

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 18 September 1990

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Chairman:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings

Members:

The Hon. H. Allison
 Mr D.M. Ferguson
 Mrs D.C. Kotz
 Mr J.A. Quirke
 Mr R.B. Such
 The Hon. J.P. Trainer

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I intend to adopt a fairly informal procedure. Changes in the composition of the Committee will be notified to the Committee as they occur. If the Minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be in a form suitable for inclusion in *Hansard*, and two copies must be submitted no later than Friday 5 October to the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

I propose to allow the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make an opening statement if they so desire of about 10 minutes but no longer than 15 minutes. Again there will be a flexible approach based on three questions per member, alternating sides. Members may also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning before switching to the next member. Again I ask Committee members not to abuse the supplementary questioning process.

Subject to the convenience of the Committee, a member who is outside the Committee who desires to ask a question will be permitted to do so once the line of questioning on an item has been completed by the Committee. An indication of this in advance to the Chairman will be necessary. I also remind members that there has been a change in the Standing Orders, which allows members of Estimates Committees to ask the Minister for explanations on matters relating to Estimates of Receipts. I stress that questions must be based on lines of expenditure and revenue as revealed in the Estimates of Payments and the Estimates of Receipts. Reference may be made to other documents, for example, the Program Estimates and the Auditor-General's Report. Members must identify a page number in the relevant financial paper. Questions must be directed to the Minister and not to the advisers, but obviously the Minister may refer questions to the advisers for a response.

Correctional Services, \$64 667 000

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Correctional Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr B.D. Apsley, Acting Executive Director, Correctional Services Department.
 Mr I.J. Winton, Acting Director, Operations.
 Mr K.R. Goulter, Acting Director, Support Services.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I think a brief opening statement will set the scene for the Committee and give some broad information, which the Committee may wish me to enlarge upon as the morning proceeds. One of the major issues is prison numbers, which have increased sharply throughout 1990. At present, the system capacity for sentenced male prisoners is 678 single cells, with the population standing at 787 prisoners. In 1989-90, the Government's program of upgrading correctional facilities in South Australia continued. The redevelopment of B Division at Yatala Labour Prison was completed and fully commissioned by November 1989, when the last 28 upgraded cells were occupied.

Further construction work has continued on the new 95-bed unit known as F Division at Yatala Labour Prison, with the completion date expected to be in October this year. Allowing for the usual post-handover checking of the facility and the subsequent period of staff familiarisation, the Government expects to have prisoners accommodated in F Division before Christmas 1990, which will temporarily ease the accommodation shortages. During the 1989-90 financial year, redevelopment works were completed at the Port Lincoln Prison and the Northfield prison complex; work commenced on the huge redevelopment project at Port Augusta Prison; and work also commenced on the Yatala Labour Prison and on the development of a community corrections centre for Marla in the Far North of the State.

The Marla facility will allow the introduction of non-custodial options to that area of the State which at present it does not have. It will have, through the opening of the Marla facility, access to the community service order alternative. The budget allows for planning of future redevelopment at Mount Gambier, Cadell and Northfield prisons. The Government has allocated \$17 million for capital works and correctional services during 1990-91. This compares with an allocation of \$15.47 million last year and indicates the continuing commitment of the Government to the provision of secure and humane accommodation for our prison population.

Turning to the recurrent budget, the department was given significant resource increases in 1989-90 mainly relating to addressing recommendations included in the interim report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, but also providing for the anticipated commissioning of the new F Division cell block at Yatala Labour Prison. Not all those funds were expended in 1989-90. However, the budget for 1990-91 provides for those initiatives to come on stream this financial year. The department will incur commissioning costs associated with the capital works program in 1990-91, in particular, the Marla Community Correction Centre and the first stage of the Port Augusta gaol redevelopment. The recurrent budget of \$64.667 million in 1990-91 is further evidence of this Government's commitment to correctional issues in South Australia.

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

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Referring to page 90 of the Estimates of Payments, program 1, the budget line has increased by about \$10 million in total. The biggest increase is about \$6.5 million, or 88 per cent, for operating expenses, minor equipment and sundries. What is the explanation for that very significant increase in one line?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Apart from the Government's generosity, I will ask Mr Kevin Goulter to provide a breakdown of that information.

Mr Goulter: The main increase in that line relates to the increased premium in workers compensation. The premium has increased by \$6 million.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I am a little surprised by the Minister's answer, so I will come back to that matter later.

The Minister referred to F Division at Yatala which will house 95 inmates in single cell accommodation, to cost about \$9.7 million. There have been rumours over the past several months that, despite the Minister's promise to commission the new F Division at Yatala by December 1990, a different area may in fact be commissioned as prison officers have been refusing to serve in the proposed new F Division because of the difficulties associated with the unusual security design. Will the Minister either confirm or lay to rest these rumours? If true, it is apparent that it will require significant additional staffing, which is against the original concept of having a more economically designed part of the prison.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have not heard those rumours.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I relate my third question to prisoner health and to page 234 of the Program Performance and budget papers. The footnote states:

Includes Housing and Construction services . . . ; Department of Employment and TAFE . . . ; South Health Commission for prisoner medical services; . . .

It was reported in the press last week that South Australia did not have the same problem with the availability of needles in prisons and therefore nothing like the New South Wales attention to personal belongings needs to be carried out here. Can the Minister tell the Committee what is being done in South Australian prisons to ensure that no drugs or needles find their way into circulation in South Australian gaols so that they do not impinge on health costs and workers compensation costs?

No person in South Australia receives the death penalty yet, by deliberate or accidental act on the part of a prisoner, someone could be sentenced to a death sentence even if it was a delayed one. Is everything possible being done to protect prisoners, including segregation, from being infected with AIDS by sexual practices, needle contamination and aggressive needle stick? Does the Minister really believe that the South Australian system is safe from such events as have happened interstate?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In respect of the Health Commission and those questions that relate to the Prison Medical Service, they would have to be directed to the Minister of Health. The Minister of Correctional Services does not run the Prison Medical Service, which is run quite properly by the Health Commission.

As to the security of institutions and the procedures that we have for preventing as much as one can prevent contraband entering the prisons, that is certainly my responsibility. The measures are many and varied, but once there are contact visits we have a problem.

No prison in the world that has contact visits has been able to eradicate drugs completely from the prison scene. However, we do have extensive searching, particularly after contact visits in the high security institutions. In fact, we go to the extreme of strip searching every person who has had a contact visit. Nevertheless, unfortunately some drugs do get into the gaol. We have regular cell searches. We use our dogs, which are specially trained, to detect drugs. It is an extensive program. We do not believe, for a whole range of reasons, that we have in our system anywhere near the problems with drugs that they have in other States. We are pleased that we do not have that.

That is due to the procedures that we have and to the diligence of our prison officers, who spend a considerable amount of time, if not all their time, observing the manner of prisoners and whether they are affected by drugs, and collecting information about any drugs that may be in the prison. The Dog Squad is very active and occasionally

successful in detecting drugs in the prison system, but there is no way short of strip searching and internally searching everyone who goes in the prison every day (and that obviously is not a very practical proposition) of saying that there will never be any drugs in the gaol.

We have an extensive program run by the Health Commission for those prisoners who unfortunately are addicted to drugs, and there are many of them in the system. We believe—and I know the Minister of Health believes—that the program is very worthwhile and effective, even though it is criticised from time to time by a few prison officers as a waste of money.

Mr QUIRKE: I refer to page 236 of the Program Estimates. Can the Minister say what was the number of institution prisoners on remand for 30 June 1989 and 30 June 1990? What is the average time that a prisoner spends on remand? Are interstate comparisons possible and, if so, what is South Australia's position in terms of other States? What trends have occurred during the period 1978 to 1990, and are these trends likely to continue?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The number of prisoners on remand up to 30 June 1989 was 201 and up to 30 June 1990, 212. As of 30 June 1990, remandees were held at the following institutions: Adelaide Remand Centre, 136; James Nash House, 12; Mount Gambier Gaol, 5; Northfield Prison Complex, 15; Port Augusta Gaol, 15; Port Lincoln Prison, 1; and Yatala Labour Prison, 28. The average time a prisoner spends on remand is 39.3 days, but this figure is made higher by a small number of prisoners who spend a long time on remand. A better indicator in this case is the median time spent on remand, which is 13 days. In other words, half of the remandees spend fewer than 13 days on remand and half spend more than 13 days on remand. A more detailed breakdown of the distribution of time spent on remand is indicated in the following figures, which are based on a sample of 1 651 remandees: time spent on remand of less than one month, 1 150; one month and less than six months 421; six months and less than one year, 63; one year or more, 17; and total, 1 651.

Most prisoners remanded for more than 12 months were facing charges for serious offences, such as murder. Interstate comparisons are available for May 1990 from the Australian Institute of Criminology. These figures showed that South Australia had the third highest remand rate of any Australian jurisdiction with 13.2 remandees per 100 000 population. That figure was behind the Northern Territory which had a rate of 36.5 per 100 000 population and New South Wales with a rate of 21 per 100 000. An analysis of time on remand by David Biles from the Australian Institute of Criminology indicated that South Australia's relatively high rate of remandees has resulted from a high rate of intakes rather than delays in court processing.

South Australia's remand rate over the 13 year period from 1978 to 1990 has increased. In the Australian context, the total prison population has increased by 31 per cent and most prison statistic commentators believe that this increase is, in part, attributable to an increase in the remand rate. A closer examination of South Australia's remand rate shows that it was relatively constant between 1978 and 1984 but, between 1985 and 1987, it increased markedly. Since 1988 the rate has stabilised but, as mentioned earlier, South Australia's rate remains the third highest of any Australian jurisdiction. It is expected that South Australia's remand rate will continue to increase, but that the increase may be at a slower rate than the increase in the general imprisonment rate.

Mr QUIRKE: Can the Minister say what is the number of offenders under the care of the Department of Correctional Services?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: At 30 June 1990, the department was responsible for managing 937 prisoners in custody and 4 766 community based orders. It is significant that this indicates a ratio of one to five in respect of custody to community based penalties within the control of the department. The figures demonstrate the importance this Government places on the development of realistic non-custodial penalty options for courts and the credibility of those options.

Mr QUIRKE: What is the pay structure for prisoners? When was the pay structure last reviewed or increased?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Current pay rates are based on a daily allowance plus a further allowance payable for each working day, depending on the skill requirement and work performance. The daily allowance for all working prisoners (remands and unemployed) is \$2.20 per day, Monday to Friday inclusive. The further allowance for skill and performance is based on six levels: level 1, \$2.15 per day; level 2, \$2.25 per day; level 3, \$2.35 per day; level 4, \$2.45 per day; level 5, \$2.55 per day; and level 6, \$3.05 per day. Weekends and public holidays are paid on the basis of an extra day's allowance for each day worked.

Last financial year, an increase was obtained from inflationary adjustments made to the budget. The allowances for remand prisoners were increased from \$9.50 to \$11 per week. All other allowances were increased by 25c per week. That was implemented on 26 October 1989. The budget of 1990-91 provides for a 6 per cent increase, and the department is preparing to pay that increase to prisoners.

Mr SUCH: In view of the astounding increase in workers compensation premiums payable, will the Minister explain what was the premium payable last year and why there has been a dramatic increase? Is it related to AIDS, stress, over-exertion or physical injury? In view of the dramatic increases in workers compensation costs, is the Minister satisfied with the level of occupational health and safety practices within the prison system?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have the figure for last year in my head but I am sure it is printed somewhere, and it would not take a great deal of effort for the member for Fisher to find it. I did not understand the question of how it related to AIDS. As far as I know, no-one is on workers compensation for AIDS. As regards other reasons for workers compensation—they are many and varied. Correctional officers, the same as the rest of us, are heir to pretty well every ailment known to mankind.

One of the areas that is particularly worrying is stress. It is inherently stressful to be a correctional officer. It is much more stressful than being a clerk in the Department of Correctional Services, so it is not surprising that a number of correctional officers are on stress leave. I would be happy to outline in detail, either now or later, for the member for Fisher the program used to deal with the prison officers who are on workers compensation for one reason or another.

As regards the level of occupational health and safety—overwhelmingly, our prisons are modern prisons and the physical working conditions are very good. Our staffing levels are higher than anywhere else in Australia, even the world, and we do not have a large number of very 'heavy' criminals as there are in other jurisdictions both here and overseas.

It is a little bit of a mystery as to why we have the high levels of workers compensation given the high staff-prisoner ratios and the generally good physical working conditions. Nevertheless, it is a reality that we have these high levels of workers compensation. As I said, I will be happy to

supply the Committee with much more detailed information in our programs for dealing with it.

Mr SUCH: As a supplementary question: on my calculations we are looking at an increase of 600 per cent in workers compensation premiums. What steps is the Minister taking to address what is obviously a dramatic increase which must be of concern to the community?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot confirm that previous figure at the moment. In the previous question I answered just about all the question that has been restated by the member for Fisher. If he chooses to prompt my memory on something that he asked that was different, I will try to do that and then I shall hand over to Mr Kevin Goulter, the Acting Director of Support Services, to further detail the figures.

Mr SUCH: Perhaps the Minister could indicate the actual premium that was paid last year.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is all the new material you want?

Mr SUCH: At the moment.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I ask Mr Goulter to outline those figures to the Committee.

