. That was highly successful and most of those Aborigines are employed as a result of that. We have a better rate of getting Aboriginal offenders employed than has any other State once we get them into a work development opportunity.

We have increased the number of Aborigines in the intensive neighbourhood care program (INC). We used to have two INC sets of foster parents: now we have 22. Those INC

parents concentrate on helping Aboriginal children get work or stay at school. So, there is an all-out attempt throughout our system this year to ensure that we bring the numbers at institutions right down and into the community programs, so we are putting on special staff. We will ensure that they are work oriented. In the department we believe philosophically that work and work skills are the best way out of the poverty trap and the offending trap.

Mr ROBERTSON: So the department is taking a lead. At page 453 of the Program Estimates, we are told that 15 children previously employed under Commonwealth funded programs have gained mainstream employment in the department. Obviously, that is a case of leading by example.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The people who were referred to by the Chief Executive Officer and who are involved in this program are themselves Aborigines. Perhaps past programs have not been appropriate to meet the needs, aspirations and interests of Aboriginal youth and I believe that the departmental programs are succeeding and will succeed even more because they are using Aborigines themselves to find out what Aboriginal youth want to be involved in in terms of the kind of work programs that have just been outlined to the Committee.

Mr ROBERTSON: My second question concerns domestic violence. At page 455 of the Program Estimates, it is stated that, in 1987-88, funding was allocated for the production of a film on child sexual abuse and that, in this year's program, funding has been set aside for a film on domestic violence. So, two films will have been made within two years, one on child sexual abuse and the other on violence.

At page 459 of the Program Estimates, we are told that a program was established last year in the Riverland, presumably to set up a group of young males who were having problems controlling their tempers. What was the upshot of that program? How much focus in these films and the other effects referred to is being directed to young males as perpetrators of violence?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member referred to the making of films, but I tend to identify them as videos. I launched the video 'The Secret', which was aimed at promoting discussion and being used as an educative tool in the whole question of child sexual abuse. That is an excellent video in addressing the broad issues of the whole question. Regarding domestic violence generally, I will ask the Coordinator of the Domestic Violence Prevention Unit to answer the question and to give the Committee further information on the work of that unit.

Ms O'Loughlin: The Domestic Violence Prevention Unit, through the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee, is setting up regional councils to consider domestic violence in country areas and to ensure that adequate training is given to service deliverers so that they can deal appropriately both with victims and with perpetrators. We are especially concerned that young men still seem to be getting into the cycle of violence, and that perpetuates it for the next generation. We are also concerned that people be given adequate opportunity for the change necessary to break the cycle.

Mr ROBERTSON: There is an increasing number of single parent families, headed by a woman rather than a man, and that must worry people in the field, especially when adolescent children tend to beat up their mothers. This seems to be a growing problem.

Ms O'Loughlin: Yes. That is why we need intervention with one generation so that it is not carried on to the next generation. If we do not start soon, we are just creating

another generation of violent males, which is not what our society is about.

Mr ROBERTSON: In that context, I note that at page 460 of the Program Estimates, again on the subject of domestic violence, the concept of the key worker has been enshrined in the specific targets and objectives for this year. The Education Department already has adopted the idea of key workers for Aboriginal children in the mainstream educational system. IDFC has toyed with the idea for a number of years for children with intellectual and other forms of disabilities. Do you feel that in the area of domestic violence the key worker is the way to go? Personally, I feel that it is a great system, but I wonder what its limitations are and how common it might become in the area of domestic violence?

Ms O'Loughlin: I hope that eventually it will become part of the institutionalised process of looking after victims of domestic violence. It will only be inhibited by the fact that there are not enough resources. That will be difficult, particularly in country areas where people are stretched to their limits. That is why with our domestic violence counsellors we are not looking just to the Departments for Community Welfare and Education, but at workers across the broad spectrum of community neighbourhood houses and social security, wherever people are working with victims and perpetrators of violence.

Mr ROBERTSON: I turn to the area of service delivery in the shopfront of community welfare. The problem with any institution, whether it be the DCW, the DSS or anybody else, is that people tend to fall through the cracks when they are reluctant to come and face somebody at the counter. How can that problem be addressed? How can we get over the problem of a staff member who has been working flat out for 10 hours and gives a short response thereby causing a person who may be in great need to retreat from the DCW and not come again?

I raise the question because a group of church workers with whom I was talking last weekend levelled that kind of criticism at the DCW. I presume that they see these people on the rebound. My response was that they do not blanket the whole field either and people still manage to fall through the cracks. How aware is the department of the problem and how can it soften its image to the point where the people are attracted to what is effectively an authoritarian shopfront rather than being repelled by it?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As Minister I will initially answer the question and then I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to talk about some of the ways the department is working to address its image. As Minister, I am aware that there are numbers of people in the community who have had experiences with a number of Government departments that have not been of a positive nature. In some cases this could be said about the Housing Trust, but this is a question which people feel needs to be addressed with respect to community welfare. As the honourable member said, there is a group of people who fell through the cracks and who have a kind of fear of 'the welfare'. That is the way they talk about the department and its services.

I am acutely conscious of the need to soften the department's image. When I say that, I am not criticising the quality of service that is provided at the front counter of our offices; I acknowledge the hard work and, in many cases, the stress that a number of workers are under in meeting a demand in some of our busiest offices that cannot be predicted and cannot flow through in an orderly fashion. For example, in my own electorate I am aware of the pressures on a Friday afternoon when people realise that the weekend is on them and they do not have any money

for food and it is another week until pension day. The pressure that that situation puts on staff, who are already working to capacity, means that sometimes a quality, empathic and caring service is not always provided as we would want it.

I stress that I do not make that statement as a criticism; as Minister I am merely acknowledging the difficult task which many departmental workers have. We must look at addressing that problem so that we can offer to the community the kind of sensitive and caring service which we want to offer and which is necessary to break down some past experience that may have occurred either as a child, an adolescent or a young family member, and because of the whole combination of their life experiences they are not prepared to front the counter and demand what they need.

The honourable member identified a group of people which is very often powerless and feels intimidated by formality and its inherent processes. They are very often people who do not have a high level of education, are housebound and who do not feel confident to be able to put their case to people they see as strangers. The department is very aware of this problem which was alluded to earlier in terms of getting feedback from the community. How can we best offer the sort of services that we want to offer? How can we meet your needs in terms of the community? I will now ask the Chief Executive Officer to highlight some of the practical strategies that the department is looking at to meet the very points raised by the honourable member.

Ms Vardon: The honourable member asked if we were aware of the situation. This is probably the issue that I am most aware of in our organisation because I hear about it all the time. It came to light very strongly recently as part of consultation between health and welfare. We asked one of the staff involved in that consultation to team up with a couple of others and ask the customers what they thought their ideal organisation would be. As a result, some practical and clear suggestions about what the DCW should do to improve its shopfront services were made. I have asked the woman who collected that information to address our managers who are meeting for a day on this topic. She is to give them this feedback and they are to come back to us with some strategies.

Most of the comments were about lack of smiling and being warm and friendly. We realise that we have taken for granted the fact that because we have nice clerical officers they smile all the time. I have been watching them and they do not smile all the time; nor do the social workers or the managers. It might sound a bit corny, but this department is going to start smiling. That is only a start, but it is one thing.

Secondly, we have been involved in funding a referral program at Port Adelaide which is sponsored by the heads of human service agencies. We have asked a worker based at the Port Adelaide council to sit down with all the human service agency representatives and work out why people are falling through the nets. She is organising training programs in conjunction with the Adelaide council and funded by the Minister of Local Government. That is a very important project and it is all about not having people slip through the net.

We have tried to increase the number of bilingual and Aboriginal workers because we know that people will come from those cultures when we have those workers. There are dilemmas associated with that recruitment campaign. However, we believe that it will pay off, that all these groups who will not come near us will come if they feel there is a friendly person there. So, we have a recruitment strategy, a

referral program and a lot of feedback already. Our managers are also expected to provide feedback.

Rosemary Wighton is organising a campaign to improve the image of our department with the customers. It does not matter what we do we will always be 'the welfare'. However, Rosemary has a three-part plan, which she still has to discuss with the Minister, and we will be doing a lot of media work on that.

The last point, which is always the most difficult point, is that we would like our offices to be structurally like a lounge room. Unfortunately, with the kind of aggression that comes into our offices—and we have some very hostile customers, particularly those who have to pay maintenance and others who attack our staff verbally or, on the odd occasion, physically—we have to keep a counter or some protective barrier between our clerical staff and the customers. This is not an ideal situation; we would like to get rid of those counters but we have to look after staff safety. We are trying to do something about the interpersonal behaviour of our staff and make them smile. We really are very aware of the issue.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I refer to the matter of child protection (with the program referred to on page 457 of the Program Estimates). During the Estimates Committee hearing in September last year, the former Minister of Community Welfare (Dr Cornwall) stated (*Hansard*, page 409):

I believe that within this term of Government we will have the best child protection laws and the best child protection procedures and protocols in the country. We will have the best legislation as it relates to child sexual abuse and, in particular, the best protection of children in the country.

Further to these remarks, I was interested to note that SACOSS, in response to grave concerns expressed by the member organisations and associate members about current direction in child protection practices, organised a seminar on this subject, held on 22 June last. Is the Minister aware that the participants at this SACOSS sponsored seminar recorded 51 issues of concern about current child protection policies and practices in South Australia, and does she consider that these 51 concerns which were forwarded to the former Minister of Community Welfare in July this year warrant her serious consideration and evaluation, and will she agree to do so? Alternatively, does the Minister accept, like her predecessor a year ago, that the child protection policies and practices employed at present are the best, and that is, above reproach, amendment or alteration?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would like to answer that question generally and then ask the Chief Executive Officer to add some specific comments. First, I want to say that it might be interesting for the Committee to know that the Victorian department has sent representatives over to South Australia today to have a look at our whole system of child protection. Members would be aware that a package of Bills passed both Houses of Parliament, which amended a number of laws, including the Evidence Act, and I certainly did not hear any criticism of this package of Bills. I think those Bills certainly went a long way towards achieving the stated goals of my predecessor at the last Estimates Committee hearing.