Mr Goulter: The premium paid last year was \$960 000. That is a fixed premium. In addition the department incurs the cost for the first 21 days that an employee is on workers compensation. That cost was \$549 000, a total of \$1.5 million.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I now invite Mr Winton, the Acting Director of Operations, to give some of the information that the Committee clearly wants. Members of the Committee have shown an interest in how seriously we regard workers compensation and what programs we have to reduce the incidence of our employees on workers compensation and how we deal with them when they are on workers compensation in an attempt to get them back to work fit and healthy as soon as possible.

Mr Winton: The department has been very concerned about the incidence of workers compensation, and over some period has been taking action to try to reduce the level of absence and the cost that is being incurred. As a result of negotiations with the Department of Labour, the Department of Correctional Services applied to the coordinating committee of Government workers safety, health, workers compensation and rehabilitation for the implementation of the Pentstar program. We have been fortunate in being provided resources to the amount of \$230 000 for the implementation of that program in this financial year.

The aims of the project are to assist staff to remain at work and also to assist staff to return to work after workers compensation absences. It involves the development and implementation of a number of programs in several areas such as injury prevention, return to work initiatives, lifestyle management and education. In fact, the program started in October 1989 and has received a significant increase in funds this financial year.

By way of explanation, for the period 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1990 there have been 388 claims in the department compared with 362 the previous year. The major concern is stress-related claims which feature at 47 per cent.

The major aspects of the programs are in prevention. We try to support health and safety representatives and committees in the institutions and provide training to health and safety representatives. We are also providing training to managers and undertaking work place safety audits and some research into the stresses in the role of the correctional officer. It is significant that the department is embarking on a major initiative to broaden the range of the correctional officer so that it is more rewarding for officers.

We are also providing stress management training for all staff, and there is a pilot staff counselling training service in G Division at the Yatala Labour Prison. One of the most significant parts of the program is the provision of a critical incident debriefing service for staff who are involved in traumatic incidents. Already the program has proved successful in the serious incidents that have occurred and we have been able to get counsellors to prisons at short notice to provide support to staff.

We also propose to provide injury management programs for staff who are injured at work and also some lifestyle management programs so that staff are better informed of the programs that are available in the community to provide a more rounded lifestyle. Finally, we hope to improve the information management systems within the department so that the department is more aware of the incidence of workers compensation, costs and where the hot spots are in the department. We in the department are taking the matter very seriously and we are confident that the actions taken in conjunction with the Department of Labour will be successful this financial year.

Mr SUCH: On page 234 of the Program Estimates at the bottom line reference is made to 39.4 long-term workers compensation cases. How long have those people been in that situation? What were the causes of that compensation? Will they be provided with payouts or will they be rehabilitated within the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot remember all the names and all the circumstances. I will get that detail for the member for Fisher. As to whether they will return to work or whether they will eventually come to some other arrangement, that would be purely speculation and I do not know whether it is really of any value, but I will certainly get the first part of the information for the member for Fisher.

Mr SUCH: My third question relates to Mobilong prison. Is it correct that a four-wheel drive vehicle is driven around the perimeter of the prison seven days a week 24 hours a day to help to maintain security? Is that an admission that security there is not effective and that the electronic surveillance system is not as effective as it should be?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The perimeter security is both electronic and physical. There is always a question of how much physical security we actually need. It may well be that perhaps there is too much security at Mobilong. I am sure that the PSA and prison officers would contest that and would say that it is very necessary that the perimeter of the institution be constantly patrolled. The community at Murray Bridge would probably also agree with the prison officers and want a permanent perimeter patrol.

There is nothing unusual in that. Yatala is the same. We do have external patrols of the prison, and I guess most high/medium security prisons have exactly the same. There is nothing novel about that; it is just a fact of prison life that one patrols the perimeter of the gaol. I am not sure what the import of the question is or if there is anything else I can add. Perhaps it might be a question of looking at where we can reduce the number of patrols.

Mr FERGUSON: I preface my question by making a suggestion to you, Sir. I know that it is your duty to report back to the Parliament in due course on the efficiency or otherwise of the Committees. Perhaps, you could make the suggestion to the Parliament that we install a data processing line with keyboards from the Speaker's gallery to the Opposition benches, so that they can get their questions a bit faster than they are getting them at present. It would certainly add to the efficiency of the Committee.

On page 237 of the Program Estimates, details are provided of the number of successful completions of commu-

nity service orders. Can the Minister also provide details of the range of programs being undertaken?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: When the community service order program was established by legislation in 1982, a Community Service Order Advisory Committee was set up to advise the Minister on the operation of the program. That committee also established guidelines on the type of projects or tasks to be undertaken within the parameters set out in section 176 of the Correctional Services Act 1982. In broad terms, tasks or projects are limited to those for persons or organisations who are in need, non-profit making, and where the work would not displace or threaten to displace a paid person.

Persons placed on community service, and now fine option, work on a variety of tasks, which include gardening and yard clearing for pensioners; ground and building maintenance for community centres; playground, building and ground maintenance at kindergartens and schools; maintenance work in national parks and local tourist sites—that should be of interest to the member for Fisher—foreshore clearing, and so on, for local councils; general assistance to heritage, historical and special project groups in local areas; special Aboriginal-based programs by Aboriginal offenders for Aboriginal citizens or groups; and support work on a variety of tasks for local community agencies.

All project requests are considered for approval by each local community service committee, within the framework of the legislation and the guidelines from the Community Service Advisory Committee. The district's office manager and community service officers in each district office obtain referrals for projects through their local community network. In general, demand for work outstrips the supply of offender labour.

Mr FERGUSON: I refer to the Home Detention Scheme. On page 236 of the Program Estimates, accommodation pressures are identified as an issue facing the department. Would the Minister outline the current position with a home detention program and indicate future directions this program may take.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: This certainly is a program of which the Government is particularly proud. For a number of reasons, the program provides a cost effective alternative to imprisonment. It assists to lessen overcrowding in prison and provides the prisoners with a structured transition back to normal community life. Since this program's commencement in early 1987, 418 prisoners have participated. The vast majority of participants have resided with immediate family or near relatives in a private home at various locations throughout the State. The majority of prisoners have been fully employed or have attended school. The average period of time on the program has been approximately four months and the daily average of participants fluctuates around 40.

Home detention has been very successful, with approximately 85 per cent of prisoners completing the program without breach. The detection of alcohol consumption or the use of non-prescribed drugs has been the predominant cause of breaches. The occurrence of fresh offences has, as expected, taken place but not to any alarming rate or severity. Fourteen prisoners have been charged by the police for driving or property offences while on the program. To date, a total of only 20 prisoners have been involved in home detention as a condition of bail. Of this number, seven have been returned to custody for breach of curfew.

Electronic monitoring equipment continues to work satisfactorily, with 22 units presently in operation. Approximately 60 per cent of prisoners on home detention have been involved in electronic monitoring. Initial participation

is determined on factors of offence, notoriety and patterns of behaviour. Electronic monitoring is removed after a satisfactory response to the program has been maintained. Two home visits per week are conducted, regardless of the use or non-use of electronic monitoring. The expense of the home detention scheme compares very favourably with the cost of prison imprisonment. During the 1989-90 financial year the daily average of 37 participants cost \$22 per day per participant, or \$8 000 per participant per year. Home detention was over seven times less costly than the average cost of imprisonment within an institution.

The previous maximum period of home detention of six months has recently been extended for prisoners within one year of prison release who possess factors indicating that a period longer than six months is appropriate. Prisoners who represent with a genuine positive attitude, minimum drug or alcohol concern, confirmed employment or schooling and perceived stability within the proposed residence may be recommended by the Prisoner Assessment Committee for a home detention program beyond six months. To date, four prisoners have been released for eight month periods of home detention.

Legislative amendments are now being proposed to determine the eligibility for home detention, based on the non-parole period rather than the head sentence. Existing legislation, by its wording, limits and in some cases prevents release on home detention prior to parole release. It is expected that expected legislative amendments will also make the program available to life sentence prisoners, to parole release and make it more attractive to prisoners with sentences of less than one year. The proposed alteration to the Correctional Service Act would likely increase the numbers on the program by 20 to 30 a day.

Mr FERGUSON: In relation to prisoner education and training on page 236 of the Program Estimates reference is made to finalising an integrated prisoner education/prisoner industry plan for the Cadell Training Centre. What action is the Department of Correctional Services taking overall to ensure that prison industries are integrated with education and training activities?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In April this year the Department of Correctional Services issued a policy document to all prisons setting out principles for prisoner work and clarifying the prisoner education and work interface. Subsequently, a conference was held with prison managers and prison industries managers to discuss the practical implications of these policies. A survey is currently being conducted of each prison seeking information relating to the training requirements of each prison industry. Integrated prison industry education management plans will be developed at each prison in consultation with the staff.

Mrs KOTZ: Referring to page 47 of the Auditor-General's Report, and concerning the average daily number of prisoners and the net cost, I note that, in the Remand Centre, the net cost per prisoner has increased 13 per cent from the 1989-90 to the 1990-91 budget. I also notice that head office costs have increased 27 per cent in the same period. What are the reasons for those increases?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot confirm those figures at this stage as I do not have them in front of me, apart from indicating clearly the Government's commitment to correctional services and the generous extent to which it is funded. I will obtain those details and provide them by the appropriate date. With reference to the cost increases for prisoners at the various institutions, it is clear that, with staff accounting for about 75 per cent of our costs, any wage increases, etc., are reflected very quickly in the costs of the maintenance of our prisoners. However, I will obtain

a more complete breakdown of these details for the Committee.

Mrs KOTZ: Referring to Major Resource Variations 1989-90 to 1990-91 on page 236 of the Program Estimates, the first line refers to the full year cost of social justice initiatives. Will the Minister describe the areas of social justice initiatives and the cost relating to their implementation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is a lot of detail, on which we will get back to the Committee.

Mrs KOTZ: Referring to page 47 of the Auditor-General's Report, will the Minister provide the daily average number of prisoners to prison capacity expressed as a percentage in each of our prisons?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will provide that detail for the honourable member.

Mr QUIRKE: Page 236 of the Program Estimates highlights an important issue facing the department in relation to the major and continuing accommodation pressures upon high and medium classification facilities for both male and female prisoners. What is being done to address this issue?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I can provide this information in considerable detail because it is one of our most difficult problems. The funded capital works program to 1990-91 provides for the completion of 95 additional cells in F Division, Yatala Labour Prison, and the commencement of 80 additional cells at the Port Augusta Gaol. This accommodation followed the additional cells commissioned at the Port Lincoln prison in June 1990 and the provision of two cottages of four beds each for low security female prisoners at the Northfield prison complex.

Prison numbers have increased sharply throughout 1990, partly as a result of the transfer to the care of the Correctional Services Department of all prisoners previously held in custody by the Police Department. This has necessitated the department's extending the temporary leave program pursuant to 27 (1) of the Correctional Services Act 1982 as from 15 May 1990.

Early projections of male sentenced prisoners indicated a prisoner population of 760 by 1993. As at the week ending 9 September 1990, the population was already 710. It is envisaged that when the 95 F Division cells are commissioned in January 1991, the extended temporary leave program can cease. Given the present temporary leave numbers, which average from 75 to 100, it appears likely that the F Division accommodation will be almost taken up by prisoners on that program.

Consideration will also be given to cease using the early release provisions for fine defaulters. In effect, this results in no more prisoner accommodation being available until the new cells at the Port Augusta Gaol are commissioned. The department will be endeavouring to commission the expanded accommodation in June 1992. However, the department is still required to upgrade the existing cell blocks on a stage basis, and the total new capacity for Port Augusta will therefore not be available until April 1993. The department is considering plans which could be introduced in the short term to provide relief, and these include the construction of an additional five cottages, each of four bedrooms, for male prisoners at the Northfield prison complex. This would require some additional capital funds if approval was given.

The department also intends to redevelop the Cadell Training Centre including expanding the capacity from 125 bed spaces to 152. If that was approved, additional funding would be required. Further, although a less desirable option in the event of a continuing increase in prison numbers would be to consider providing transportable bunk houses as an immediate emergency provision for temporary accom-

modation. As this type of accommodation is of a low security rating in terms of building quality, it is considered to be suitable only for the Cadell Training Centre. A total of 18 units comprising 36 rooms could be sited and serviced at the Cadell Training Centre.

The department is also considering alternative strategies and diversionary mechanisms which relate to the management of prisoners. The Government is planning to introduce amendments to the Correctional Services Act to determine the eligibility date for home detention, based on the non-parole period rather than the head sentence. It is anticipated that the proposed legislative amendments will make the program available to more prisoners.

The question of doubling up in cells also arises when prison accommodation is short. However, the Government would be very reluctant to even consider doubling up in cells because of the inherent management problems and the clear Government policy to reduce this practice. However, it remains a possibility if no other strategies can be implemented.

I turn now to the possible extension of services provided by the department's court unit at the Adelaide Magistrates Court in relation to the provision of bail assessments. The likely impact of such a move may result in the greater use of bail to reduce remand numbers. If that were the case, it is anticipated that the impact would be more likely felt in the long term. As I said at the commencement of my response, the continuing increase in prison numbers in this State is our biggest headache, and that is basically for two reasons. The first is that fewer people are leaving gaol, which is a direct result of the Government's policy of providing for longer sentences to be imposed for more serious crimes. That approach has been very successful in cases of murder, rape, armed robbery and serious assault. The majority of sentences handed down have increased considerably; they are now much greater than those handed down a few years ago. The community has demanded that and, in my view, quite properly. However, there is also a cost to that; that is, people are imprisoned for far longer.