However, as I have been asked this question and I am now the Minister, I indicate that I believe that we can always work to improve child protection areas. As long as we have a developing and changing society and community, there will always be need to look at changes in the way in which we offer and afford children protection by the department and under the laws that are made by Parliament. So, to say that we have arrived at an ultimate and perfect solution is not something that I would state. I certainly acknowledge the enormous progress that has been made in

this area. Certainly, as I move around the community I am getting increasingly positive feedback about the way in which the Government has moved in terms of providing protection and care for children who are most in need of that.

But to actually look specifically at some of the points that the honourable member has raised in relation to the seminar that was held on 22 June, from which came the 51 areas of concern, I guess that, in asking the Chief Executive Officer to comment, I would have to say that such a list of areas of concern could cover very minor points that need to be addressed, right through to fairly major and significant, perhaps philosophical, issues. So, I think it is a fairly broad and general statement, and I do not expect for one moment that the Chief Executive Officer will address herself to all 51 issues of concern. However, I think it is appropriate that she responds more in principle to the question that the honourable member has raised.

Ms Vardon: The SACOSS conference was in fact a jointly sponsored SACOSS-DCW conference, because we wanted to get some feedback as part of our campaign. We wanted to actually get some more information from people who have used the system for child protection, to ensure that we can hone off some of the rough edges, so to speak, and so that we keep an open mind on new directions that we should take, and so on. A third of the people attending that conference were DCW staff, and they were sent there to give their own views, without any hindrance. We find that list extremely helpful for us. Some of the items on the list were misinformation, arising from people just not having the facts, and that is all right because we can deal with that. Some of the items involve small improvements which we can make and which we have taken on board. Other matters relate to ideological and philosophical debates—which will always be part of a child protection system.

If I can reflect on the extremes of the debate which come out in some of the recommendations: on the one hand we have people who believe that there should be no intervention in families, that families are in trouble because the structure of society is such that they are under so much pressure that, if we fixed up unemployment, housing, and social issues, we would never need to intervene with families and children. So, there are those who say that all the resources should be put to the community development end of the spectrum, while, on the other hand, there are those people who take a totally one family approach and say that we should just intervene whenever there is a child in trouble, forget the social changes and stay with the case work approach.

In South Australia we have learnt from both those debates and, in fact, we have taken points from both. We hope to have a range developed where, of course, we support families, and of course we worry about poverty. We have a financial counselling service that we are building on, and so on. However, we also know that we have to be excellent in case work and child protection at individual child level. So, we have put our resources along the whole range of services. I will not list them, but over the past three years we have taken about 60 initiatives. I am very proud that the Victorians are over here today. Certainly, wherever I go South Australia is looked to as a great leader in child protection services, and we are very proud of that.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Further on this matter, I did leave the door open for the Minister to give us some information, and knowing her attitude I thought she would jump at it. However, my specific question in this regard concerns the 1988-89 specific target/objective (page 457 of the Program Estimates):

Further legislative changes are envisaged focusing on a range of child protection issues.

What further legislative changes are proposed?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: With grace and style, could I just remind the honourable member that in fact that question has already been answered by Ms Leah Mann, in terms of the amendments to the Community Welfare Act. She went into great detail in providing an answer. Perhaps the honourable member was not in the Chamber at the time, and that is understandable as not all members are here all the time. Ms Mann has indicated that she can add one further piece of information.

Ms Mann: One thing that I did omit to say was that the Community Welfare Act amendments would look at establishing in statute the South Australian Child Protection Council. As the member would be aware, that is chaired by Dame Roma Mitchell, and has a wide variety of representatives, mostly chief executive officers of the relevant Government agencies, as well as representation from non-government agencies—lawyers, and so forth, and the community. It is intended to give this council a statutory base and that, in terms of Community Welfare Act amendments, would be the primary area for child protection amendment.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I apologise for not being here previously, but I do go out because this system bores me to tears—and people know that I would like to abolish it, and it is a waste of public money. Further on the child protection topic, I refer to the matter of notifications. Last year during the Estimates Committee hearing the former Minister (Dr Cornwall) indicated that he and the department considered that notification of child abuse was moving towards a plateau. The former Minister stated, 'We will reach that plateau in the next one or two years.' The Program Estimates note that last year there were approximately 4 000 notifications of alleged child abuse, an increase of 54 per cent compared to the previous year. What reasons does the Minister attribute to the rise in the number of notifications? Does she consider that the notifications will plateau this year? Can the Minister provide a breakdown of the categories of alleged child abuse notification over the past year—sexual, physical, psychological, and neglect? As to the latter part of my question, I know that we have an arrangement that answers can be provided to questions within 10 days, and so in relation to the detail required I will be happy if that is replied to in that way.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would like to answer the member's question. Can I say that, in criticising the system, could I just remind the member that it was his own Government that introduced this system of Estimates Committees. The member has said that he finds the system incredibly boring, but I do not think it aids anybody to be critical in that way. I would be delighted to provide the honourable member with those figures—right now, in fact.

As the former Minister so rightly predicted, the notifications have plateaued and decreased. As the honourable member said, in 1986-87 there were 4 027 notifications and in 1987-88, there were 3 898, so that is a reduction. As I understand the question, the member asked for a breakdown for this current financial year. In the area of physical maltreatment, there were 1 252 notifications. In the area notified as sexual maltreatment, there were 1 194; emotional maltreatment, 157; neglect, 872; children at risk, 372; and unknown, which obviously have not been registered in any category, 51, making a total of 3 898. In fact, these figures reflect the breakdown, and the children who have been notified with respect to sexual maltreatment make up 31 per cent of the notifications for the financial year just ended.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Referring to page 457, in May last year the Bannon Government commissioned Dr Lesley Cooper, Director of Social Administration, Flinders University, to

report on the protection of children of under age parents. The commission of this report was announced with great fanfare in a fashion similar to the previous announcement of the review and practices in relation to child sexual abuse and domestic violence, all of which were released in the public interest. When announcing the under-age parents inquiry, Dr Cornwall noted also that the recommendations 'would serve as a sound basis for future action'. Dr Cooper presented her report to the Government on 30 June last, some 10 weeks ago, and to my knowledge that report has not been released. If that is the case, does the Minister intend to release the Cooper report on the protection of children of under-age parents and, if so, when, and, if not, why not?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: This question was asked by the member for Coles as a question without notice in the current session of Parliament. I have already answered the question. I have a long detailed response, but I am prepared to restate my answer that I will be releasing the report but in my own time, and I will be releasing responses to the report.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Referring to page 458 under 'Young Offenders' concerning the threatened industrial action at SAYRAC, correspondence received by the shadow Minister of Community Welfare highlights that industrial action at SAYRAC is considered by staff as the only avenue now available to them to make the Minister and senior management in the department act to redress their urgent concerns about personal safety, staff morale, loss of experienced staff and rising WorkCover claims.

During the course of the past year 11 of the 25 residential care workers have had time off due to stress and other work related problems—a fact which demonstrates that all is far from well at SAYRAC. In addition, floor staff are concerned about their safety following an incident earlier this year when a fellow worker received a serious head injury when struck with a billiard cue.

What action, if any, has been taken to ensure floor staff have an input into the work practices at SAYRAC; to curb unrest among staff about issues of personal safety; to reduce staff stress and workers compensation claims; and to reverse the current trend whereby qualified experienced staff are seeking other jobs? Does the Minister condone actions by the supervisor to threaten staff that they will be sacked or redeployed if they continue to complain about management practices or refuse to work in an unsafe environment?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I can only assume that the question has been prepared by someone else who is quite out of touch with the situation. The letter that I understand the member referred to was sent months ago. Since I have been the Minister of Community Welfare, I have visited both SAYTC and SAYRAC. I have had discussions with the staff and have spoken with the residents at both establishments. I will ask the Deputy Director to answer some of these points specifically, but I am concerned that this information is so out of date and these situations have been resolved. On my visit to both centres and in my frank discussions with staff, none of these matters were raised. In fact, on the day I visited, a small number of residents, about 20, were at SAYRAC and about 12 residents were in SAYTC. I am not quite sure where this question has come from. I am a little puzzled about why I am asked questions that are so far out of date. Ms Leah Mann may want to add further information for the benefit of members.

Ms Mann: Presently the numbers at SAYRAC are about 12 or 13, so at the present time we have very low numbers. The staffing situation remains constant. Staff are rostered on duty, and we do not reduce staff because we have to

keep the units open. The incident referred to was not an assault but an accident when one staff member accidentally hit another member with a billiard cue while moving to restrain a youth. Subsequent discussions between staff, management and the PSA (who were later involved) have very satisfactorily resolved any of the staff concerns as far as I am aware.

New arrangements were made for calling in staff when there was a disruption in the centre. We need to remember that it is a centre where we have quite disruptive young people who get very stressed at times and are prone to acting out. We recognise this by having a facility to call on additional staff at very short notice to assist in the units. In addition, management provided for short notice overtime if a situation looked as if it was getting out of control. As far as I am aware, all staff now feel quite satisfied with the security and staffing arrangements in relation to the young people in their care. The numbers are very low. The overtime and extra arrangements are no longer called upon as of the last few weeks.

The rate of staff attrition is in fact very low in our centres, so much so that we are only having to recruit on an annual basis. In past years we have had to recruit much more frequently. We are just undertaking a recruitment training program which we plan to run in November or December. We will have an orientation training program for about a three-month period. Staffing attrition has never been as low, so I simply do not understand the factual basis for the question.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: Referring to page 458, under the heading 'Young Offenders', it is with some pleasure that I refer to a program called 'Intensive Neighbourhood Care'. If I remember correctly, I announced that in 1978. It is nice to be able to read under '1988-89 targets/objectives':

After 10 years of successful operation the INC program will be reviewed to ensure continued access of high priority children to this outstanding program.