At the other end, there is the continual problem of a large number of short sentence prisoners coming into the system. This places a great deal of pressure on our low-security accommodation, and it is something with which we have been wrestling, particularly during the past 12 months (the period that is under review). I have already outlined some of the measures that we intend to take to relieve the pressure—I will not use the word 'overcrowding' again—in prisons. Unfortunately, the Government has no control over the sentences imposed. Quite properly, that is entirely at the discretion of the courts. As far as I know, we have every possible sentencing option to enable the courts to fulfil the Government's wish that prison be used only as a last resort.

However, despite all these programs we continue to have the problem of a high number of short-term prisoners. As I have said, we will cope with this situation through various administrative and legislative means. I thank the Opposition in anticipation for its cooperation when the legislation comes before Parliament to enable us to use some of our programs more effectively.

Membership:

Mr Atkinson substituted for Mr Ferguson.

Mr QUIRKE: I refer to page 149 of the Financial Statement 1990-91. Over the past few months there has been some comment about the staffing levels at Port Augusta Gaol and, indeed, in the department generally. Will the Minister comment on staffing levels across the department and the situation in relation to institutions—Port Augusta

in particular—and will he provide details of initiatives in relation to recruitment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The departmental staffing level as at the last pay period ending June 1990 was 1 211. The department has a target of 1 314 staff to be achieved by June 1991 in accordance with the upgrading and expansion of institutions. To ensure that the institutions achieved their required staffing levels, the department undertook a major recruitment campaign which resulted in over 500 applications for employment. Two correctional officer training schools have been arranged. The first commenced on 27 August 1990, and the second will commence on 12 November 1990. It is currently planned that a total of 120 officers will be trained through these schools and will be assigned to the various institutions on the basis of existing vacancies and new positions created through expansion.

Another training school is planned early in the new year, and that will enable institutions to fill vacancies which occur during the Christmas holiday period. During 1989-90 the department recruited a total of 87 correctional officers, of whom 66 were male and 21 were female. I have information which shows that staffing levels in institutions as at 30 June 1990 totalled 866, compared to an approved establishment of 892.9. I table that document, which is as follows:

STAFF NUMBERS—IN FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS

	Establishment	Staff at 30 June 1990
Yatala Labour Prison	325	302
Adelaide Remand Centre	186.7	177
Mobilong Prison	131	120
Northfield Prison Complex	65	64
Port Augusta Gaol	42.5	61
Port Lincoln Prison	34.7	33
Mount Gambier Gaol	20	20
Sir Samuel Way Courts Complex	15	19
Dog Squad	7	7
Home Detention	6	6
Cadell Training Centre	60	57
	892.9	866

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Since Commissioner Cotton handed down a decision in relation to staffing at Port Augusta Gaol early in January 1990, the situation at Port Augusta has improved considerably. In particular, Commissioner Cotton awarded an increase of four staff at that institution. Those positions were created and have now been filled. In addition, factors of concern to staff at Port Augusta Gaol—including occupational health and safety, stress management and training—have all been dealt with by the department.

A matter of considerable dispute at Port Augusta Gaol was the use of casual staff. Commissioner Cotton indicated that increased use of casual staff would be appropriate, but the industrial reaction to this decision was not supported. In order to deal with the situation the department negotiated with the Public Service Association and agreed that staff who had been employed on a casual basis over an extended period would be offered permanent part-time work. That offer has been made to six casual officers at Port Augusta Gaol. It has been agreed that ongoing casual support will be available strictly in a casual sense in accordance with the award.

Mr QUIRKE: Will the Minister comment on the department's performance in relation to the recruitment of Aboriginal staff (page 238 of the Program Estimates)?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In accordance with equal employment opportunity principles, and in response to a recognised need, the department continues to place greater

emphasis on the recruitment of a work force which more accurately reflects the demography of the society it serves. A significant aspect of this policy is a commitment to increase the level of Aboriginal employment throughout all divisions. New strategies for recruitment, placement and retention have been established so that the positions are seen by Aboriginal people to be more attractive and as providing some support. Some of these strategies are as follows: the appointment in March 1990 of a personnel consultant, Aboriginal recruitment; wider networking in Aboriginal communities so that Aboriginal people are aware of employment opportunities within the department; cooperation with the CES and organisations in country areas; and a review of the recruitment process, including selection criteria, to make it inclusive rather than exclusive for members of the designated disadvantaged groups.

Further, all identified Aboriginal applicants are short-listed for interview. Where there are Aboriginal applicants for a position, or where it interfaces with Aboriginal people, the department aims to include an Aboriginal person on the interview panel. If this is not possible, a person skilled in equal opportunity is included to ensure that the panel takes account of the historical disadvantages and differences of culture that may be encountered.

The number of Aboriginal staff employed as at June 1990 was 14, comprising six females and eight males. Two of these women are base grade clerical officers and three are in the social work classification. One male is at a classified level, while the other males are base grade correctional officers. In addition, from June to August 1990, the department has employed five male and one female as base grade correctional officers. Therefore, the current figure for Aboriginal employment is 13 males and seven females, that is, approximately 1.5 per cent of the staff.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I seek to clarify information given previously about workers compensation. The premium for last year was \$960 000. I am not sure whether the figure for this year is an increase to \$6 million or an increase of \$6 million, which would make the premium virtually \$7 million for the current year. Can the Minister confirm that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot confirm that because it is wrong, but I can give the correct figures. I will ask Mr Goulter, Acting Director, Support Services who has already given those figures to the Committee, to give them again.

Mr Goulter: The premium increased from \$960 000 to \$7 million. It is an increase of \$6 million.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I find it surprising that the department would accept such a massive \$6 million increase without some questioning and probably to a great extent analysis with WorkCover of the reason behind that. Will the Minister or his officer provide the reasons expressed by WorkCover for the substantial increase? In addition, does the figure of 39.4 long-term workers compensation cases represent the major factor or just a minor factor in this substantial increase?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is still some slight confusion about how much was paid out in workers compensation last year. My information is that it was \$1.5 million. The premium was about \$900 000. As I said, I will get the precise figures for the honourable member. The increase is \$6 million, so the total this year is about \$7.5 million, which the honourable member is not finding in his book. I am giving all this additional information.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I accepted the figures given previously by the Minister. The Minister is now confusing the separate issues, one being the premium payable of \$960 000, which has increased to \$7 million, but the figure

of \$549 000 which Mr Goulter gave us in addition to the \$960 000 premium is in fact money paid out on the salaries and wages line by the Government as its share of workers compensation payments, quite apart from the responsibility of WorkCover to take up after that \$549 000 has been paid. If I am wrong on that count, will the Minister or his officers clarify where I am in error? It is a large sum.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is a large sum, but I would say that it is about right. I will examine *Hansard*. I would not want to be accused of misleading the Committee. I will have the question examined and, if there is any further information, we will supply it to the Committee before the nominated date. I am not sure what additional information or comment the honourable member requires from us on workers compensation. We have given extensive replies about what we are doing concerning workers compensation and we have expressed our concern. We can go through it all again. Perhaps by way of clarification and supplementary question the honourable member could be more specific about precisely what we have not given. We shall be happy to give that information or enlarge upon the information given.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I already asked the Minister whether the department in conjunction with WorkCover had arrived at a basis by which the huge additional premium could correctly be established. After all, it is a huge increase. First, I thought it was a 500 per cent increase, but the Minister's confirmation has made it a 600 per cent increase on the base premium from \$960 000 to \$7 million, which is 600 per cent in anyone's mathematics, and that is being generous. What is the reason for such an increase? Has the department simply accepted the WorkCover premium increase without question or has it ascertained the precise reason for the premium increase? I am merely asking whether the department has ascertained where WorkCover's major concerns lie. If it has not, it will not be in a position to redress the situation. It cannot go to WorkCover and say that it has already resolved the problem, and the premium should start to come down, if it does not know why the premiums increased initially. I would have thought that the Minister would have been the first to demand from his officers and WorkCover why premiums would have gone up 600 per cent. I know that I would have been very interested in the reason.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thought we had answered that, but so that we do not keep having my saying, 'I thought we answered that', and the member for Mount Gambier repeating his question, I will ask Mr Ian Winton to repeat the answer dealing with those issues.

Mr Winton: Perhaps I can reiterate the department's concern about the level of the premium. We have accepted the premium and have taken action in conjunction with the Department of Labour to address the concerns that are obvious to the department and the Department of Labour. Our main concentration is to ensure that we assist our staff to return to work and to remain at work. As previously indicated, we are doing this through a number of programs that are concentrating on injury prevention, return to work initiatives, lifestyle management and education. The department is also working through the Pentstar program operated by the Department of Labour (\$230 000 has been provided to the department) to cover the areas which have been previously described.

One of the major initiatives is to look at research into the stresses of the job of correctional officer. While some overseas research is available, the local information particularly in relation to the department and how it can enhance the role of correctional officers will be particularly impor-

tant. We see that prevention is the biggest ally for the department to tackle this problem as well as the injury, lifestyle and information management that the department will try to bring into being during the financial year.

As I was saying, the department is also working with the Department of Labour and Treasury officers. We have established a tripartite committee to oversee the implementation of the Pentstar program. Within the department there has been a reallocation of resources so that we can establish two positions for rehabilitation providers and for a claims administrator and a project officer to assist in the lifestyle management components of the Pentstar program. It is also significant that during the past financial year the department implemented a one-day staff forum to which those staff who were on long-term workers compensation were invited in order to discuss the implications of their long-term compensation to enable the department to get a clearer focus on the actions that could be implemented to structure the programs towards those people. Finally, it is worthwhile re-stating that part of the \$7 million includes the \$2 million that is associated with a back payment to officers resulting from a court decision that overtime would be included in the average salary paid to staff. We see that as a one-off payment that unreasonably increased the premium this financial year.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In the hope of giving the Committee the maximum amount of information and to avoid their being forced to waste time merely re-stating previously asked questions, I would like to ask Mr Goulter, the Acting Director of Support Services, to give a little more detail on the breakdown of the \$7 million. Mr Winton has already indicated that some of the \$7 million is in the form of backpayment as a result of a court case. I am sure that a greater breakdown of that particular premium figure would be appreciated by the Committee, because I am sure the Committee would not want to go away with the view that this year there would be a 600 per cent increase in workers compensation claims or payments by the Department of Correctional Services. That would be a very wrong impression, and I would not like anyone to have it.

Mr Goulter: The premium set by the Government insurance fund in any one year has two elements. The first is to recover any shortfall that it may have incurred in the previous year. We paid \$960 000 the previous financial year. If it cost us, for example, \$2 million, there would be a shortfall that would have to be picked up. That is one component. The second component is that the fund assumes that we will continue to incur workers compensation claims at the same level. Therefore, naturally, that builds on top of the previous year. Mr Winton referred to a Supreme Court case last year, which held that the average salary that should be paid to people on workers compensation must include overtime in the average cost. Since the introduction of the legislation, we had included only the penalty allowance in the average—in other words, we included the 15 per cent that a worker would have received as a result of working on a Saturday or a Sunday. That requirement was to be backdated to the commencement of the legislation, some three years previously. That is the reason for a lump sum, one-off payment of about \$2 million. In addition, that higher rate of payment now must be projected into the coming year as well. Therefore, that also adds to the previous year's premium. I do not have the specific figure here, but I can get it if the Minister wishes.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I hope that as a result of that extensive explanation to the Committee, we will not have people going outside the Committee and suggesting that workers compensation will increase by 600 per cent in the

Department of Correctional Services. Given that explanation any such statement would, of course, be completely mischievous.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: I refer once again to page 234 of the Program Estimates. Mention is made of prisoner health in a footnote. The Minister said that, as Minister of Correctional Services, he was not personally responsible for health matters, but I put it to him that he is paying the Health Commission a certain fee for care and attention after an illness is suffered. Does the Minister regard himself as being responsible, through his officers, for assessing, for example, how vulnerable prisoners and prison staff are to accidental or deliberate AIDS infection by known AIDS sufferers or carriers? Does he consider himself responsible for the vulnerability of prisoners, particularly short-term prisoners on minor sentences, to sexual attack by AIDS sufferers or carriers? If so, what measures is the Minister taking, through his officers, to ascertain whether prisoners are carriers or whether they have full-blown AIDS? What sort of protection is the Minister affording other prisoners and staff?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Of course, the Department of Correctional Services does not have responsibility in that area; the prisoner medical service has the responsibility. Of course, the department cooperates—and it is very happy to cooperate—with that service. I would like to put on the record my admiration for the prison medical service, and for the competent way in which it is run by the Health Commission through the Modbury Hospital; it is an excellent service. No-one in the prison system has AIDS, as such. If one has AIDS one is in hospital. We do have a program of testing for HIV which is compulsory for everyone entering the prison system. The results of those tests are, of course, for the information of only the patient and his or her doctor. The results are certainly not known to me and there is certainly no reason why I have to know that a certain prisoner is HIV positive. There is a regime within the prison system for anyone who has an infectious disease. That regime is set by the patient's doctor. The prison officers follow that regime, whether we are talking about an AIDS sufferer, someone who is HIV positive or someone who has a far more infectious disease. Some other diseases, including childhood diseases, are far more infectious and contagious than AIDS. However, our prison officers are trained in this work and, to date, there has been no problem. I am not quite sure what else I can say. I am very happy to say as much as the honourable member wishes, but I am not quite sure what he wants to hear.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to page 236 of the Program Estimates, which states that it is a goal of the department to increase the range of remedial programs for prisoners who are drug and alcohol abusers. Can the Minister say which programs are currently run and which programs will be started this financial year? Are prisoners regularly tested for drug and alcohol consumption?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Prisoners on drugs or other substances are offered two programs. At the Prison Drug Unit, prisoners with sentences of six months or over are automatically assessed. Part of this process includes the gathering of detailed background information, including family, legal, educational and other contextual material. If alcohol or drug abuse is identified, referral is made to the Prison Drug Unit. Under the auspices of the Drug and Alcohol Services Council, the Prison Drug Unit consists of a coordinator, three drug counsellors, and an Aboriginal drug counsellor with clerical support.

Prisoners with sentences of less than six months are referred to the unit by institutional staff or by the Prison

Medical Service if a drug problem is identified. The Prison Medical Service, in cooperation with the Drug and Alcohol Services Council, provides a limited methadone program for prisoners on remand, prisoners who are HIV positive and drug addicted pregnant women. Drug testing in prisons is confined to the use of alcohol testing kits. These Drager-Alco kits are used to test prisoners where there is a suspicion that alcohol is being used.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to page 236 of the Program Estimates concerning institutional corrections. One of the broad objectives is to develop integrated prison industries and optimise financial returns. What is the department doing this year to obtain optimum financial returns from prison industries?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Prison industries contribute to reducing the cost of the operation of prisons by providing essential services such as cleaning and catering, as well as servicing vehicles and some building maintenance, etc. Extensive vegetable growing occurs at some prisons, as well as dairying, animal husbandry and poultry farming. The Department of Correctional Services makes maximum use of production in order to reduce the food bills for prisons. Income generated from the sale of goods manufactured in prison workshops and from surplus primary production is returned to revenue. The department believes that there is room for a significant improvement in the extent to which prison industries contribute to reducing the cost to the taxpayer of running and maintaining prisons.

At the beginning of the year, the department commenced a fundamental review of prison industries on an institution-by-institution basis. As a result of some preliminary work done at the Cadell Training Centre early this year, the department concluded that a greater return would be available from dairy production than pork production. As a consequence, the pork production industry at Cadell was closed down and the stock sold. Income generated from that sale was used for the purchase of dairy cattle. Significantly increased revenue is now expected from the dairy herd. The review at Cadell is continuing and a detailed analysis of resources and production at the Cadell Training Centre is well advanced. That analysis will provide the department with the information that is required to enable the Cadell Training Centre to improve the financial return to the Government and to improve the integration of industry and education activities.

Towards the end of this year, a review will commence of the industries function at Yatala Labour Prison. Issues to be investigated include the costing system, the selection of products for manufacture, prisoners' hours of work, staffing issues and work practices. In July of this year, each prison was instructed to review the price being charged for goods produced by prison industries. Where capacity for price increases exists, industry managers have been instructed to ensure that the price of products is increased so that maximum revenue is obtained. A Prison Industry Review Committee has now been established consisting of officers of the Department of Correctional Services and a representative of the Under Treasurer. The purpose of that committee is to monitor and report on the review that is underway, and to monitor and report on the introduction of measures designed to achieve potential cost offsets.

Mr ATKINSON: How often are prisoners employed in industries outside the prisons? Has local government taken advantage of such programs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No prisoners are employed in industries outside the prisons, other than low security prisoners who maintain the grounds outside the walls of Yatala Labour Prison. However, as far as I am aware, no prisoners

work outside prisons on behalf of other employers. People working under community service orders do extensive work in the community and with local government. For example, foreshore clean-ups, which would otherwise not be done, are done from time to time by offenders who have been sentenced to a period of community service. We cooperate with local government very well and I believe that it happens with a number of other projects. We do not hire out sentenced prisoners.

Mr ATKINSON: On page 236 of the Program Estimates, reference is made to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. What has the department done and what will it do to give effect to the recommendations of that commission?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I was particularly pleased to read in yesterday's newspaper that this year there has not been a single death of an Aborigine in custody. I assume that, by 'death', the article meant suicide—I am not quite sure about death by natural causes. But it is pleasing that the huge investment that this State and, I assume, the other States—it is an Australia-wide problem—have made in this area is achieving some success. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody made many recommendations in its interim report which impact on the Department of Correctional Services. The 1989-90 budget provided significant resources for dealing with these recommendations. The department has appointed additional staff to enable an expansion to provide a non-custodial option for fine defaulters. Recruitment policies and practices have been re-examined so as to maximise the degree of encouragement given to the recruitment of Aborigines.

An Aboriginal recruitment officer has been appointed to provide extensive liaison with Aboriginal organisations. Progress is being made in implementing a staff appraisal process to identify and eliminate racist views held by officers and potential officers. Increased training has been introduced to assist staff to identify persons at risk, to provide first-aid training, resuscitation techniques and non-physical restraints. The Aboriginal culture, history and social behaviour components of the induction program are being extended in consultation with Aboriginal communities. The Aboriginal content of other training courses has also been extended in consultation with representatives of the Aboriginal community. The department has appointed a health and welfare services coordinator to address interface issues between services provided to the department by the Health Commission and other agencies.

Mr SUCH: My question is covered by page 236 of the Program Estimates. Have rooms at Yatala and other prisons been set aside for conjugal visits? If so, are those rooms being used for that purpose? What are the criteria for the use of those facilities by those prisoners? Are there any proposals to allow conjugal visits within our prison system?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: During the redevelopment of Yatala some years ago, some rooms were designated for what we call private family visits. They have never been used and there are no plans to use them. I assume that the member for Fisher is referring to overnight stays of partners.

Mr SUCH: Yes, and daytime.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We do not have bedrooms put aside for that, if that is what the member for Fisher is looking for. The answer is no, we do not have that. A number of ex-prison officer houses are used as living accommodation for prisoners and for visits, but certainly not bedrooms and all the kind of stuff that the member for Fisher wants to hear about. I am sorry to disappoint him.

Mr SUCH: My second question also relates to page 236. Does the Minister accept the claim that the rate of deaths

of non-Aboriginal persons in prison is approximately the same as for Aboriginal people? How much has been spent to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody? Further, what steps are being taken to ensure that the deaths of non-Aboriginal people in custody are also minimised?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Do I accept the validity of the figures?

Mr SUCH: The first one?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Whose figures are they? If they are your figures, I would have some reservations. If they are figures from the Australian Institute of Criminology I would probably accept them as accurate. As to the amount we have spent on Aboriginal deaths in custody programs, I will certainly get a list of that. It is a lot of money, and the program is extensive and very successful.

As regards white deaths in custody, everything we do is geared towards keeping prisoners alive and well with some degree of sanity among them. Taking the broadest possible view, the entire budget of the Department of Correctional Services is designed to keep whites, blacks and others alive while in custody.

Mr SUCH: My third question relates to the same page. Are female and male prisoners treated equally within the prison system in respect of visiting hours, the provision of food, access to phones and other privileges that may operate within the system?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As far as practical, yes. We have a problem with female prisoners—because there are so few of them it is difficult to organise the range of programs or institutions that are available to males. The numbers are just not sufficient to do that. It is good that there are so few female prisoners. I regard that as a plus. The fewer we have, the better. It causes us some problems in dealing with them, but it is a good problem. It is far better than having a large number of female prisoners and having different institutions and programs for them. We do not have the numbers, and I am pleased about that.

Mr SUCH: As a supplementary question, I notice in paper No. 5, *The Budget and Its Impact on Women*, page 53 refers to a program for women whereby the department allows them to have pets as therapy. In relation to male prisoners (I am not talking about *Penthouse* pets) is a similar program being contemplated for male prisoners?

The CHAIRMAN: The supplementary link is the gender, but as we are coming close to the end of the examination of the vote I will generously allow that question as a supplementary question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Fisher misunderstands the position. The Pets as Therapy program is a training program by female prisoners. They are training pets for an outside organisation, they do not keep them.

Mr SUCH: The document says 'Pets as Therapy'.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is an excellent program and we train a number of animals for outside organisations which then place the animals with individuals in nursing homes, and so on. I do not think there is any provision for doing that for male prisoners. There are probably enough pets being trained by females. If an organisation requested us to train some more and the females could not handle the extra load, I am sure that we would look at that matter.

Mr SUCH: So it has nothing to do with keeping pets *per se*?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, it is a training program. We train pets for others.

Mr QUIRKE: On the prison at Mount Gambier, page 236 of the Program Estimates states 'Purchase land and finalise plans for a new regional prison at Mount Gambier'.

What action has been taken and is proposed for the new prison at Mount Gambier?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Mount Gambier will be particularly interested in this answer. On 4 June 1990 Cabinet approved the purchase of a parcel of land in the Moorak district of Mount Gambier for the purposes of constructing a new prison. At present negotiations have been unsuccessful with the property owner for the purchase of that site. The Government has now implemented the compulsory acquisition process in respect of the land. The department is currently developing a design brief of requirements and anticipates that detailed sketches and estimates will be available early in 1991. The proposal is for a 75-cell prison to be constructed with support infrastructure of industries and programs and facilities together with security and operational control buildings and a secure perimeter fence system. It may even be patrolled.

Mr QUIRKE: Carrying on the good news for country members; on the redevelopment of the Port Augusta Gaol, page 236 of the Program Estimates refers to the 1990-91 specific objective relating to extensions at the Port Augusta Gaol. What progress has been achieved in the redevelopment of the Port Augusta Gaol, and what impact does it have on the capital budget?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Construction on stage 1 of the Port Augusta Gaol redevelopment project commenced in April 1990. Stage 1 components include an administration building, a stores building, a staff facilities building, an industries complex, a reception control station and common services. At present all underground services have been laid to the respective buildings, the concrete floor has been poured and some of the structural steel work has been erected. Design and documentation for stages 2 and 3 are presently being finalised for tender call late in September 1990.

The facilities to be provided in those stages are as follows: stage 2, new surveillance control, visiting centre and admissions building, a new infirmary, perimeter fences and security detection systems; stage 3, new male prisoner accommodation of 80 cells, new female prisoner accommodation of 12 cells, a gymnasium, siteworks, oval development and landscaping.

The impact on the budget is that stage 1 will incur expenditure of \$6.7 million this financial year; stages 2 and 3 will incur expenditure of \$2.5 million in 1991-92; and about \$12.5 million will be required to complete stages 2 and 3.

Mr QUIRKE: In the Estimates of Payments, reference is made to the capital works projects. Will the Minister advise the program for 1991 and indicate whether further capital works projects are planned for commencement in the next year or so?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Correctional Services' capital works program for 1990-91 amounts to an allocation of \$17 million. These funds are predominantly for expenditure on the redevelopment of Port Augusta Gaol (\$9.2 million). Other projects and expenditure of a major nature are: F Division of Yatala Labour Prison, which is due for completion in October 1990 (\$670 000); new kitchen, Yatala Labour Prison, due for completion September 1990 (\$533 000); Marla Community Correction Centre, due for completion in January next year (\$361 000); admissions extensions at Yatala Labour Prison (\$398 000); community correction centres at Murray Bridge, Adelaide, Berri and Clarence Gardens collectively will total \$911 000; and minor works and asset maintenance (\$2.125 million). Further capital works projects have been committed for planning purposes only. The main projects are: a new prison for Mount Gambier, to which I have referred; redevelopment and

expansion of Cadell Training Centre; and the redevelopment, including some additional cells, at the Northfield prison complex.

Mrs KOTZ: My question relates to the Auditor-General's Report, page 47. I believe that the Department of Correctional Services used to have a district office in the State Bank building in Jetty Road, Glenelg, and that an amount of \$100 000 was spent in renovating the upper floor and converting the office space for probation and parole officers. However, I understand that the department failed to get a long-term lease and, in about 1988, were told to move out. The office is now located in rather expensive accommodation in Durham Street, Glenelg. The office was located there despite a study that had been carried out, indicating that a suitable office should be located in the Plympton-Edwards-town area, where a majority of parolees were resident. How often are the studies carried out to find the best locations for probation officers, and does the Minister agree that economic savings can be made by relocating officers to areas of low cost, nearer to the highest concentration of parolees?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ascertain those details about that office for the member for Newland. I can only say that, in general, it is not always possible to get the ultimate location for every office or every accommodation need of the Government. However, I can assure the member for Newland that there is a Government office accommodation committee, which looks at the issue for the bigger projects. Correctional Services tries, as I am sure every other Government department does, to tee up its office and accommodation requirements to its operational requirements. I know nothing of this question, but I will certainly find out for the Committee and have the answers provided by the appropriate date.

Mrs KOTZ: With reference to page 47 of the Auditor-General's Report, I would like to bring back to mind the police strike action that was experienced earlier this year regarding the transport of prisoners from the Remand Centre. Are correctional services officer numbers sufficient now to avoid any repetition of the reasons for that police strike action?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I know of no strike action by police in the State, certainly, since I have been living here, which is 25 years. As regards the numbers of correctional officers, it has nothing whatever to do with the issue; the issue never had anything to do with the number of correctional officers. It was to do with the availability of accommodation and, also in the remand area, the hours for which the Remand Centre was open. It had nothing to do with the number of prison officers. The ratio of prison officers to prisoners in this State is certainly higher than anywhere else in Australia and, as far as we know, anywhere else in the world. So, there is no problem with prison officer numbers.

Mrs KOTZ: My next question is fairly detailed, so perhaps the Minister would like to take it on notice. The budget papers indicate a large number of committees in the Department of Correctional Services. What are the titles of the committees, the membership and names, the functions, the date the committees were formed, the amount of membership fees, and the budget cost of servicing the committees? Also, how often do the committees meet?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will find out that information.

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

Office of Transport Policy and Planning, \$5 495 000

Chairman:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson

Mrs D.C. Kotz

Mr J.K.G. Oswald

Mr J.A. Quirke

Mr R.B. Such

The Hon. J.P. Trainer

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Transport.