Any credit in the matter due to me is simply as the person who introduced the program at the time. The real credit goes to the people who have had to administer the program and have done so successfully, together with families in the community who have come forward to provide this kind of care. All sorts of dire forebodings were made by the Opposition and the press that people would be forced to have alongside them in their quiet suburban areas arsonists, rapists, murderers and heaven knows what. It is a specialised program which needs the understanding of the community. That has been forthcoming, or we would not be looking at 10 years of successful operation. A reference to the program points out, under '1987-88 Specific Targets/Objectives', there were major improvements in the access of Aboriginal children to the INC program in country regions. Is any detail available on that?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, there is. However, I point out the honourable member, in his typical fashion, has downplayed his role in introducing the program in 1978. If it were not for his foresight, perseverance and initiative, I do not know whether we would have had such a successful program. I have total figures and would be pleased, on notice, to provide the figures for which the honourable member has asked.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: On page 461, 'Support Services', under the heading, '1988-89 Specific Targets/Objectives', the following statement interested me greatly:

All staff will be made aware of the departmental policy on sexual harassment and the resolution processes.

Can we have some amplification on that?

Ms Mann: As is common with most areas of Government agencies and the private sector, we have seen considerable

development in the workplace in making sure that it is free from sexual harassment. In our own workplace, as with others, this issue needs to be tackled. Therefore, earlier this year we embarked on a staff training program, which was carried out in a very pleasing way through the use of a small theatre production, which raised the issues in an environment both challenging and stimulating and promoted a lot of discussion amongst the staff as the theatre group moved around. It is the intention that every work site and group of staff should have the opportunity to discuss and be aware of Government and departmental policy on sexual harassment, and whom to see and how to deal with the matter if one is a victim of such harassment and needs to have the matter addressed. It is that process to which the comment refers.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: I refer to the program title, 'Community Participation in Welfare', on page 455. On how many occasions has the Child Advocate, appointed to the Children's Interest Bureau in the past year, been called upon to act on behalf of a child; and does the Minister consider that it would be a logical progression to develop the Children's Interest Bureau from its current role of advocacy to the status of children's ombudsman?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We have somebody with us today who is well placed to answer any questions on the Children's Interest Bureau. Ms Sally Castell-McGregor is the Executive Officer, and I ask her to comment.

Ms Castell-McGregor: The legislation, which has given the unit its official mandate, was only proclaimed on 1 September. Some of the referrals have come in. In June, nine official cases came to the unit although it was not officially established under the Act. In July, 38 referrals came to the advocacy unit. I have not yet looked at the figures for August, but I know that there are more than 38. I expect that, with the proclamation, we will have a steady increase every month. Even before the advocacy unit was established, those of us on the bureau's permanent staff were handling a number of requests to go to Community Welfare Department case conferences to argue for the child's rights on those occasions.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The Department is very supportive of the work of the Children's Interest Bureau, particularly of the role of advocacy that the bureau is undertaking.

The Hon. J.L. CASHMORE: Only the Minister can answer the question of whether the role should be advanced to the status of children's ombudsman.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Does the Executive Officer wish to comment on that suggestion?

Ms Castell-McGregor: It is one of the long-term goals for the future. It has been frequently stated that the bureau should have a separate Act, similar to the office of the Commissioner for the Ageing. This was stated because there has been comment in the past about some ambiguity in the relationship between the bureau and the Department of Community Welfare because the bureau is established under the Community Welfare Act, although it has a distinct mandate under that Act. Any decision that would make the bureau a commissioner for children—one of the suggestions—would have a resource implication and would have to be gone into very thoroughly. It has always been a goal, and we hope that one day it will come to fruition.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.]

Lands, \$38 581 000

Minister of Lands and Minister of Repatriation, Miscellaneous, \$9 800

Works and Services—Department of Lands, \$5 000 000

Chairman:

The Hon. T.M. McRae

Members:

Mr D.S. Baker

Mr S.G. Evans

Ms D.L. Gayler

Mr G.M. Gunn

The Hon. R.G. Payne

Mr D.J. Robertson

Witness:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan, Minister of Lands.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr J.A. Darley, Director of Lands and Valuer-General.

Mr L.B. Kidd, Director, Operations Services.

Ms A. Stimson, Manager, Executive Services.

Mr J.G. Maher, Registrar-General.

Mr C.J. Kaufmann, Acting Director, Regional Operations.

Mr J.R. Porter, Surveyor-General.

Mr R.N. Emery, Manager, Management Accounting and Budgeting.

Mr D. Watts, Animal Welfare Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and invite the honourable Minister and lead speaker for the Opposition to make brief opening statements.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Since taking on the portfolio of Minister of Lands I have become responsible for a department which has a strategic objective of excellence in service provision. To meet that objective it has adopted an operational philosophy which emphasises service orientation to its many client groups, flexibility in the management and training of its people and a commitment to change and innovation. The diversity of its service activities is reflected in the budget estimates being discussed tonight.

What is not immediately apparent from the program is what they represent in terms of quality of service for the South Australian community. As a prelude to this estimates review session I wish to draw attention to some of the programs and objectives which I believe epitomise the department's striving for excellence. The Department of Lands is now recognised both nationally and internationally as a leader in technological innovation.

Its work in the development of a digital cadastral data base (DCDB) is an illustration of its leading edge. The proposed development of a digital topographic data base (DTDB) in the 1988-89 financial year is another example of its commitment to the development of excellent systems; nor are these developments undertaken in isolation. The Department of Lands is the custodian of a major part of the State's land information system.

The establishment of the legal-fiscal data bases through the Registration and Survey Divisions has been integral to the longer-term development of an information base which will support a range of planning and development initiatives for the whole State. In undertaking these developments the department has developed expertise which is recognised world-wide. In concert with Sagric International, the Department of Lands has successfully tendered for contracts in registration, surveying and land information systems

throughout the world. In 1988-89 the department will continue to raise the profile of South Australia overseas.

Marketing initiatives form an important part of the development strategy of this department. They are of benefit to South Australia in providing recognition of our State's abilities and developing contacts and opportunities for the sale of other South Australian goods as well as giving unparalleled opportunities to further increase our departmental skill base. I am very pleased that the department has recognised the need for and is actively moving to increase the skills and experience of its personnel.

The current budget contains key training initiatives, one of which, the development of a work force planning system, is another leader in the innovative use of technology. The proposed work force planning system will enable management to assess the skills and experience base of staff against the long-term needs identified through the continuing planning and management programs. The system will also provide benefits to staff by enabling them to assess their own training needs for skill and career development. Another home-based initiative is the commitment of resources to upgrading and improving services.

The efficiency committee, working with staff, management and industrial representatives, is one means of refining work practices. The emphasis on service orientation, and the establishment of a land information bureau, is another means of extending to clients services which are easily accessible and without excessive overhead. In mentioning these developments in information, service and technology I must not forget the traditional clients of the Department of Lands.

In 1988 the Government plans to introduce new pastoral legislation which will simplify the administrative processes and bring to the management of pastoral land modern approaches in land management. This legislative review is part of an ongoing process within the Department of Lands to meet Government policy on deregulation. The approach is essentially one of reviewing and simplifying our administrative activities to ensure that there is no unnecessary waste of resources, either public or private.

I would add that in adopting a service oriented approach the department has been mindful of this Government's policies on equity and service efficiency. Thus the department has a goal of achieving full cost recovery of its business operations by 1992. I am confident that the management commitment shown to the programs and activities being discussed tonight will enable achievement of that goal.

Mr GUNN: The Opposition has a number of concerns related to the administration of Crown lands, pastoral lands and other titles across this State. We believe that the most secure title of land should be made available to all landholders, and we will be particularly interested in the responses to our questions relating to the new Pastoral Act, the new Crown Lands Act, and what will happen to the shack sites on the Murray River and other parts of the State. What will happen to the people in marginal areas and what will happen in relation to the freeholding policy?

I note that the Program Estimates on page 435 states:

Continued to achieve a target maximum commercial return from the disposal of land. Approved Land Management Plans implemented.

It goes on and talks about average revenue from rents and fees per lease or transaction. The Opposition will have a number of questions to ask. What is the intention of those words? Is it the Government's intention to increase the Crown land rents which apply to perpetual and other leases or does the Government have a program to allow people to freehold that land at a reasonable rate, which appears to me to be the most sensible thing to do because it has always

been accepted that those leases were fixed in perpetuity and could never be altered.

Mr Darley: The Crown has every right to increase rents, as does any landholder in South Australia. That does not have any effect on the Government's freeholding policy where the policy quite clearly states that lessees of perpetual leases can freehold land at 15 per cent of the current unimproved value. The department is pursuing a policy of increasing rents to current market levels, except in those specific cases of perpetual leases where the Government policy of freeholding at the rate of 15 per cent of current unimproved value applies.

Mr GUNN: The original intention was completely to rewrite the Crown Lands Act and to repeal a number of Acts. There would then be one consolidated Act which would deal with all land in South Australia. A draft Bill was issued that I think was universally agreed was totally unacceptable to everyone. What stage have the negotiations reached and who was involved in putting together the final draft? In the past some considerable concern has been expressed about some of the inputs. Will there be a new Pastoral Act and then a new Crown Lands Act and what discussions has the Minister or her officers had with the Department of Agriculture to orchestrate the introduction of the legislation at about the same time as the new Soil Conservation Act is introduced, because they are all inter-related?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Since becoming the Minister, and being aware of the history which you have just related, I have taken the decision to proceed in a sensible and responsible manner and, at the same time, moving ahead and actually implementing policies which all sides would want to see implemented in terms of actually doing something about the Pastoral Act. At this stage, I have made a decision that, instead of having one large Bill, we will introduce two separate ones—a Pastoral Bill and then a Crown Lands Bill at a later time. In this session I hope to introduce a new Pastoral Bill. In the short time I have been Minister, consultation has involved extensive discussions at ministerial level, at departmental head level and other officer level with not only the Department of Agriculture but also with the Department of Environment and Planning and the Department and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I have also met with the United Farmers and Stockowners.