Departmental Advisers:

Dr D. Scafton, Director-General, Transport.

Mr P. Tregoweth, Manager, Transport Administration.

Mr D. Mitchell, Director, Transport Policy and Research.

Mr L. Oxland, Acting Director, Transport Planning and Coordination.

Mr M. Philipson, Manager, Economic Research.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination. Do you wish to make a statement, Mr Oswald?

Mr OSWALD: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to make a statement, Minister?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, Sir. The changes that took place in the transport portfolio a year ago are still affecting the presentation of the portfolio budget for 1990-91. Some internal changes have been made to programs on transport policy and planning, road transport and the State Transport Authority. These can be dealt with in response to questions on the respective programs. The addition of the finance function to my portfolio required some changes in the Minister's office. The main changes affecting the Office of Transport Policy and Planning is the transfer of much of the concession program (program 1 on page 81) to Family and Community Services and to Education.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to page 200 of the Program Estimates and page 81 of the Estimates of Payments. Following the release of the Interstate Commission Report on Road Use Charges and Vehicle Registrations, the pressure for change in the cost of road use has grown strongly with the Business Council of Australia giving broad support for the ISC recommendations and the Industry Council, conservation groups and rail lobby groups all advocating that the report be implemented.

The Liberal Party, however, believes that the user pay recommendations in both Mr Butcher's initial ISC report in May and subsequent review in August will impose real cost penalties on South Australian motorists, transport operators and the South Australian economy because of inflationary pressures and our distance from Eastern State markets. Areas such as the Eyre Peninsula would suffer enormously because they enjoy no alternative rail options.

I understand that the Minister, at the ATAC meeting in Hobart on 7 September, adopted similar arguments in his criticism of the ASC registration and road use proposals. I ask the Minister:

1. As Federal Cabinet has endorsed the ISC road user recommendations, has the Federal Minister for Land Transport (Bob Brown) indicated that he is prepared to accept any change to the ISC proposals for uniformity and cost recovery, let alone changes that would be in South Australia's interest, for example, changes which reflect differ-

ences in local costs, access to alternative rail options and related distribution issues?

2. As I understand Ministers have deferred a number of key ISC recommendations to a task force of officers, can the Minister confirm if South Australia will be represented on this task force and, if so, who will represent the State's interest in negotiating the road use reform proposals?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It was very interesting to hear the Liberal Party policy in this area. I am not sure of the relevance of such to the Committee, but I suppose it was of interest. The South Australian Government's position is very clear and we believe in reform in the road transport charging area. There is no doubt in my mind that several categories underpay for the use of the road or the amount of road that they use, and the wear and tear caused in relation to the standards to which the roads have to be built. It is another thing to get a formula that satisfies everybody throughout Australia, and certainly the formula that has been proposed by the Interstate Commission does not satisfy South Australia. The Federal Government and the other States have been made aware of our dissatisfaction. We have some alternative proposals to put. We will put them to the Federal Government through the working party that has been established. As regards the policy of the Federal Government on the ISC report, I can only say that the honourable member will have to ask the Federal Government.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to page 200 of the Program Estimates. As section 9 (1) (b) of the Commonwealth-State rail agreement provides that the Minister can seek arbitration if there has been a reduction in the level of effectively demanded services, will the Minister advise why he has not used this course of action, in view of what appears to have been a deliberate policy by Australian National in the past year, in particular to discourage passenger travel by running down both the standard of service and the frequency of operation of AN's passenger services to Mount Gambier? Is the Minister aware that all rail authorities in all States, except South Australia, are investing in improvements to their country rail services?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: What other States do is entirely for the other States. With the exception of Tasmania, other States have country services. This State does not have country services, as a result of the sale of the country railways to Australian National which was completed in 1976. I have not been advised by the Federal Government that it is seeking to close down any country passenger services here in South Australia. When I am advised I will take the appropriate action. I have intimated to anyone who is interested that we will certainly be taking the question of the Blue Lake service to arbitration. If we had the power we would also take the Broken Hill/Adelaide service and the Iron Triangle service to arbitration. However, my advice is that we have no legal rights to do that with the Broken Hill or Iron Triangle service.

If the Federal Government chooses not to finance Australian National for those lines, it is a pity for the people who live in those areas. However, I understand that it will take about \$20 million to refurbish the rolling stock on each of those lines for that service and a considerable subsidy per passenger. The Mount Gambier service has the highest subsidy—in the order of \$300 subsidy per return trip. I know that members opposite, with their economic rationalist philosophy, would certainly not want the taxpayer to fund that subsidy. It is a pity because, as I mentioned in the House some time ago, if the Federal Government chooses not to continue to support the Blue Lake service, this Government will take the issue to arbitration. However, the

ground has been cut out from under our feet to a great extent by the Leader of the Opposition in South Australia saying that we cannot expect the taxpayer to carry on paying. Nevertheless, the Government will try, in spite of that statement by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr OSWALD: Did the Minister say that he has no power to take the Iron Triangle service to arbitration?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am advised that that is the case.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to section 9 (1) (b) of the Commonwealth-State railways agreement which provides that the Minister can seek arbitration. Is my advice incorrect that, despite section 9 (1) (b), he does not have the power to go to arbitration?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Not in the case of the Iron Triangle service and the Broken Hill service. We certainly have the power to seek arbitration with respect to the Blue Lake service, according to my advice.

Mr OSWALD: What is the difference between, say, the Blue Lake and Iron Triangle services—they are both State services?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Iron Triangle service was never a service of the old South Australian Railways, which was sold to the Commonwealth. It was a service established entirely by the Commonwealth after that transfer took place.

Mr OSWALD: The Minister announced on 19 June that 50 non-transferable taxi licences would be issued by ballot to existing licensees in two stages: the first 25 to be issued at the end of August 1990 and the remainder by March 1991. On 22 April, the regulations were disallowed on the basis that existing licensees should not be the only persons eligible to participate in the ballot for the new licences, and that drivers and lessees should also be able to participate. Does the Minister intend to proceed with his plan of 19 June to issue 50 new non-transferable taxi licences in two ballot lots by March 1991 and, if so, who will be eligible to participate, when will he gazette the regulations, and when will the ballots be held? If he does not intend to proceed, why not?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot confirm the date when the regulations were disallowed but 22 April definitely sounds wrong. However, I cannot remember offhand the date. It is a pity that that action took place depriving the people of the metropolitan area of some additional taxi licences and a greater availability of service. The reason behind restricting the licences to existing licence holders was to, in some rough way, compensate those who had paid very high prices for licences for the additional effort involved in the taxi industry. It is certainly far from a perfect procedure. In fact, there is no perfect way of doing it other than by selling, say, another 50 licences, or as many as one chooses, and distributing the money equally amongst existing licence holders. The problem with doing any of those things is that they perpetuate the problem already existing of people paying far too much—in fact, paying anything—for taxi licences.

So, the scheme proposed by the Government was a very rough way to compensate existing holders without adding another cost burden to the industry and, in fact, compounding the cost burden already existing on the industry. As that proposal was disallowed by the Legislative Council and the public and taxi owners who paid very high prices are the losers, what flows from that will be announced at the appropriate time when the Government has made a decision.

Mr OSWALD: As a supplementary question, and as a point of clarification, the date was 22 August, not 22 April. In the Minister's reply, did he intimate that he would be issuing 50 new non-transferable licences?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Minister did not intimate anything. The Minister stated quite clearly that he would be making announcements in that area when the Government had reached a decision.

Mr QUIRKE: Program 1 indicates that \$1.6 million has been paid for reimbursement of children's concessions in 1989-90. Which operators received this reimbursement?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The \$1.599 million shown on page 21 was actually paid to the STA reimbursing the difference between the actual child's fare to half the common adult fare. Similar reimbursements to private operators for student travel are paid through the education line with which the concession program is integrated in 1990-91. In 1989-90, such payments were \$697 000, and the following companies participated in the education scheme: M.A. Robinson, operating in the Barossa, \$168 000; the Mount Barker Passenger Service, \$163 000; L.A. Johnson, operating in the Hills and Goolwa, \$149 000; E.J. Case, Mannum, \$79 000; Premier Road Lines, Victor Harbor and Balaklava, \$66 000; Murray Bridge Passenger Services, Murray Bridge, \$49 000; and M. Reid, Mount Gambier, \$23 000, total, \$697 000.

The average subsidy per student is \$550 and the total number of students was 1 270. However, averaging disguises the fact that the longer the trip the greater the subsidy. It indicates that the State Government subsidises quite heavily certain private bus services in this State. The total amount spent in subsidy is increasing and it is something the Government must watch very carefully in case it gets out of hand. One of the problems we have is that a number of these private bus services just may not be viable without being subsidised by the taxpayer, and that is a very good indication that, when we consider the introduction of so-called private enterprise bus companies or replacing some of our existing services with private enterprise bus services, if that occurred there would still need to be enormous subsidies provided. Those of us who have been around for quite a while can remember when most of the private bus services in this State collapsed and the Government had to step in and take them over to ensure that some service remained, particularly for people on the metropolitan fringe as well as in the principal provincial cities. It is very easy to applaud private enterprise and say that they could do it better but history in this area tells us that, without taxpayers' money, they cannot really do it at all, never mind do it better.

Mr QUIRKE: Why have most of the concession lines on page 81 been transferred to other ministerial portfolios?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: This program identifies concessional reimbursements made to the STA, Australian National, the Bus and Coach Association, country town bus programs and the *Island Seaway*. For 1990-91, the major lines of concessional reimbursement have been reallocated to agencies that are more directly responsible for those policy areas. They include concessions for children to the Education Department, on page 76 of the Estimates of Payments; pensioners to the Department for Family and Community Services, on page 37 of the Estimates of Payments; likewise for AN pensioners, the blind and incapacitated. The aim is to have reimbursement for particular concessions clearly identified in the budgets of the Ministers with the function of responsibility.

Mr QUIRKE: Payments to AN for pensioners and others, page 81, Program 1, were not as high as budgeted for. Why was that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The 1989-90 budget for pensioner concessions reimbursement to AN, included an allowance for extensions of the free trip to include stations

north of Port Pirie. However, this scheme did not commence until 1 July this year.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 200, Planning and Coordination. Further to the proposed route for a southern O'Bahn that the Minister outlined to the Estimates Committee last year, a proposal estimated to cost \$100 million and involving about 20 flyovers, can the Minister tell me what if any further study has been undertaken on the project? Have local views been sought from authorities, residents and businesses along the proposed route and have alternative routes been considered and opinions canvassed?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The short answer is that no further work has been done on this. As to a practical way of getting the O'Bahn down to Darlington, the route that I outlined here in the Budget Estimates Committee last year is the only practical route. The members for Morphett and Hanson canvassed local opinion quickly and thoroughly and advised the Government that in no circumstances would they tolerate people in the south having the relief of an O'Bahn through to Darlington going through their electorates. I make no further comment than that. Given the amount of feeling that was displayed by the members for Morphett and Hanson, there was no real point in pursuing the matter.

Mr OSWALD: The plan was impractical.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Morphett will have time available to question the Minister.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There was no point—

Mr OSWALD interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I sincerely hope that the member for Morphett is not reflecting on the advice that the Chair is giving. If we go down that track we might find that much time will be spent arguing about the ability of the member for Morphett to question the Chair, which will be time lost by the Committee in questioning the Minister.

Mr OSWALD: I certainly was not reflecting on you, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I advise the Minister to ignore any words coming from the member for Morphett until the member for Morphett asks the Minister a question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As I was saying, I did not see any point in pursuing that further, even though it was the only practical route, with all its faults. The member for Morphett should not feel bad, first, about the member for Newland interfering in his area and also because I have outlined clearly and fairly the actions that took place after the Estimates Committee last year. I can assure him that when the Liberal Party made its proposal, which was a totally impractical proposal through the electorate of Unley, the result was exactly the same. The local member there canvassed local opinion quickly and let the Minister of Transport know also quickly that the people of the south again could not have an O'Bahn through to Darlington if it impacted in any way on that area. This merely demonstrates that the people of the settled inner metropolitan area are just not willing to be inconvenienced for the benefit of people who live elsewhere. While we might regret that, unfortunately it is a fact and both Parties would recognise that that is the reality. We have to try to deal with some of the problems in the south by a different means than by trying to push an O'Bahn through existing settled areas, because public opinion will just not allow us to do it.

Mrs KOTZ: Again I refer to the Program Estimates, page 200, under Planning and Coordination. The completion of a feasibility study for the upgrading of the Tonsley Railway station is noted as one of the office's achievements for last year. What are the conclusions of the feasibility study? During the course of the study was any consideration given

to siting the interchange at or near centres of popular usage such as the Flinders Medical Centre at Bedford Park or the Westfield Shopping Centre at Marion? If so, what were the issues for and/or against these options? As indicated by the Minister last year in the Estimates Committee, was a study undertaken among people living south of O'Halloran Hill to determine whether they would use the interchange services and, based on the feasibility report, does the Government intend to proceed with the interchange project? If so, what is the projected timetable and cost?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Tonsley study was released. I am sure a copy is in the Parliamentary Library. If it proves not to be there, I will see whether I can find a spare copy to send to the member for Newland. The report was released publicly.

Essentially, the proposal in my view and that of the Government was financially difficult. The estimation of cost was about \$20 million, which was too much to swallow in one bite. I have asked for further studies to be done, and they are in the process of being completed. From memory, I am expecting any week now the results of those further studies of different locations, although in the same general areas, and perhaps not so grand and elaborate as proposed in the \$20 million project for an interchange. That is certainly not getting us anywhere.