In the very near future I intend to visit some of the pastoral areas and, if they are in the honourable member's electorate, I will notify him and I would be delighted if he could join me on that inspection. As I understand it, this matter has been on the agenda since 1980, so it seemed to me to make good administrative sense to move towards resolving the issue in terms of drafting legislation. I have made the decision to have two separate Acts and that is the way I hope the whole thing will proceed. I believe that I will have the member for Eyre's involvement, and hopefully support, in this matter, perhaps not on every single issue, but I am sure that will be the case in the general thrust of what I will attempt to do. We do not have a draft Bill. I shall be more than happy to share the contents of the draft Bill with the honourable member when it is available. As yet, it has not been drafted, so really I do not know whether we can give a lot more information at this stage.

Ms Stimson: The consultation which has occurred to date has been very close consultation with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment and Planning and, in particular, in the case of the Department of Agriculture, with an officer who is involved with the soil conservation legislation. We intend to maintain a very close liaison during the drafting stages of the Bills so that contin-

ued negotiation will ensure that the principles of the Bills will run together. In this way, the department is being kept informed of developments in the Department of Agriculture with regard to the soil conservation legislation.

Mr GUNN: There appears to have been considerable discussion at Government level, but the people who will really be affected by this legislation are the pastoralists and the landholders of this State. Until recently they were the only people who paid anything for the use of that land. I am concerned that they will not receive the consideration which they should. That community fears that their needs and aspirations may play a secondary role. They are also concerned about the need to have a better tenure than currently exists. A 42 year lease is unacceptable and it is not a wise length of time. It should be a continuing lease. Will the department have discussions to endeavour to meet the concerns of the pastoral industry and their UF&S representatives in relation to extending the leases to give them more security which will lead to better management and financial arrangements and has agreement been reached about the need to control unnecessary access to these lands?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I can give an assurance that the pastoralists will not be left out in the cold. Before I met with my ministerial colleagues, I met with the UF&S. If there was any setting of priorities, our priority was to ensure that we made a decision as to how we could best proceed and that was done in consultation with the UF&S. I felt that I should inform them that I wanted to have two Bills instead of one. I said quite openly that, if we can accept that as the broad parameter, we can work within that. Despite the fact that Parliament is sitting (and as the honourable member probably knows, I have quite a lot of other commitments), next week or the week after I will meet with representatives of the UF&S and with pastoralists.

I would be pleased if the honourable member would pass on to his constituents the fact that their fears are groundless in the sense that it is my intention to consult and have open dialogue and communication with the people who are most affected. I think it would be quite irresponsible not to do so. At this stage it would be premature to give any kind of blanket guarantees. The whole question of how the land will be best managed must be weighed against questions of tenure and access, and those matters are being addressed. I am very keen to discuss these issues with the pastoralists and I give the honourable member an assurance that that is already happening.

Mr GUNN: I am pleased that the Minister will enter into a consultative process with the people who are directly involved and I look forward to the outcome. I am sure that she will find it interesting if she visits those pastoral areas.

My next question concerns the Government's policy on freeholding. As I understand it at this stage, people who hold marginal perpetual or miscellaneous leases are not permitted to convert them to freehold. The Marginal Lands Act goes back to the 1930s when there was a consolidation of agricultural land, I suppose it was necessary for that to take place then. There may be more of that in the future. Many people who hold marginal perpetual leases also hold perpetual leases and own freehold land, operating them as one operation. Can the Minister give an undertaking that she and the Government will urgently consider allowing those people who currently hold marginal perpetual leases to convert them to freehold or to a normal perpetual lease?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The restriction on freeholding in the marginal areas will be reconsidered in conjunction with the proposed soil conservation legislation. The advice that I have received from the department is not to proceed hastily in any of the areas suggested by the honourable

member, but to wait until we have some soil conservation legislation principles established and then to reconsider the whole question of freeholding in the marginal areas. I think that is a fairly responsible position to take because we are perhaps looking at some kind of a soil conservation Bill in the early session of next year. It is not a matter of putting it off or procrastinating; it is waiting to make sure that whatever decisions are taken are in the best interests of the marginal lands and the people who work them.

Mr GUNN: The point that the Minister overlooked—and which most people overlook when dealing with marginal perpetual land—is that most of these people run farms for which they probably have some ordinary Crown lands with a perpetual lease and they also have freehold, all operating in one. There is absolutely no difference and it really is a nonsense that they cannot convert those marginal perpetual leases to freehold or normal perpetual leases. This situation has been allowed to go on for too long.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I understand the point that the honourable member makes and I know that each of those parcels of land that are occupied by the one landowner are treated on their merits, but I think it would be inappropriate, until we have some soil conservation legislation, to look at how to deal with that situation. Without making any commitments, it seems to me that some sort of rationalisation in the way that these lands are managed and the type of tenure would make common sense, but it would have to be done with the overriding principles of soil conservation and in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and the legislation proposed by that department.

Ms GAYLER: I am pleased to hear that the Minister proposes to introduce specific legislation shortly relating to pastoral lands and that that legislation will be interrelated with soil conservation legislation. Will the proposed pastoral legislation have as a central theme, of both the legislation and any controlling bodies that are established, improved land management practices for those areas? I think it has been established over a long period, and accepted I would think by lessees in that area, that improving land management is one of the keys to the pastoral area.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is a key issue and will be addressed by the proposed legislation. The simple answer is 'Yes'.

Ms GAYLER: Can I also assume that the system of terminating tenure will be retained—for example, the 42-year lease—as one of the principal tools of land management? I note in this context that the new New South Wales Liberal Government has decided that in relation to the western division of New South Wales, which is comparable to much of our South Australian pastoral land, it will not move to a system of freeholding that area. Will the system of terminating leases be continued for the pastoral area?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: No, it is not my intention at this stage to move to freeholding, but I think it is a bit premature to talk about the form of terminating tenure. We have to consult with the pastoralists before establishing a system that addresses the key issues of land care and management and the economic viability of the land. Those matters will be seriously addressed, but I will not look at freeholding as an off-the-top kind of approach. There will be a number of other options considered which will take into account the needs of pastoralists and at the same time the need for good, efficient land care and management policies.

Ms GAYLER: I note that one of the specific objectives for 1988-89 on page 435 of the Program Estimates is to implement a program of making an assessment in the arid lands. I think I am right in saying that that process has

begun with a recent delegation or party which set off for the arid lands. Can the Minister give the Committee some idea of what is expected from the mapping and assessment project identified for this year?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member is right; the department has put together the range land assessment unit No. 9. There are nine people involved in that project. This unit is working on land system mapping on a 1:250 000 scale, paddock by paddock range condition assessment and the creation of a monitoring system. These three initiatives will allow new leases to be issued based on scientific assessment. These resources and information will be available to the local soil conservation boards as they are formed. So, as these boards are formed this information will be made available to them to provide for community based land care.

Mr S.G. EVANS: My question relates to a matter that I have raised with the Minister privately—and I emphasise that I do not wish to make any reflection on any individual. Is the Minister satisfied that there is no conflict of interest where the Director of Lands and the Valuer-General are the same person? I do not know what the situation has been in the past in this regard. The Valuer-General has the responsibility of deciding the value of all properties in this State, while at the same time that person, as the Director of Lands, has the responsibility of looking at rezoning of land or at Government land that may be sold. I suppose when an acquisition is to take place he establishes the initial value to be applied to the property to be acquired.

I realise, of course, that there is a Land Valuation Court to which a land holder can appeal, but that is not a satisfactory solution if an individual has nothing more than a suspicion to act on. I have great respect for the present incumbent in those positions and I know that he has great dedication to any task that he takes on. However, in the event of a court case it could be of some benefit to a legal eagle to argue that one person should not hold those two positions, because there is a conflict of interest. Is the Minister satisfied with that arrangement? More particularly, how long will the situation continue? Will it be for the foreseeable future, or is it just that the Government has been waiting for some time to find a replacement for one or other of those positions?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member gave me some notice earlier today and so I have had an opportunity to give some thought to this question. Simply, I do not believe that there is a conflict of interest through the combination of the responsibilities of the Valuer-General and the Director of Lands as the one office holder. Under the Valuation of Land Act, the Valuer-General is required to discharge duties as the ultimate arbiter of the Government's efforts at valuation in this State. As such, the Valuer-General has ultimate responsibility for the technical quality of valuation work. The powers, authorities, duties and functions of the position may be delegated without limiting the authority of the Valuer-General to intervene personally in any matter.

The question of conflict of interest may seem to relate to response to ministerial direction. While the Chief Executive Officer is responsible to the Minister for undertaking the directions and policies of the Executive, the Valuer-General is seen to be directly accountable to Parliament and not under ministerial direction. So, it is not as though the person is directly responsible to the Minister in both cases. In the case of the Valuer-General, that position is seen as being directly accountable to Parliament.

However, in so far as the Valuer-General's responsibilities relate to determining valuations of land, the Valuer-General

is responsible, under section 17 of the Act, for undertaking a valuation of land at the request of any Minister administering any Act or department of Government. This clearly places the Valuer-General within the purview of the Executive, in the same way as the Chief Executive Officer.

The remaining issue is whether the combination of offices could lead to a bias in setting valuations. In this context, it is important to look at the purpose of the valuation of land, to assess whether there could be any claim that valuations could be set to generate income for Government. Some rates and taxes are determined on the basis of valuation, and therefore the valuation sets the parameters within which these charges are determined. However, the actual percentage or formula applied in each case is for the determination of Government, on the advice of its agencies, not on the advice of the Valuer-General. It should also be noted that, although the Valuer-General sets valuations, it is in fact the courts which have ultimate responsibility in determining whether or not a valuation should stand. The independent arbitrator in this whole matter is the courts.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: The right of appeal is always there.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Exactly. The existence of an independent appeal mechanism through the Land and Valuation Court is a safeguard against bias, irrespective of whether the position of Valuer-General is separate or combined with the responsibilities of head of a Government agency.

The issue of conflict can be further considered through comparison of the duties required of the Valuer-General and the Chief Executive Officer. Both are required to ensure the carrying out of programs to agreed standards of performance and to exercise managerial responsibility. There is no conflict between the managerial duties of these positions, particularly given that both the Valuation of Land Act and the Government Management and Employment Act provide for the delegation of management authorities.

As Chief Executive Officer the Director of Lands is responsible, among other things, for the organisation and establishment, financial and other management planning, division of responsibilities, and allocation of resources within the administrative unit. The organisation grouping for the Department of Lands encompasses a range of functional activities, not only in relation to valuation. In practice, the Chief Executive Officer has delegated day-to-day personnel and financial management responsibilities to divisional directors, who are also responsible for work allocation and achievement. Thus, the ongoing management of the valuation activity is handled through delegations under both the Government Management and Employment Act and the Valuation of Land Act.

This delegation does not conflict with the assumption of ultimate responsibility for quality and performance by the Chief Executive Officer. The dual roles of Valuer-General and Chief Executive Officer merely reinforce this responsibility for technical quality. The combination of Chief Executive Officer accountability and management delegation is consistent with the principle of management responsibility outlined in the Government Management and Employment Act. The situation of the Director of Lands and Valuer-General is a practical example of the manner in which effective delegation should operate. It is my understanding that there are no plans to change the situation at present. Certainly, I am not considering requesting that either of the positions should be filled by another person.

Mr S.G. EVANS: The Minister has given a very good explanation in relation to one part of the argument, but she has now raised a greater doubt in my mind whether the

present situation should continue. The Minister has said that in one area of responsibility the individual is responsible to Parliament while in the other the individual is responsible to a Minister. Automatically, there is a conflict in that area. It is not necessarily the case that the value of land might be high. For example, in a community where there is a shortage of employment and a keen desire by a government of any colour to encourage industry, pressure could be applied on the Minister of the day to sell Crown land at a lower price. The procedures in relation to the court of appeal would no longer apply, because no-one will take court action in relation to having been sold land at a price that is too low. Will the Minister reconsider the position? I now consider that there is even a much greater risk than I originally thought.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will not reconsider the position. Perhaps I should remind the honourable member that previously the Valuer-General was actually responsible to the CEO. Nobody was suggesting that there was any kind of conflict.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Now the Valuer-General is responsible to Parliament, and I take the point that the member for Mitchell makes: it is part of the checks and balances system. If the person acting either separately (as two separate people) or as the same person actually carries out their statutory responsibilities in an honest and forthright manner, I cannot see how there could be any conflict of interest. In my previous explanation I spoke about delegation of powers of both of those positions. I have clearly outlined to the honourable member that there is not a conflict of interest. I suppose it is everybody's right to have a different view and interpretation of information, and I respect the honourable member's right to have that interpretation. However, it is not my interpretation. Therefore, as I am the Minister, I do not intend to reconsider my position. I have not heard anything from the honourable member which would change my view that, under the present system, there is any conflict of interest in the person having both positions.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Has the department sold properties during the year for other departments, in particular the Highways Department, or does that department sell all of its land in its own right, especially in the area of Hilton? If that land is sold by this Minister's department, are all sales by tender or auction, or in fact has there been a substantial number by private treaty? Was the price asked for those properties sold by private treaty compared with prices at recent sales of adjoining land that went to tender, auction or private sale in the private market?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I understand that the first part of the question can be answered with a very quick 'Yes'. I will ask Mr Chris Kaufmann, the Acting Director of Regional Operations, to answer the more specific parts of the member's question.

Mr Kaufmann: We have used both public competitive methods, predominantly auction, for some properties, and we have used tenders for the properties being sold in the inner western project, which is the sale of the surplus land caused by the closure of the north-south freeway. That was sold by tender because they are sold under development agreements which require assessment of the proposals for the use of the land. In all cases they have been sold, whether by competitive methods or private treaty, at market value or above.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I would prefer the Minister to pass the information in relation to this question to *Hansard* within the 10 day period. Can she provide information on the

location, size and development, if any, of all property sales that the department has carried out in the previous 12 months (1987-88) and for what department, and identify by what method it was sold, whether by auction, private treaty or tender, and whether any other party showed an interest in any of the properties and was given an opportunity to tender or make an offer before the final sale was completed?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: No wonder the honourable member asked for the 10 day period. That is an enormous undertaking, to ask for a 12-month period, for every sale of land and the other related matters. I would have to ask whether the Director of Lands would be able to have that information in 10 days and whether he might like to share with the Committee the kind of resource allocation that would have to be reallocated, in a department which is highly efficient and effective, to provide that level of information. In the spirit of the way in which this Committee has conducted itself all day, I ask the honourable member, if he has some specific areas of concern, to reframe his question to actually highlight the area. If he feels it is too sensitive and does not want it on the public record, I am sure we could provide him with that information on a private and confidential basis, if that was his wish.

In light of the fact that we are here to examine the efficiencies of Government in terms of budget allocations, to ask a department to provide that level of detail for every single property, given that all properties are disposed of through the Department of Lands, is an enormous task. I will ask the Director to respond in case perhaps we have some amazing *Beyond 2000* computer where you press three buttons and all of that information comes out. However, I would ask the member to reframe his question in terms of the particular time frame, or the disposal of a particular department's land. Perhaps there is some aggrieved constituent who has been to see the honourable member, in which case it may be more appropriate for us to examine the system and see if there is something wrong in it. I am more than happy to do that but I just find this quite outrageous.

Mr Darley: Could I suggest for the honourable member's sake that the number of people engaged in the land disposal unit is just five. A lot of the information for which he is asking would not be available. We would not necessarily have details of every inquiry made. However, I can assure him that with each of those properties sold—and many millions of dollars are tied up in this exercise, as the Acting Director of Regional Operations has said—the land has been sold at current market value or better, and certainly not less than the Valuer-General's valuation.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I am disappointed if we, as a Parliament, are only here to assess where money will be spent or where money has been spent. It is critical that we know the areas where money is raised and how it was raised. I cannot make my complaints here, but I have a packet of them. It is important for the security of the State assets that this sort of question is answered in detail. I accept that 10 days is too short, but that is the practice. If the Minister said that she could not do it in 10 days but would guarantee to do it before Christmas, I would be happy. To suggest that it is not possible for the Parliament to obtain complete details means that we are wasting our time trying to represent people.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member has raised a number of points, particularly about the security of State assets. I assure the honourable member that he is not the only member of this Parliament who is concerned about the security of State assets. I remind the honourable member that I, too, have been a back bench member and have had a complaint or two. Whatever every other respon-

sible member of this Parliament has done—and I certainly did—was to contact the Minister of Lands and ask that the case be investigated. I do not know whether the director will remember the case that I raised and pursued through to the end and discovered that all was fair and above board. I am not prepared to ask the department to tie up the resources of five people in an incredibly important area to find every single detail for which the honourable member has asked. It would be grossly irresponsible of me as a Minister of the Crown to ask my department to do that. I give a public undertaking here that if the honourable member wants to provide me or the Director of Lands with the information on one, 20 or 30 complaints that he has received, they will be investigated professionally and thoroughly and he will be kept informed of that information.

Any responsible member of this Parliament would go about finding that information in that way, but to ask a department to tie up an enormous amount of resources is grossly irresponsible. I am being totally open and not hiding anything. I have answered every question asked of me since 11 a.m. this morning and I am more than happy to provide information wherever it is needed. However, to do so in this kind of way would be very wrong. I take my responsibilities as a Minister incredibly seriously, and I am not prepared to tie up competency, expertise and resources in that way.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I thank the Minister for the lecture and for saying that I am irresponsible in trying to obtain that information.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Committee to come to order. The member has made his complaint and the Minister has given her response.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I ask the Minister my third question. What progress has been made on deciding the future of the Blackwood forest reserve, originally known as the Blackwood experimental orchard, and when will those decisions be made public?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for his question. This area of land has been held by the Government pending a response from the Mitcham city council, which has been offered the land at market value. The Government regards the land as surplus to its requirements, but is anxious for the use of the land to be determined in a manner satisfactory to all interested parties.

These uses will be determined under the proposed supplementary development plan. Meanwhile, agistment to riding for the disabled will continue and the land will be held pending resolution of planning issues and the response from the Mitcham city council.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I refer to paragraph 11 of the financial statement for 1988-89, headed 'Recent developments in financial management'. On page 127 it points out that issues of recent developments in financial management in the public sector have been addressed. The following paragraph appears:

Proper financial management requires that those making decisions (agencies and individual managers) have responsibility for the full range of resources which they utilise, have flexibility to change the mix of resources used as appropriate and have proper financial information on which to base their decisions.

In view of what paragraph 11 points out, has the Department of Lands made any significant improvements in prudent financial management in recent years?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The question does relate directly to the purpose for which we are here tonight. The short answer is that the department has made significant steps in improving financial management. Like most public sector agencies, the department has recognised the need to improve its financial systems, particularly in today's economic cli-

mate, and acknowledges the requirements for Government agencies to be more accountable to Parliament and the community. The first major step in improved financial management was the introduction of a comprehensive management planning system based around the Treasury budget cycle. This development of branch and divisional plans has enabled a more structured approach to resource allocation and provided management with better financial information on which to make decisions in this area. Complementing the management plan is an improved system of monitoring and reporting on resources used against budgets. This has enabled management to recognise expenditure trends quickly and to take action where necessary.

The honourable member will notice that the department remained within allocation in its 1987-88 budget after adjustments had been made for wage increases and additional terminal leave payments. The department is further examining its overall accounting systems as part of its business plan implementation and I have recently approved the implementation of a new revenue receipting and accounts receivable system to further improve revenue identification and reporting for management. The issue of accrual accounting is currently being looked at and further work in this area will be carried out in the 1988-89 financial year.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: That answer seems to be in accord with statements by the Auditor-General that accounting procedures ought to be reviewed with a view to reducing expenditure in that area.