Mr SUCH interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It contributes little to moving people. That was why, long before the election, I released the report with the costing and said that I was not too impressed by it. We do not make \$20 million capital works program decisions with dubious value after cost benefit analysis on the basis of when there is an election.

Mrs KOTZ: As to the Program Estimates at page 200, Planning and Coordination, concerning the Seaford development, the Premier noted on 20 June that, until the public had indicated its preferences, the Government would not be deciding on the arterial road and rail alignment corridors to be preserved for future use. The closing date for public input was 27 July. What were the options favoured by the public? Do they correspond with the preferences of local councils in the region? On what grounds will the Government be making its decision on the options, and when will such a decision be announced? As the current projections are for a further 19 500 people to be living south of the Onkaparinga River by the year 2000, when will work commence on the preferred arterial road option, and why has the Government decided that the rail extension from Noarlunga Centre will not be built for at least 15 years?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am having difficulty with my shorthand when the question turns into four or five questions. I am inclined to say that I will respond to those questions prior to 6 October or whenever the due date applies. I do not mind multiple questions as long as there is a long pause between them to enable me to write the questions down. Another alternative is to ask them one at a time, and I shall be only too pleased to answer them.

I will go through them to the best of my memory. The first question related to the responses. They are being collated at the moment. The answer to the second question is that no decision has been taken. I cannot remember the question, but I remember writing down the answer. In relation to the third, fourth and fifth questions, I did not manage to write them down, so if the member for Newland can repeat them I will be only too pleased to respond.

Mrs KOTZ: The last two questions related to the current projections for a further 19 500 people to be living south of the Onkaparinga River by the year 2000. First, when will work commence on the preferred arterial road option?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I think that the date for that has been long since given: it will commence in 1993.

Mrs KOTZ: Why has the Government decided that the rail extension from Noarlunga Centre will not be built for at least 15 years?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: On any cost benefit analysis that we have been able to do, the amount of patronage that would be available for that rail line certainly does not justify at this stage the huge cost of the infrastructure. I know that that is a decision that would be agreed with by all Parties in the House on the basis that infrastructure is not built, first, prior to it being needed and, secondly, without a cost benefit analysis that cheaper options are not available.

Mrs KOTZ: As a supplementary question: in his answer to the first question the Minister said that the responses had been collated. Are those responses available to the public? Is it possible for me to have a copy of them?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I said that they were being collated. When they have been collated I see no reason at all why everyone who has an interest should not have them. I will certainly make them public.

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling upon the member for Spence to proceed with his line of questioning, I would like to comment on a remark the Minister made about a question having in some cases four, five or even six aspects to it. The Minister is well known for his ability to answer a broad range of questions incorporated in one supposedly simple question. Notwithstanding, it is not fair to the Minister or the rest of the Committee for members to ask five questions in one. I remind members of the Committee that they can ask three questions and they should be kept simple.

Mr ATKINSON: On page 200 of the Program Estimates, under the title 'Planning and Coordination of Transport' mention is made of a study of the transport needs of the western suburbs, to commence this financial year. Will the study be looking at the transport needs of the proposed multifunction polis at Gillman?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To answer the last part of the question first: we certainly will be having a look at the transport needs of the multifunction polis and those investigations will be quite extensive. As regards the western suburbs, as was mentioned by the member, I have initiated the western region study, as a joint portfolio exercise, involving the Office of Transport Policy and Planning, the State Transport Authority and the Department of Road Transport. The study will examine the accessibility provided by existing road and public transport systems and will formulate a program of improvements in accessibility now and in the future.

The terms of reference for the western region study were prepared and forwarded to the STA and the Department of Road Transport to enable work to commence as quickly as possible. The study will include an examination of the potential for the Grange railway line versus rail access to West Lakes, light rail versus existing heavy rail on the Outer Harbor and Grange lines, and possible alternative uses for the old Holdfast Bay railway reservation. The STA commissioned Travers Morgan to develop a computerised network analysis model and apply it to an analysis of public transport services and deficiencies in the north-western suburbs of the metropolitan area.

To return to the MFP, the concept as all members would know and support includes a major urban development with a population of 100 000 people on a 3 500 hectare site. It will consist of a series of villages or settlements that will range in size from a few thousand to as many as 10 000 people. It involves the integration of workplace, place of education, recreational areas and domicile. Up to 40 000

people may work on site, distributed evenly between MFP core activities and support workers. The site is well chosen because of the good passenger and freight transport services which surround it. That suggests a chief priority will be good MFP access to the existing transport links, with some improvement to the links also necessary.

The site is 13.5 kilometres from the CBD, 15 kilometres from Adelaide International Airport and two kilometres from Australian National's freight headquarters. The port of Adelaide is on the site. The MFP will present a unique set of transport opportunities and problems. The villages will need to be interconnected via roads, pedestrian and bicycle ways, whilst the settlement will need to be adequately connected with Adelaide CBD, the northern suburbs and the airport, for the movement of people and freight. The export generation activities on site will need specialised transport for high value-added freight, which suggests that the airport will be a key link with overseas markets.

The MFP appears to be an urban development without any quantifiable precedent. West Lakes has a similar urban density but is of a more traditional design. Such a scale of urban development so close to existing services and the CBD presents new problems—and opportunities, including the potential application of new transport technologies.

Mr ATKINSON: As a supplementary question, will the old permanent way for the Finsbury/Woodville North line, or perhaps the existing Rosewater line, have any role in passenger transport to and from the MFP?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It could be. We are not at the stage of being very specific at all. As the member for Spence would know, the concept is still being refined and until such time as it is refined we cannot be specific. However, there are a number of transport corridors and transport advantages which we hope will be useful for the planners of the MFP; that is, things that we can build upon rather than creating new things. One of the great strengths of the MFP is that it will give us the opportunity to experiment and use some of the new and very exciting technologies that are becoming available in the transport area. To have a green-field site on which to try them and also to have the expertise within the MFP which will be developing such technologies anyway will be very exciting—certainly for Ministers of Transport and everyone living in Adelaide in the future.

Mr ATKINSON: With reference to the 1989-90 specific objectives on page 200 of the Program Estimates, what will happen now that the feasibility study on the Tonsley interchange proposal has been completed, if indeed it has been?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As I mentioned to the member for Newland, the original proposal has been completed and published, with some comments by me. Our commitment is to continue to investigate the feasibility of a bus/rail interchange at Tonsley. The Office of Transport Policy and Planning undertook the Tonsley interchange study to examine the merits of carrying out the following improvements to allow the Tonsley rail service to achieve its potential as a high speed, mass transit service. It was recommended that there be upgrading of the Tonsley Railway Station to become a major bus/train passenger interchange which permits the easy and fast transfer of southern suburbs bus passengers to train and bus and the provision of secure car parking facilities for 'park and ride' passengers, and facilities for 'kiss and ride' and taxi drop-off passengers.

It was also recommended that there be an upgrading of the passenger train service on the Tonsley line to provide fast express services to and from the city all day, not just at peak hour as at present, and the partial duplication of the Tonsley branch line and closure of some under-utilised

stations between Mitchell Park and the city to facilitate the express operation and reduce the number of stops for Brighton trains. The study also suggested the re-routing and rescheduling of bus services from the southern suburbs to connect with, and in some cases terminate at, the interchange to allow city bound bus passengers to transfer to train and to allow intermediate bus passengers to transfer to another bus. It was recommended that there be provision of regular feeder bus services linking the interchange with Brighton Railway Station, Flinders Medical Centre, Flinders University and the Marion Shopping Centre.

Although the study confirmed that the scheme would yield considerable benefits to city bound passengers in the form of travel time savings, an economic analysis found that, on the basis of economic criteria alone, the justification for the proposal was marginal and sensitive to the value of savings achieved in bus operating and maintenance costs. The scheme was estimated to cost a total of \$36.2 million comprising building and pavement works (\$15.3 million), track work (\$1.8 million) and rolling stock (\$19.1 million). Following completion of the Office of Transport Policy and Planning study, the STA was requested to investigate alternative sites for the interchange in the vicinity of Tonsley Railway Station and examine the feasibility of alternative, cheaper design solutions.

Mr ATKINSON: With respect to planning and coordination of transport program, what progress has been made with suggestions contained in Professor Fielding's report?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Extensive progress. The Fielding report was a good document. At the time it was released, the Government rejected some parts of it immediately as contrary to the philosophy of the South Australian Government. By far the bulk of the report was approved by the Government, was endorsed by the Government and is in the process of being implemented by the various Government bodies that were affected by those recommendations. There were some 40 recommendations and I will have the details incorporated in *Hansard* by the due date.

I am very pleased with the progress that has been made on the Fielding report. As I said earlier, I thought it was a very worthwhile document. The fact that Professor Fielding put forward some proposals for Adelaide that were not acceptable to the Government, mainly on a philosophical basis, does not mean that the bulk of the work was not of value. It was of considerable value and the Committee will appreciate the amount of progress that has been made in implementing those recommendations of the Fielding report which have been endorsed by the Government.

Mr SUCH: I refer to page 200 of the Program Estimates. What are the department's traffic predictions for all existing north-south arterials and do the forecasts confirm concerns expressed by the RAA and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, among others, that the total capacity of our north-south arterials will be reached some time in the late 1990s or early 2000s? Recognising that the Government has made a commitment to build a third arterial road terminating at Bedford Park, does the Minister still maintain that there is no need for a major north-south arterial project?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There will not be a north-south arterial project if the member for Fisher means by that that we put freeways through the western suburbs. The MATS plan, quite properly in my view, was tossed out over 20 years ago and will not be revived by this Government. I know that various members of the Opposition support it, and they have been quite open about that. The member for Davenport is one who makes no bones about it. He believes that there ought to be some kind of north-south freeway. Quite frankly, we are opposed to that and it will not occur

under this Government. The Government will not give Adelaide over to the motor car, despite the blandishments of the RAA or anyone else, including the member for Davenport and the member for Fisher. I am sure that members on the Government side of the House agree with that.

As regards the capacity of the existing arterial roads, the RAA did make some predictions. I am sure that the Office of Transport Policy and Planning also has some predictions, which I will certainly provide for the Committee. What those predictions are worth is a matter for judgment. They are not revealed truths. I think that the price of petrol at the moment might have some effect on them. So, who knows? What I do know is that, with better management, the existing roads can carry far more traffic than they do at the moment. A very good example of the type of management about which I am speaking is South Road. We are in the process of upgrading considerably certain sections of South Road, as everyone who drives down that road knows. It is a nuisance while we are doing it; we have to be open about that. But, when particular stretches are completed, everyone would have to agree that it is well worth it.

To better manage our roads better must be the policy of this Government and, I hope, any Government—unless we are to turn Adelaide into some kind of Los Angeles. The road lobby is voracious. There is no limit to the amount of road that it wants laid. At the moment, Adelaide has a rush half-hour rather than a rush hour. We could spend the entire State budget on roads, but it would still not satisfy some people. It would get it down to a rush 25 minutes. Instead of traffic being lined up four abreast, it would be lined up eight abreast. Everyone would leave home 10 minutes later and we would still have the same problem—and we would have destroyed the city.

This Government is not going down that track. That is not to say that new arterial roads are not required. Certainly, the third arterial road is essential. It must be built, despite many people in the south not wanting it.

Other new arterial roads in the metropolitan area will be required. It would be better to deal with that matter after 4 o'clock when we will look at the estimates for the Department of Road Transport. As regards carving up the western suburbs for a new arterial road, the answer is 'No', and it will remain 'No'.

Mr SUCH: My second question relates to the standardisation of the Adelaide to Melbourne railway line, which is referred to on page 200 of the Program Estimates. What negotiations, if any, are being pursued by the Minister with the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to standardise the Adelaide to Melbourne rail line, including a timetable for such an exercise? As the Federal Minister for Land Transport has requested the States to submit proposals for rail infrastructure upgrading preparatory to the establishment of the proposed National Rail Freight Corporation, to be funded from a \$50 million allocation in the 1990-91 Australian centennial road development program, will standardisation of the Adelaide to Melbourne line be one of the projects, or the only project, submitted by South Australia? What are the latest cost estimates for standardising the line and what would be South Australia's share, if any, of those costs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Out of those six questions the essential ones are whether the Government supports the standardisation of the Adelaide to Melbourne line, and the answer to that is 'Yes'. 'When can we get somebody to pay for doing that?' is really the guts of the second part of the question. The answer to that is, 'As soon as we can persuade somebody to do so'. The possible advent of a National Rail

Freight Corporation, although it is not guaranteed to assist, may assist that process.

At every opportunity we press our case with the Federal Government or anybody else who will listen that we would like that line subsidised. But, we would be kidding ourselves if we thought that for the greater benefit of the whole of Australia the standardisation of that line had a very high priority. Unfortunately for South Australia, other areas in Australia have higher priority. Such decisions will be made in places other than Adelaide: they will be made essentially in the place in which the money is provided, and that is basically Canberra. So, I am not terribly hopeful that we will get an early start on the standardisation. Whenever we have an opportunity to do so we shall press our case.

As regards questions of rail infrastructure and any funds that are available, we shall certainly produce a list of priority projects that we feel are appropriate for the use of those funds and make them available to the Federal Government.

Mr SUCH: As a supplementary question—it was included in the original question—is there any current estimate of the cost of standardising that line?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, there is. I do not have it with me but I shall send it to the Committee.