On page 435 of the Program Estimates, under the heading 'Management of the Crown estate,' I draw attention to the line, 'The dog fence was maintained in an acceptable condition.' That is a carefully phrased statement. Do those few words appear in the way in which they do because of any qualification or reserve that may be pertinent thereto?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That really does mean that the dog fence was maintained in an acceptable condition, but I have more information on that point. The major issue has been an approach by the Dog Fence Board to the United Farmers and Stockowners (UF&S) to promote wider contribution to the dog fence from all pastoralists in the wool and sheep industry. This levy was to fund inspection and further development of the fence, including the possibility and question of electrification. Negotiations are continuing with the UF&S on the implementation of a levy that would be acceptable to all members. If agreement is not reached the board could increase industry funding through use of current statutory provisions. These provisions allow the board to redefine the ratable area to include the southern and south-eastern portions of the State which are not currently paying a levy.

So, in answer to the target objectives for 1987-88 to maintain the dog fence in an acceptable condition, that was achieved. There is, of course, ongoing and increased expense involved in doing that, as well as ongoing discussions with the people who have to contribute to it. This is being done through the UF&S.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: My supplementary question relates to page 425, and to what constitutes the 'satisfactory' nature of the dog fence.

Mr Darley: The Department of Lands has a dog fence inspector whose job it is to inspect the total fence four times a year. During those inspections he is required to identify any damage, any holes and that sort of thing, so that an acceptable standard of dog fence is one which is still standing and free of holes that would enable a dog to get out.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I now refer to page 436 and to the program entitled 'Land Surveying and Mapping'; the

policy area being natural resources. Under 'targets/objectives', one sees the following:

Completion of the State primary geodetic survey by use of the global positioning system will require the establishment of a suitably comprehensive gravity for the State.

I am sure that every honourable member would appreciate any amplification possible on those erudite words.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would be pleased to answer that question, but I think that the person most appropriate to answer it is the Surveyor-General, Mr Porter.

Mr Porter: The matter of gravity is of concern not only to surveyors but also in relation to mapping, oil and mineral searching throughout South Australia and with regard to the greenhouse effect. The Department of Lands is involved in a mapping program and has a requirement from other Government departments, particularly Mines and Energy, to establish gravity control and heighting throughout South Australia, and to complete a geodetic network. The work that is involved at present relates to that gravity and level control for the State.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: In view of what has just been said, why do we need to complete the vertical component of the State primary geodetic network? I would have thought that gravity had some relationship to the vertical component. I could be wrong, and I would be anxious to know.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would like the Surveyor-General to answer this technical point.

Mr Porter: Gravity tends to be related to levelling. The exercise and explanation can be very technical, and I do not know how technical you wish me to be on this point. The levelling network for South Australia is related to a mean sea level exercise; the gravity exercise is related to geodetic changes in gravitational pull, and both of these are of interest to the mining and surveying industry. They are separate yet in some way related. So, the normal practice is that the geodetically levelling observations are generally taken at the same point as the gravimetric, except where levelling exercises are needed for mapping purposes and gravimetric observations are not.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: What does the term 'global positioning system' mean?

Mr Porter: In the past two years the concept of surveying has changed. Surveyors are changing from using theodolites and measuring angles and electronic distance measuring units for measuring distances and are converting to using satellite equipment, which picks up signals from a group of signals.

Mr GUNN: The Minister and her officers would be aware of the existence of the Mintabie Consultative Committee. I understand that some action has been taken to initiate the formation of that committee, because there was an urgent need to resolve a number of outstanding issues. For example, the community has been prevented from establishing a reticulated electric supply and the proposed Uniting Church hospital has involved a dispute. A number of issues concerned the title of lands in the area. Can the Minister give an assurance that the Department of Lands' good offices were used to form that committee and that discussion of those matters will take place as soon as possible? Over 1 000 people are at Mintabie and the Government has just built a new school there.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I have met with the Anangu Pitjantjatjara people and have discussed some of their concerns about Mintabie. I am aware that there is a significant population and that public services are much lower than conventional standards. Tension exists in the area regarding future development and as to whether the whole area should be extended, or whether, in the fullness of time, it should be returned.

Mr GUNN: It should be extended.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am saying that there are other views and, as the Minister, I would be remiss if I was not prepared to listen to those views and be mindful of the fact that we have been through mining booms in a number of areas, not the least of which has been gold mining. I think it would be incorrect to make a hasty decision. I understand the honourable member's questions and the genuine concern that he has. The department is very conscious of this sensitive issue.

Mr Kaufmann: The Consultative Committee for Mintabie actually exists under the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act and is already, and has been, working for a long time. Within the next three to four weeks the review will involve the locals quite actively and it will address a whole array of those issues at Mintabie, particularly relating to the future role of that town and what, if any, legislative or administrative changes are needed.

Mr GUNN: Can an assurance be given that everything possible will be done to expedite the review and the considerations of the committee?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, I can give that assurance, because I am aware that that would be the wish of the officers involved, and it is certainly my wish.

Mr GUNN: My next question concerns shack sites along the Murray River which would have been affected by the 1956 floods. Can the Minister indicate whether the Government has considered re-establishing the Shack Site Review Committee to further review the difficulties and concerns which have arisen in relation to the ultimate aim of the department and the Government towards those shack sites? Further, can the Minister indicate what will take place when those leases expire and what will happen to those leases if the shack sites are determined as unacceptable?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr Kaufmann to address the aspects raised by the honourable member.

Mr Kaufmann: We have looked at the reconstitution of the classification review committee, but there seems to be no point in doing it again. It was an exceedingly expensive exercise. The 1956 flood was reaffirmed by the quite extensive Murray Valley Management Review. The shacks that are left are classified as non-acceptable and are below flood level. We will have to look at what happens as the leases expire. It is the Government's policy to look at replacement sites and, in the context of the Murray Valley Management Review, development sites have been located. It is the department's intention as time moves on to look at joint development of those areas with private enterprise in order that the existing non-acceptable shack lessees can be offered replacement sites and there will be development to sustain local councils and economies. The same situation would apply in relation to coastal shacks.

Mr GUNN: Will the Minister consider requests that I have received from Mr Brian Powell, who lives at Quorn and who has been involved in the Outback and the Arid Zone most of his life. He is particularly interested in growing native trees and recently spoke on the School of the Air network about the need to plant native trees on stations and around homesteads. He has been inundated by people wanting his advice and assistance to organise such plantings.

Has the Minister considered providing a departmental officer to assist in this project? Mr Powell pointed out to me at the weekend that it is beyond him to keep up with the requests made of him, he is getting on in years and it is a fairly expensive project.

I have also been approached by Mr John Zwar who is involved with the Roxby Downs project and in relation to the Arid Zone Botanic Garden at Port Augusta. Will the

Minister consider this worthwhile suggestion because Mr Powell advised me on Saturday at the Quorn Show that there are many native species suitable for planting—and perhaps the Woods and Forests Department could be involved—but people require advice and assistance to get them established, otherwise the exercise is likely not to be successful.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It seems to me to be an excellent suggestion. As I understand it, the department has not been approached by Mr Brian Powell. I will certainly ask the department to look at making those resources available. I give a commitment that I will raise this matter with my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, as obviously there is some crossover between the two areas. But certainly, in line with the kind of land and indeed water management resource policies, these suggestions are well worth pursuing.

Mr ROBERTSON: I preface my first question with a supplementary question, and it relates to a question asked by the member for Mitchell about gravity survey. I presume that the gravity grid that is being established is usable by mining companies for doing Bouger anomaly maps and the like. Is it to a standard that can be used for microscale exploration?

Mr Porter: That is right.

Mr ROBERTSON: I refer to page 436 of the Program Estimates and to the reference to the projected field trips to establish Aboriginal place names—presumably in the North-West of South Australia. This is under the program title 'Land Surveying and Mapping'. Seeing this reminds me of the story of Norman Tindale who, in 1929 took a camel through that area to map the names of the tribes. This might be one of those apocryphal stories, but I am told that when he asked the Pitjantjatjara people the name of their group they gave it to him, and when he said what is the name of the group over there they gave him another name, which he duly wrote down; when he got to the other group to check the translation it was something like 'Them other fellows over the hill'—it did not actually relate to their name at all. They subsequently turned out to be the Yunkatjajara, from memory. I am wondering whether there will be any difficulties in accurately chronicling the various names of places and what use will be made of that information when it is finally put together. I do not envy the people who have to do it, I must say.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I think the member for Mitchell has certainly made a very interesting interjection, that there may well be some correction to maps that are no longer held to be accurate. For a little more scientific explanation, I once again ask the Surveyor-General to give us an explanation.

Mr Porter: If I may preface my answer by saying that the Aboriginal people of South Australia are concerned that they are losing their heritage at the same rate as the European people. One of the major items of importance concerns the names of places that are of concern to them. The exercise that has been proposed this year, which hopefully will continue in forthcoming years, is an endeavour to arrest this loss of information and to place on the maps of South Australia the proper Aboriginal names for certain features. In doing this, there is the problem that the true names have been lost. Indeed, the other problem is that many Aboriginal tribes do not have a vocabulary or a written language to make this exercise possible. However, work has been done in association with certain experts. The exercise in the Pitjantjatjara country, particularly the Musgrave Ranges, involves people from the Pitjantjatjara Council. They were

the people who asked us to become involved in this exercise, to try to arrest this loss of information.

Mr ROBERTSON: Will there be any difficulty in renaming places? For example hilltops and the like, which may have had European names? Is it envisaged that they will be given their correct local names?

Mr Porter: The exercise in the Musgraves will be reasonably simple because most of the topographical features bear no names at all at present. There are some names like Mount Davies and Mount Woodroffe which have significance, but the rest of the features in the area carry no names at all. This is one of the reasons why the Musgraves were chosen first, plus the fact that we are upgrading the maps in that area. Some difficulty is expected in areas like the Flinders Ranges and the Gammon Ranges. In those cases, consideration has been given to placing both European and Aboriginal names on the topographical maps.