Mr SUCH: My third question relates to the Glenelg tramway and page 200 of the Program Estimates. In respect of the two feasibility studies that were recently conducted on extending the Glenelg tram line, what were the conclusions in terms of economic benefits and construction costs for each of the alternatives investigated, that is, the Adelaide Railway Station, Adelaide Children's Hospital, Barton Terrace via O'Connell Street, North Adelaide and Hill Street via O'Connell Street, North Adelaide? As the General Manager of the STA was reported in April last year of favouring the extension of the tramway up O'Connell Street as it would provide North Adelaide residents with their own transport service, on what grounds has the Government dismissed that option in favour of extending the line to the Adelaide Railway Station, and when is it anticipated that the STA will have completed its detailed study of the Adelaide Railway Station option.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It would be wrong to say that the Government has dismissed or accepted any of those proposals. If the costings are available for that list of options that were outlined by the member for Fisher I will certainly examine *Hansard* and let him have the responses.

There is no question that again on any cost benefit analysis the evidence seems to suggest that the tram to the railway station is the only one that really warrants it on a cost benefit basis. Unlike other Parties, this Government does not do everything on a cost benefit analysis. We put some human beings into the equation.

I cannot therefore say that one of the other options eventually may not be favoured. At the moment, if we are talking about something that is rational for transport rather than for social reasons—for example, giving the good burghers of North Adelaide their own transport—the most logical cost effective option is to the Adelaide Railway Station.

Also, the studies showed that that would not be difficult to do in an engineering sense and that, in a traffic sense, it would not create too much disruption. So, it could be a useful addition to the transport needs of the city if we look at the matter purely on a transport needs basis. When we start to broaden our criteria other options can seem attractive.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to page 200 of the Program Estimates relating to coordination. One of the specific targets that were identified last year was to initiate a traffic and demand management study for the Adelaide central busi-

ness district jointly with Adelaide City Council. The same target is identified this year, but there is no reference to the project being conducted jointly with the Adelaide City Council. Does the exclusion this year of any reference to Adelaide City Council suggest that the project did not get off the ground last year because of some difficulty in gaining the cooperation of the council? If not, what is the reason for initiating the study of the issue without the joint involvement of the council?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have been speaking for an hour so I shall invite the Acting Director General of Transport, Dr Scrafton, to respond to that question.

Dr Scrafton: The study began last year in collaboration with the Adelaide City Council. We had initial discussions with the council and it was agreed to concentrate upon traffic and, as the Minister mentioned, the economic aspects of the extension of the tram line. That is what we did in 1989-90. As the Minister said, those reports are available. I am sure that if they are not in the Parliamentary Library they could be made available to the Committee.

This year we would like to extend that work and look at traffic implications in general, particularly as we feel strongly that the extension of the tram line to the railway station is justified, and we would want to look at traffic impacts in some detail. There is no question of work of this sort ever being undertaken without the cooperation of the city council. It is its jurisdiction, and it is the main street through the city of Adelaide. We would look for and expect to get full cooperation. The council has traffic data on the city of Adelaide. We have worked very closely with it in the past and we shall continue to do so.

Mr OSWALD: Page 196 of the Program Estimate refers to inter-agency support. In relation to the Minister's office, what is the reason for the increase in employment from a proposed level of two average full-time equivalent positions to nine increasing by \$351 000 to \$627 000 the allocation to the Minister's office last year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The position is no mystery. The Minister's office was incorporated into the Department of Transport when the Department of Transport was abolished and the Office of Transport Policy was established; a separate Minister's office was established and the resources were basically split between the two.

It was a different office. Previously, the two people to whom you refer were probably personal staff of the Minister. The rest of the office was all Department of Transport staff, paid under the Department of Transport. There are no more people; they are just paid under different lines.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to page 200, under the heading 'Planning Coordination and Taxi Regulation'. In a news release dated 11 April, the Minister said:

Of the 130 regulations we presently have, we will retain about 30, which provide for consumer safety and service to the public, and discard the rest.

Can the Minister confirm that in a subsequent review of regulations the Metropolitan Taxi Cab Board and the South Australian Taxi Industry Association argued that the target of 30 was ridiculous and arbitrary and would not be in the public interest? As the board and the association, together with the Office of Transport Policy and Planning, submitted their joint proposal's for new regulations to the Minister in early July, when does he anticipate that the regulations will be gazetted?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not sure whether I have the question clear. Certain regulations in relation to the taxi industry have gone through the Parliament, and they are the regulations to which I referred in that press release. The whole Act is being reviewed and, obviously, all the regulations in total will be reviewed at the same time. I do not

have a timetable on that later review, but I am sure that whoever was on the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation would be able to advise the member for Morphett of the status of the regulations that have gone through.

Mr OSWALD: The Minister may wish to take my next question on notice, since it requires the collection of statistical data and report to the Committee at a later stage. I am happy for it to be taken on notice, if that is the desire of the Minister. The Minister has various departmental in-house committees. Will he advise the Committee of the title of each departmental committee and how many there are; the functions of those committees; the names of the members of the committees; the dates on which those committees were formed; the amount of membership fees that are paid; the budgeted costs of serving those committees; and how often the committees meet?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will take that question on notice.

Mr QUIRKE: Within the objectives of promoting economical and efficient transport as outlined on page 200 of the Program Estimates, what was the final cost of the North-East busway project?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: This is a great achievement of the past few years of the Labor Government. Of course, it was talked about beforehand by various people but, since this Government came to office in 1982, it did not just talk about it; it actually did it. I am sure that the people who use the busway are very pleased that we were elected in 1982 and that the talking stopped and the action began.

The final cost for the project was \$97.3 million, which is quite a large amount of money. The breakdown of that cost is for the preliminary design work, \$1.3 million; land acquisition, \$6.1 million; the construction itself, \$54.4 million; landscaping, \$4.5 million; and administration, \$9 million, which gave a total for design, construction and landscaping of \$75.3 million. The buses, which are a minimum requirement on a busway, cost a further \$22 million, and that gives us the grand total of \$97.3 million.

The project has been highly successful. Passenger numbers have increased, particularly since the Tea Tree Gully Plaza section was completed. I am not sure that there is any other city in the world—as far as I know, there is none—that has such a busway extending for that distance for the benefit of the people at both ends. What that project had that, unfortunately, we do not have between the city and Darlington in the south, was the Torrens Valley. We had minimum disruption to existing householders and, because of the topography of the Torrens Valley, the busway is fairly well shielded from surrounding residential areas and, with the addition of very good landscaping, which was expensive but well worth it, the amount of noise or visual pollution, I would suggest, is now nil.

At the same time, we have been able to create along the valley a tremendous environment for passive recreation, and it is visually very pleasant indeed. I always ensure that any visitors who come to Adelaide make a trip on the O-Bahn and, without exception, they are very impressed. It is a great pity that we do not have a similar corridor between the city and Darlington. I am sure that we would have had a southern O-Bahn built by now through the existing suburbs. Unfortunately, that is not the position.

Mr QUIRKE: On page 82, program 3, no contribution towards the operation of the Victor Harbor scenic railway is budgeted for in 1990-91. Why is that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It was a one-off payment, and we hope it remains a one-off payment. I think we have said this previously. There is no provision for that project. It is deemed not to be necessary and all we can do is wish

SteamRanger well in that project. I think it is very worth while; it gives a great deal of pleasure to a large number of people, including the people who actually run the railway. I think they probably get more pleasure out of it than the passengers on the railway. I suppose all of us yearn for our infant days, when playing with trains was something highly desirable. However, payments from the Government have concluded.

Mr QUIRKE: How effective has the Transit Squad been in combating unruly behaviour and vandalism on trains, and what are their numbers this year, *vis-a-vis* last year, in terms of personnel?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I can go through that, but my suspicion is that it may be out of order; it would probably be dealt with better during the STA budget estimates, so I will deal with that question after dinner.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to page 200 of the Program Estimates. One of the reasons given for the Minister's shock announcement on 11 April in relation to the regulation of the taxi and hire car industry was his desire to see innovative hire services. His news release of that date identified the following types of services he wishes to encourage: community buses; feeder services to buses and trains from outer metropolitan areas; car pooling; supermarket shopper service; cross-city services; and, tourist-related services. Since the Minister removed the arbitrary limit of 55 hire vehicles permitted to operate in the metropolitan area, how many new hire car licences have been issued and for what purpose? As the Liberal Party understands that the purposes for which the new licences have been issued do not reflect the services that the Minister sought to encourage last April, what further action does he propose to initiate to encourage the establishment of such desirable community services, for example, the reintroduction of the subsidy to local government provided until August 1987 by the STA to assist councils with the cost of purchasing buses for community service?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Newland is confusing two entirely different things. As regards what licences have been issued, I will certainly send details of that matter to her. From memory, about 40 new hire car and special vehicle licences have been issued. What they are used for, I am not sure. What we will do to encourage them is to keep issuing them. It is very difficult for the Government to compel private enterprise to be innovative. My experience with private enterprise people in many areas—not all—is that they are not very bright at all. Unless the Government spoon feeds them, they would not do anything.

In the preparation of services that require extensive capital investment (certainly not for licences, as they are issued for the administrative fees only), I will and have always urged anyone who has come to me with a bright idea for expanding transport services through the use of either hire licences or special vehicle licences to go away and do their homework. Far too many people invest their superannuation or savings or mortgage their house on what they think is a bright idea without doing anywhere near the amount of market research required to ensure that that business has some future. Certainly, some individuals and firms are talking to me about services that they want to introduce in and around the metropolitan area. I can give them any information we have, urge extreme caution so that they do not get caught with a whole heap of vehicles for which they still must pay but without any patronage, and also wish them luck. The rest is up to them because it is, after all, the private sector that can take advantage of the new open policy of hire car and special vehicle licences.

As regards the community bus program, I advise that it was stopped some years ago. It is not the Government's intention at this stage to reintroduce that program as it was previously. Funds do not permit that, but there are areas where we can help local councils with the price of vehicles and that we have done. Noarlunga council is one that comes to mind and there may be others.

Mrs KOTZ: I again refer to page 200 of the Program Estimates. One of the achievements listed for 1989-90 is the completion of an assessment of the Darwin/Alice Springs railway. Will the Minister advise us of the conclusions of that assessment and provide me with a copy of the report? As Premier Bannon in the past has indicated support for the project, and since tens of millions of dollars are lost to South Australia each year because we have no direct trading link with the north, what is the Government's current position on the Darwin/Alice Springs railway?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will see what reports are available for the Committee, in particular for the member for Newland. However, the position is very simple: the Government strongly supports the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. On some of the work we have done there has been a considerable financial benefit to this State. The only problem is getting someone to build and finance it because the South Australian Government is not in a position to do so and, to date, the Federal Government has refused. I am not sure of the position of the Northern Territory Government. A private consortium has had a look at the cost of building and operating the railway. I have had some discussions with people working for that consortium, but the discussions basically have been to express strong support, whilst not having any financial wherewithal to back up that support.

The outcome of the latest reports I have seen is that it could be expected that the railway would at least break even on its operations and perhaps make a small profit. However, the financing of the capital cost of the infrastructure is beyond anyone to find at present. If somebody paid to put a railway there, it could operate profitably. In these times when we are constantly being urged by our political opponents to be more economically rational, I am sure that the Opposition would not support the operations of the railway on the basis that somebody somewhere would have to subsidise the cost of constructing the railway. The Labor Government believes that, in the interest of building a nation, somebody else should pay the cost of building that railway; we do not have the wherewithal to do it.

Mrs KOTZ: My third question again relates to page 200 of the Program Estimates. For 1988-89 the Program Estimates noted that the Department of Transport had completed the first cycle of the strategic plan of transport for South Australia. Last year in the Estimates Committee the Minister advised that a study team assisting the Cabinet subcommittee of resources and physical development was finalising a draft report identifying strategies to address eight key issues affecting the future of transport and transport planning in South Australia.

In the Program Estimates this year, no reference is made to the development or completion of a strategic plan for transport for South Australia or to the strategy report prepared for the Cabinet subcommittee. What follow-up work is being done on the two reports in terms of developing and implementing strategies for transport in South Australia, and will the Minister provide copies of both reports referred to? I note that last year the Minister promised in the Estimates Committee to provide the member for Bragg with a copy of the report to the Cabinet subcommittee by the study team when it was finalised, but to this date he has not received any such report.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If the member for Bragg has not received a report which is available and which I promised him, I will certainly check on that matter and send it to him. It surprises me that it has taken him a year to realise he does not have it. He must not have wanted it very desperately if that is the case.

Mr SUCH: He knew you'd deliver eventually.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: His confidence on my delivering it to him eventually is appreciated but, nevertheless he should have given me a reminder. I will look into that matter if the member for Bragg chooses to tell me.

A report is being prepared. In fact, I have seen a draft of the transport plan for South Australia, but I am not yet totally satisfied with it. When it has been considered by the Cabinet subcommittee and by Cabinet, a decision will be made on how widely it will be distributed. One of the problems we have in all these areas is that it became very clear about a year ago, whether it is to do with transport planning, land use planning or any other planning, that the system had become somewhat cumbersome and, in some areas, perhaps was outdated and there was insufficient clarity in objectives which made it difficult for people who had the responsibility to carry out the policy to see clearly where they were going.