Mr ROBERTSON: My next question relates to the property valuation system and the computer assisted valuation techniques which were used last year and which will obviously continue to be used in future. The aim as I read it is to enable valuations to be made more frequently. As one who has annoyed his neighbours intensely by actually buying a property above what they regarded as the market rate and putting everybody else's rates up, I can understand some of the difficulties caused by this. How close to completion is the attempt to put everything on the computer assisted valuation system, and how regularly will those valuations be updated, or is there a continuous rolling re-evaluation whenever a property changes hands?

Mr Darley: Certainly, sales of all properties are monitored as they occur. Valuations are updated annually, as the member mentioned. So, with that continuous monitoring of sales, the valuations that are returned are completely in context and comparable with the sales that are occurring.

Mr ROBERTSON: That obviates the need to raise and lower rates by councils, E & WS and everybody else who uses that system?

Mr Darley: It obviates the need to raise or lower rates with sharp increases or decreases.

Mr ROBERTSON: Previously you found the rate in the dollar would creep up, until the actual valuation was updated and the rate was dropped, which was a bit traumatic?

Mr Darley: Yes.

Mr ROBERTSON: Referring to page 439 of the Program Estimates and the establishment of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee which is examining the prospect of introducing licences for pet shops and backyard dealers in pets, what is the rationale for that? What will the licensing procedure involve and what does it intend to achieve? What is the intention of licensing such an area?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr David Watts, the Animal Welfare Officer, to answer that question.

Mr Watts: A number of complaints have been received by the Minister over a number of years about various pet shops and dealers around the State. As a result of this, the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee set up a subcommittee to look at the overall question, and it is tackling it in two parts. The first part was to look at pet shops generally and the practices that occur in those shops, to highlight weak points and then prepare a draft code of practice to control the activities of pet shop traders. That subcommittee has finished that stage and, hopefully within the next month, the Minister will be able to release that code for public comment. Once that is done, the subcommittee will start to look at the idea of licensing.

Without trying to pre-empt what it will come up with, I understand that it is trying to find some method that will

allow legitimate sale of animals for companion animals, but restrict very much the backyard sales that happen at Paddy's markets and Trash and Treasure markets where a lot of fairly bad practices and cruelty occur.

Mr ROBERTSON: That is not an attempt to curtail the spread of any animal diseases or a reference to the public health aspect? Presumably it relates to fair trading practices?

Mr Watts: The idea of curtailing disease and so forth is purely something that will be covered under the code of practice.

Mr ROBERTSON: I take it that that will not affect private sales, such as advertising your cat for sale in the *Sunday Mail*—God forbid! It will not presumably affect people doing that?

Mr Watts: Certainly, at this stage it is not intended to.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am looking forward to receiving the draft code of practice. I have been made aware over the years, as was my predecessor, that some practices in pet shops have been very distressing for a number of animals traded in that way. I would not be attempting in any way to interfere with people selling their kittens or puppies privately. When Mr Watts was talking about taking pets to Trash and Treasure Markets on Sunday he was referring to people who go every week and make a living from that. Some of the standards and practices shown to exist are certainly questionable, but there would be no attempt to interfere.

Mr S.G. EVANS: I refer to page 438 of the Program Estimates, where it states that 60 projects are expected to be in progress in the 1988-89 year. Will the Minister make available a list of these projects?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I have a list of Lands Department projects for 1987-88 as follows:

LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS 1987-88

At June 1988 the following situation existed:

- Allotments were on sale in 16 towns
- Allotments were being developed in 5 towns
- Allotments under consideration in 11 towns
- Allotments were being investigated in 19 towns.

The development in country areas has slowed over the past 12 months due to the downturn in the rural areas and a corresponding decrease in sales. However blocks were released in the following towns:

- Waikerie
- Port Rickaby
- Thevenard

It is anticipated that blocks will be released in the following towns this financial year:

- Kadina
- Coober Pedy
- Miranda

GRAND JUNCTION INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

STAGE 1—Comprising 48 blocks all sold

STAGE 2—Under construction

—1 block presold, 15 blocks to be offered for application in September 1988

STAGE 3—E&WS Department overseeing filling operations

REGENCY PARK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Australian National has applied to purchase Stage 5, comprising approximately 15 hectares, for the expansion of Islington Railway.

There is no further development planned in the Regency Park Industrial Estate.

COUNTRY DEVELOPMENTS

Area of Responsibility

The department is involved in all country areas of the State and is currently active in 33 council areas.

Towns involved as at September 1988:

Land on Sale

Residential	Industrial
Waikerie (8)	Berri (16)
Port Rickaby (11)	Loxton (2)
Berri (43)	
Cobdogla (3)	
Kadina (4)	
Thevenard (14)	

Port Hughes (27)

Clinton (3)

Cape Jervis (2)

Lock (8)

Coffin Bay (7)

Whyalla (10)

Kingston S.E. (7)

Coober Pedy (25)

Under Construction

Kadina Ind (11)

Penneshaw (40)

Parndana (sold but outstanding costs)

Thevenard (sold but outstanding costs)

Miranda (33)

Under Investigation

Wool Bay

Black Point

Port Julia

Coffin Bay

Port Augusta

Loxton West

Emu Bay

Barmera

Berri

Victor Harbor

Glossop

Thevenard

Robe

Xmas Cove

False Bay

St Kilda

Cactus Beach

Fowlers Bay

During the 1987-88 financial year, 136 blocks were sold (193 in 1987).

I will look at having the figures for 1988-89 available within the 10-day period.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Has there been an abnormally high turnover of valuers employed by the department in the past two years? If so, what is the reason for this movement? Four or five years ago we had a shortage of valuers and the department took on people from New Zealand. How many of these people are still employed by the department?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: When I was visiting the Department of Lands office in Berri I met a couple of New Zealand valuers who seemed to be happy and content to be making their home in the Riverland. It was interesting to talk with these two gentlemen—two of the people to whom the honourable member has referred. I ask the Director to comment further.

Mr Darley: It is a question of what is normal in terms of valuer employment in Australia or South Australia. In 1984 we experienced a loss of 22 valuers to the private sector as a result of the increased activity in the real estate market. From then until about 18 months ago things settled down but, once again, with the increased activity in the real estate market there has been a fairly abnormal drift of valuers to the private sector. The private sector looks upon the Government as the training ground for valuers for its industry. In so far as the number of valuers recruited from New Zealand is concerned, we will provide that information accurately in a couple of days. Generally speaking, it is about 23 or 24, and I suggest that the only New Zealand valuers who are not still with us are one who was killed in a road accident in 1985; one who moved to Sydney to join the ministry, and the others would have been promoted into the private sector. However, we will get accurate information on that subject for the honourable member.

Mr S.G. EVANS: What is the total financial return from the sale of properties conducted by the Lands Department during the 1987-88 fiscal year?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The surplus land sold in the past financial year totalled \$14.116 million, and the Crown

land net proceeds for the year were \$7.754 million. It is a matter of adding those two figures together.

Mr S.G. EVANS: Is the Minister referring to all properties? I asked for the sales of properties: that may only be vacant land.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The problem with the honourable member's question is that it can involve improved and unimproved land. I understand that that separate information is not available. We can give the honourable member a breakdown of the figures I have provided for him, but I cannot provide him with that specific information. Information is contained in the Estimates of Receipts book. I have given some information, which was recorded by *Hansard*, regarding the two areas of surplus land and Crown land.

Ms GAYLER: Do any metropolitan councils make their own land valuations annually or otherwise? In other words, are there any which do not use the Valuer-General's annual valuation, and how does the Valuer-General charge councils for the valuations done for them?

Mr Darley: One metropolitan council does not use the Valuer-General's valuation and that is the Adelaide City Council. The method of charging is based, for capital values, at the rate of 12.5c per \$10 000 of capital value or, for site values, at the rate of 30c per \$10 000 of site value.

Ms GAYLER: As a supplementary question, I take it that councils are still entitled to carry out their own valuations, if they wish to do so. Might councils be financially better or worse off if they carry out their own valuations?

Mr Darley: There is no doubt in my mind that councils would be financially disadvantaged if they had to undertake valuations on their own accord. However, the Valuation of Land Act, and certainly the Local Government Act, enables local government to make its own valuation if it so desires.

Ms GAYLER: During last year's Estimates Committee hearings, the Committee was advised that a draft submission concerning the Roads (Opening and Closing) Act was being prepared, with the object of simplifying the process, particularly for closing old and often undeveloped roads so that a quicker, simpler (and therefore cheaper) process could be achieved. What stage have those proposed amendments reached?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The draft submission recommending amendments to the current Roads (Opening and Closing) Act has taken longer than was anticipated. The reason for this is that it has involved extensive consultation between the Department of Lands and local government bodies. As the honourable member would be aware, there is an enormous number of local government bodies, so this consultation has taken a long time. However, I will shortly take a submission to Cabinet for consideration and I anticipate that the Bill will be introduced into the Parliament during the current session and that will tidy up the points raised by the honourable member.

Ms GAYLER: Page 438 of the Program Estimates states that, for 1988-89, a further development of industrial land for metropolitan Adelaide and land for the Roxby Downs development and Lincoln Cove is proposed. What contribution to the economic development of the State is this program of land development making and in what way is it assisting industrial developers and small business in South Australia?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I believe that the policies are assisting industrial development in South Australia in a number of areas which have been highlighted in specific targets for 1988-89.

Mr Kaufmann: There are three quite different areas. The first relates to our industrial land in metropolitan Adelaide

where we have contributed quite substantially to the State's revenues. By selling land on concessional finance, we have also been able to promote the development of a considerable number of industries.

This is done in close consultation with officers of the Department of State Development and makes use of the Housing Trust's rental purchase scheme. So, it is an integrated piece of the State's activity. Last year we sold 48 allotments and we anticipate that this year half of them will be under development. Also, this year we anticipate releasing 15 allotments and expect that they will all be sold. There are actually 16 allotments in the area, the first of which has already been sold to the Housing Trust. That is an example of fulfilling many of the Government's objectives because the Housing Trust is building a rental purchase factory for an industry that is being relocated from Hindmarsh. So, it is contributing to residential urban consolidation as well as allowing for the expansion of an industry.

In country areas, we have contributed to the growth of several towns, most notably Kadina where we have an industrial estate that is allowing for the steady growth of industry servicing Yorke Peninsula and the Lower North. We estimate that about 70 jobs have been created on that estate over the past four or five years which, in a town the size of Kadina, is fairly significant.

The last areas are Roxby and Lincoln Cove. Although the main project is generated from outside the department, the use of the Crown Lands Act and the skills of officers of the department has allowed the developments to proceed at a lower cost to the developers and, in the case of Lincoln Cove, at a saving of probably 18 months in getting titles prepared.

Mr GUNN: In various parts of the State there are people who hold miscellaneous leases. Concern has been expressed to me that certain people in the department are keen, when those leases expire—or prior to expiry—to get them handed back or to get rid of the people who currently occupy or use those leases. I cited some examples in the Upper Eyre Peninsula. Can the Minister assure me that the suggestion I put forward is not the policy of the department and will she undertake to make sure that the department will not attempt to get those people who currently hold miscellaneous leases to relinquish them during her term as Minister?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the appropriate officer to describe the current attitude and approach taken by the department towards miscellaneous leaseholders.

Mr Kaufmann: Throughout the State it is in our interest to ensure that people have appropriate tenure and pay market rents. Working out what is the long-term appropriate tenure frequently takes some considerable investigation. One that is coming to conclusion is in the Moonta-Wallaroo mines area. I use that as an example because it is a complicated piece but it has allowed us to be in a position to convert a great number of miscellaneous leases and annual licences to freehold.

The other significant area of miscellaneous leases is the one to which the honourable member refers in the Upper Eyre Peninsula where there are substantial quantities of native vegetation. These have been the subject of applications for clearance, and the Native Vegetation Clearance Authority is somewhat concerned about dealing with them individually. They have also been the subject of a proposal for an enormous national or conservation park corridor running virtually from the Western Australian border well into the middle of Eyre Peninsula.

In order to try to resolve the competing interests in this matter the department has commenced a review of public land on Eyre Peninsula, in order that we hold representative

examples of the ecosystems that need preservation—but that we hold no more than that. The review will take between three and four years, and certainly we would not anticipate closing any of the leases in advance of that review. I would anticipate that, at the conclusion of that review, a number of lessees would end up with much more appropriate tenure than the fairly short miscellaneous leases that they have.

Mr GUNN: Who is carrying out the review? Will the landholders or their representatives be involved in all the discussions or in part of the review? I have some personal concerns about the attitude of certain people in the department who have been involved in the negotiations; this has been brought to my attention in regard to some of the miscellaneous leases that some of these people have lost. I am very unhappy about the way in which the matter has been handled. I do not want to go too much further, although without too much provocation I would name certain individuals. However, I believe that landholders have been treated in a quite disgraceful fashion.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I call on Mr Kaufmann to respond.

Mr Kaufmann: The review will be conducted by our professional services unit, which is located at head office here. It will not be conducted by officers from the regional office. It is intended to consult extensively with all the concerned landowners and land occupiers. It is also intended that the whole process be done in a spirit of public participation. In fact, it is that process of public participation which contributes significantly to the slow time that we have projected. It is not practical to rush these things. If things are rushed people are denied the opportunity to spend time considering the information and to make submissions. It allows the opportunity for the local community to really be able to understand what is being proposed. So, it is certainly our intention to consult.

Mr GUNN: Can the Minister say what progress has been made in dealing with all the applications in relation to freehold blocks of land, at say, Coober Pedy and in other parts of the State, where such land is held under various titles—some are camp sites, some are under annual licences, and so on. From time to time, people have approached me from all over the State in relation to this. There appears to be a big backlog of these applications. Can the Minister advise whether this matter has been attended to and whether those people who have been waiting, for some years in some cases, will receive their titles in the very near future?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is certainly my objective and that of the department that Coober Pedy operate as a normal town. The allotments should be freehold and the roads dedicated to the council, with the council having reserves of land for public use. During the last year the department has cancelled licences over unused allotments, with six to 12 months notice being given. These were auctioned on 2 September, when over 60 allotments were sold as freehold blocks. Arrangements are being made with the council to develop industrial and residential allotments for freehold sale. Extension of the town into the mining area is certainly a complex matter and requires considerable skill and experience from the survey team. It has taken some time to fit this work into the department's overall program. However, problems have been caused by, for example, an injury to a staff member, and it took some weeks to be able to recover performance in this area. However, I give the honourable member an assurance that it is proceeding in terms of what he has referred to in his question.

Mr GUNN: Can the Minister advise whether she intends to repeal any unnecessary Acts of Parliament, get rid of any

boards or continue to carry out a consolidation and review of the operations of many of these Acts, regulations, boards or committees, and I ask her not to talk about the Crown Lands Act because we know that is under review?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The member would be aware that there is an ongoing review, continuing in terms of legislation, in line with Government policy to move more towards deregulation. The general answer to that question is 'Yes' but, at this point in my portfolio duties, I have not specifically addressed any areas within Coober Pedy that would attract my attention. Certainly within the ongoing program, that will be looked at.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I expect the Minister may refer this question to the Valuer-General, but can she tell me what are the criteria utilised by the Valuer-General in making a valuation on land which is used both for business and habitation purposes?

Mr Darley: If the property is used as the principal place of residence by the owner, the valuation is based on its actual use as a residence and does not have regard to its commercial potential at all.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: I do not expect that either the Minister or the Valuer-General will make any comment on what I will now say, but I have a constituent in my electorate who lives 365 days of the year on his land and also conducts a small business from it, and he has been charged business rating and valuation for the past eight years. It seemed to me to be an anomalous position. I will take up no further time of the Committee and will pursue it through correspondence channels, but the person concerned and his family live in a house on that land and he openly conducts a business there also. To me as a lay person, it seemed that the land would be treated as 50 per cent residence and 50 per cent business purposes or whatever, but the council concerned has taken the view—and I have correspondence from the council—that it follows the Government requirement in this area and accordingly treats the land in the way I have described to the detriment of the amount which has to be paid by the constituent.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Valuer-General to make a comment on that aspect.

Mr Darley: The problem in that situation is the extent to which the business operation exists on the premises. Obviously if the member is prepared to provide some information at a later date, we will certainly investigate it.

Mr S.G. EVANS: In the case of the Pitjantjatjara lands, where it is really a station now, will the Pastoral Board inspectors have the responsibility to oversee the general operations, as is the case with other leases on pastoral lands?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Is the member referring to the proposed legislation or the current practice?

Mr S.G. EVANS: The proposed legislation. The Pastoral Board has inspectors at the moment. Will they have the same responsibility in the case of the Aboriginal lands as they do now?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is my understanding that the answer to that question is 'Yes'.

Mr S.G. EVANS: This Minister's department has the responsibility of the conservation and management, one might say, of the lands of the Crown which I take it would include the areas set aside for conservation or recreation, such as our parks, whether they be national or whatever. That is still Crown land. On pastoral leases we also have problems with weeds and pests. What role will the department play in working with the Department of Agriculture on the control of vertebrate pests and noxious weeds?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That also involves the Minister for Environment and Planning.

Mr S.G. EVANS: The role of the department has changed from administration and development to conservation and management of the lands of the Crown, as referred to on page 435.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Is the question as to what extent the department is working with other departments to carry out that role and function? Has the honourable member specifically looked at the control of pests and noxious weeds? Obviously most of the responsibility and guidelines will be set down by the Department of Agriculture in consultation with the Department of Environment and Planning.

Mr S.G. EVANS: It is saying that the role will be more towards conservation and management. Who will have the real management of these lands?

Mr Kaufmann: The department is putting more emphasis on land management than it has in the past. However, our prime means of arranging that management is to put suitable occupiers in place with an obligation to undertake that management with the expectation of getting some return from it. We have stepped up our monitoring in a number of areas of tenant activity. In terms of conservation parks, the responsibility is clearly with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and not us. We have, however, increased such activity as much as we can afford within our resources to undertake this. We work closely with local weeds officers and vertebrate pests people and that will continue through the coming year.

Mr ROBERTSON: I found it difficult to accept the member for Eyre making an implied threat against an officer of the Department of Lands who may have done something with which his constituent did not agree. He has made those sort of threats in the House before and also to the Native Vegetation Management Authority. I seek an assurance that members of the Public Service, who are simply carrying out their allotted functions, will be given all due protection from those sort of attacks both in the House and in the media.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is not up to the Minister to afford protection within the House. I expect that it would come under Standing Orders and the guidance of either the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be. That would come under the purview of the officers of the Parliament, not individual Ministers, and the depart-

mental representatives here tonight would not be able to answer that.

Mr ROBERTSON: I am trying to get some form of assurance for people who are simply doing their duty in the Public Service that as far as possible this kind of thing will be contained.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That really opens up the question of parliamentary privilege. Parliamentary privilege is paramount, and no-one could give that assurance because anyone may make a statement about anyone else in the community, be it a public servant, another member of Parliament or anyone else. That would be an impossibility under parliamentary privilege. However, under the human relations, commonsense and good manners approach most members of Parliament do not engage in that kind of practice.

As I understand it, the member for Eyre did not name anyone: I have no idea whom he is talking about. I think that what the member for Bright is alluding to is a standard of fair play and some kind of ethics, given that public servants do not have the right to get up in public forums to attack members of Parliament, or even one another. As I interpret the honourable member's question, he is asking whether there is some way that we as members of Parliament can ensure that those courtesies are extended to public servants, private individuals and others. There has to be a bit of give and take in this. While people can say that they are angry about something and can make generalisations about it, it is not quite the same as specifically naming people and talking about them, while not giving them any opportunity, either before the attack is made or subsequently, of any form of redress. There is really nothing which can be done within the Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions I declare the examination completed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.57 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Tuesday 20 September at 11 a.m.