There is sufficient evidence around to demonstrate that what I have said is fact. That is why a very comprehensive planning review was instigated by the Government. The Office of Transport Policy and Planning is ensuring that our planning legislation and policy has a very strong transport input into it. As the various reports are issued by the planning review, the strength of our submission and our views on transport planning for Adelaide will become evident. There is no doubt in my mind that, prior to the instigation of the planning review by the Government, it could be argued that there was too much strategic planning going on in small isolated areas without the comprehensive review. It was all very well for Government departments or statutory authorities to have their own strategic planning review, but what was the connection between our strategic plans in transport and land use plans?

All these things were taken into consideration when the Government decided to have a review of the whole area. All the results, including transport projections and policy decisions as to where we want to go with transport in Adelaide and South Australia as a whole (and it is relatively easier outside of Adelaide), will be made public as the review deals with various segments of its work. With regard to the transport review, that is in the process of being completed and, as it is an internal document, how widely distributed it will be has not yet been decided.

Mrs KOTZ: As a supplementary question, the Minister has answered the question with regard to the second document I was talking about. However, I referred to the 1988-89 Program Estimates which noted that the Department of Transport had completed the first cycle of the strategic plan of transport. Is that document completed; has it been made public; if not, why not; and is it possible to obtain a copy of that report?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It will be contained in the annual report.

Mr ATKINSON: Given the broad objective to ensure a comprehensive and efficient transport system in South Australia, referred to at page 200 of the Program Estimates, were there any closures of AN country branch lines or passenger trains in the past financial year, and did the State Government object to any of these closures?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: During February 1990 the Federal Government gazetted the formal closure of rail lines in

South Australia. On 9 February 1990 the following line was closed: Mount Barker junction, 50.3 kilometres; to Strathalbyn, 82.5 kilometres. The closure of the Victor Harbor service has been vigorously opposed by the South Australian Government. On 26 February 1990 the following lines were closed: Gladstone to Wilmington, Peterborough to Eurelia, Galga to Waikerie, Paskeville to Kadina. The Peterborough to Quorn line was the subject of a joint Federal-State study. In June 1990 the Federal Government sought approval to close Penrice Junction to Stockwell, Burra to Hallett, Balaklava to Gulnare and Brinkworth to Wallaroo. Approval was given for the first two closures. However, in view of the planned expansion of grain handling facilities at Wallaroo, additional information is being sought before a decision is made on the last two. As I have mentioned, despite persistent rumours, there has been no request of the South Australian Government to close any country passenger services.

Mr ATKINSON: Reference is made on page 200 to road cost recovery. What is the State Government's response to the Interstate Commission's review of road use charges and vehicle registration?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As I wish to enlarge on an answer I gave earlier about the ISC, I would not like the Committee to have inferred from anything I said in the earlier answer that this Government was not in favour of reform in the road charges area.

My objection and that of the Government to the IAC report was to the specific effect that we saw it having on South Australia, that there would be a large increase in the road user and registration charges for heavy vehicles and also a small increase for the private passenger vehicle. If that meant that additional funds would be spent on roads in this State, perhaps one could make a case for it, but the position was quite the reverse: the effect of the IAC report if adopted as it is would have been for additional charges to be raised in South Australia and spent in the eastern States. The economic rationalists which are somewhat on the ascendancy now believe that South Australia does not pay enough in road charges and gets too much in roads funds.

I do not accept that and the Government cannot accept it. Given our geographic location, our small population and the nature of the break-up of our economy, it means that we have to have relatively cheap transport. I am constantly berated by the New South Wales Government, in particular, because of the low charges that this Government has in a number of areas, but specifically in the transport area. Anyone attempting to register a truck or vehicle in New South Wales will find it horrendously expensive, and what has happened over the past two or three years in particular has been dramatic indeed. I am not critical of that. Maybe that is appropriate for New South Wales. It has to run its own race and raise whatever charges it thinks fit.

To condemn South Australia for not going to those extremes that New South Wales has gone to, and to a lesser extent in Victoria, is a bit rich. I believe in working with the Federal Government in the interests of South Australia. I do not believe that we ought to just lie down and accept the report, however learned the gentleman is who put the report together, if that report is not in the interests of this State.

I do not believe that it can be in the overall interests of Australia. If this State, Western Australia and the Northern Territory (the two States and the Territory that would be most adversely affected by the IAC report) are not allowed to structure their charges to take account of the vast distances, the low population densities, the necessity for those

two States and Territory to export to the other States, then I am afraid that South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory would be quickly depleted of population, and I do not believe that that is in the overall interest of Australia.

It may not worry the eastern States, but it should certainly concern the national Government and it does concern this Government. I have put that view to them very clearly. Nevertheless, we will continue to cooperate with the Federal Government in trying to achieve a more sensible charging system for road use and a better allocation for the various sectors. Whether it is between private motor vehicles and road trains or smaller commercial vehicles, there ought to be a more sensible allocation and we will be working towards that.

Mr ATKINSON: At page 82, Estimates of Payments, Financial Paper No. 3, it appears that subsidies to country town bus services will be reduced from about \$579 000 to about \$520 000 this financial year. Will this lower the standard of service?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Quite the reverse. The South Australian Government subsidises municipal bus services in the six main country centres of the State to the extent of meeting two-thirds of any operating losses of those services. The towns/cities and the levels of subsidy are as follows:

	1989-90 \$	1990-91 \$
Port Lincoln	41 000	55 000
Whyalla	297 000	333 000
Port Augusta	80 000	59 000
Port Pirie	69 000	47 000
Murray Bridge	33 000	7 000
Mount Gambier	60 000	19 000
Total	\$580 000	\$520 000

The reduced allocation to meet operating losses in 1990-91 is a direct result of the Government's free travel for students policy. The reduced subsidy results from higher child patronage levels, which are funded from the Education Department's line 'Transport concessions to students and children'. That is on page 76 of the Estimates of Payments. In some of those provincial cities the fact that free transport for children has been introduced has been the saviour of those bus services. It has certainly reduced the amount that the councils are having to pay to keep those services going, or, in some cases, private operators. That is the reason for the change. They are just having more passengers and they are being subsidised in a different way.

Mr SUCH: I refer to page 200 of the Program Estimates. Has consideration been given to providing a light rail transport option to the southern suburbs including, for example, integration with the existing Glenelg tram line?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Director-General of Transport will respond to that question.

Dr Scrafton: The study referred to earlier of an O-Bahn to the south followed an earlier study, which was one of using light rail to the south and branching from the Glenelg line using the same alignment of the Sturt Creek right of way down as far as the Sturt triangle. The costs, benefits and problems associated with that are similar to the O-Bahn study. Until a final recommendation was required from the Government, it would be the same as the north-east corridor. We would set out all the technological options for the Government of the day. Yes, one was done but it pre-dates the O-Bahn review.

Mr SUCH: I refer to the same page of the Program Estimates. What was the outcome of the review last year of

the South Australian airline market and what are the strategies proposed for the 1990s?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ask the Director-General to respond to that.

Dr Scrafton: The aviation policy paper was specially prepared in view of the impending deregulation of interstate aviation. Given that South Australia itself does not regulate intrastate aviation, and as we would be coming to a period next month when interstate and intrastate together would not be regulated, the feeling was that the Government ought to be advised of the implications of the change for the State and the actions that might be required following deregulation. The report has been released. If one is not available in the Parliamentary Library now, we will make sure that the Committee receives a copy of it.

Basically, the key recommendations were that we, as a State, should be promoting the entry of new airlines into the trunk system. Our feeling is that it would be beneficial for South Australia not to continue to be dependent upon only the two existing trunk operators and that we should monitor and strongly provide input to the Federal institutions that will become the new *de facto* regulators. In the sense that the two-airline policy disappears and regulation as such goes, it will be organisations such as in Prices Surveillance Authority, the Trade Practices Commission, and the Federal Airports Corporation that will become the main organisations with which the State will need to be involved.

We would also continue to participate actively in the formulation of international aviation policy and encourage other operators to serve the State, because the review reveals that the distinction that exists now between international, domestic and intrastate services will gradually disappear and that the players in those compartmentalised areas will, in fact, merge. We will get international operators being allowed to operate domestically; domestic operators will seek international operations and closer links with intrastate operators; and intrastate operators will seek to expand interstate.

Mr OSWALD: Will the Minister reconsider his reply to a question I asked earlier this afternoon in relation to Taxi Board regulations?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Earlier this afternoon the member for Morphett mentioned new taxi regulations and the number of them. I regret that I may have misled the Committee: those regulations are still with the Parliamentary Counsel. I apologise if I said that they were before both Houses.

Mr OSWALD: Will the Minister reconsider his reply to another question asked earlier in relation to the Government's plans for upgrading South Road through Darlington from Ayliffes Road to Seacombe Road? The Committee would like some detail on that particular project and what the Government's intentions are for that part of metropolitan Adelaide.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have no memory of that question being asked earlier. Maybe my memory is defective, but, in any event, after 4 p.m. the Committee will deal with the Department of Road Transport lines and the matter can be dealt with then.

Mr OSWALD: If the question can be dealt with then, I am happy with that. I thought that perhaps it should be dealt with under the planning lines. The Minister may choose to take the following question on notice as it requires a statistical reply. What consultants has the department hired during the past financial year, if any? What was the cost of those consultancies? What was their purpose and terms of reference? What is the plan for the release of any

reports from those consultancies? Further, what productivity savings have been achieved in each of the past three financial years and can these savings, if any, be identified by program and amount in each instance? What productivity savings have been budgeted for this financial year? Finally, in relation to Government cars, how many motor cars are operated by the office, authority and department? How many are for the exclusive use of executive officers and their offices?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will respond to those questions by the due date.

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

Road Transport, \$22 923 000

Works and Services—Department of Road Transport,
\$84 267 000

Chairman:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson

Mrs D.C. Kotz

Mr J.K.G. Oswald

Mr J.A. Quirke

Mr R.B. Such

The Hon. J.P. Trainer

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Transport

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Payze, Executive Director, Department of Road Transport.

Mr B. Atwell, Manager, Finance.

Mr D. Gerke, Supervising Engineer, Programming.

Mr J. Hutchinson, Director, Motor Registration Division.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have pleasure in bringing to this Estimates Committee for debate a total program of \$269.45 million for the Department of Road Transport. I take this opportunity to explain to Committee members changes to accounting arrangements within the department which have been introduced for the 1990-91 financial year. First, the expenditure and revenue associated with the Office of Road Safety and the vehicle inspection function located at Regency Park have been previously included in Consolidated Account but, effective from 1 July 1990, will be incorporated into the Highways Fund.

Members will recall that the Executive Director of the Department of Road Transport assumed responsibility for these areas on 11 September last year. Furthermore, Treasury agreement has been reached to receipt directly into the Highways Fund a number of receipt lines which were previously included in Consolidated Account. The most significant of these receipts is the vehicle registration and drivers licence fees.

Other receipts that are affected include commissions arising from collecting moneys on behalf of other organisations and receipts arising from the regulation of the tow truck industry. It is appropriate for these latter receipts to be incorporated into the Highways Fund because the expenditure incurred in deriving these receipts are met from the fund. Although these receipts are now included in the Highways Fund, members can identify the sources of funding available to the Department of Road Transport by reference to page 178 of the Estimates of Payments.

This past financial year has been one of consolidation in the Department of Road Transport. The historic decision to bring together expenditure and revenue collection responsibilities has prompted a complete and thorough re-examination of the department's purpose.

The revised program structure reported in the 1990-91 proposed column of the Program Estimates reflects a much better focus on priorities and a highlighted responsiveness to road user requirements. The new program structure developed by the department also indicates more effectively the wide range of functions that are performed by the department and dispels the myth that the department is predominantly a road construction authority. In fact, the proportion of the weekly paid work force engaged in road construction is very small, and a significant proportion of this work is funded from Federal sources.

The program structure can readily have objectives and performance indicators linked to each program. The work completed to date on objectives and performance indicators is contained in the program descriptions of the Program Estimates. Whilst it is acknowledged that further work is still to be undertaken in this area, nevertheless, the effort to date is a step in the right direction. The change in program structure has meant that the Program Estimates document does not provide comparable data between the 1989-90 and 1990-91 financial years. However, I refer members to page 187 of the Estimates of Payments, where comparable data is available.

Consistent with many other Government agencies, the department accepted a reduction of 4 per cent in real terms in the State funded components of its 1990-91 budget. However, by carefully concentrating this funding level into high priority areas, for example, asset management and road safety, and deferring projects that do not have this high level of priority, the effect of this reduction on the road user has been minimised. The Federal funding scenario is not as clear at this stage because changes are pending to the ACRD legislation, which provides road funding to this State. What is known is that there is likely to be an increasing amount of Federal funds to be subject to contract conditions, a greater emphasis on funding roads of national economic significance, and the elimination of severe reductions in untied arterial road grants.

In closing, I will highlight the significant achievements of the Department of Road Transport during the 1989-90 year and the major initiatives for 1990-91. During 1989-90, the development and implementation of a comprehensive quality management system commenced. As part of corporate policy, all suppliers and contractors will be required to have quality management systems in place to ensure the quality of their products and services provided to the department. Similarly, the providers of services within the department will have the same requirements.

In addition, the introduction of commercial accounting practices commenced in the laboratory, asphalt and workshop sections of the department. These practices include the commercial pricing of services provided to internal and external users and allow for the use of a fixed quotation system. I note that the Auditor-General, in his latest report, commended work being done in this area.

Furthermore, the department's capital works program for 1989-90 was, in the main, achieved. During 1990-91, work will continue on the quality management system and the extension of commercial accounting practices to other service areas of the department. An extensive capital works program will also be undertaken as detailed in the 1990-91

capital works program, resulting in the anticipated completion of the following projects: Gawler bypass, between Trotting Track Road and Angle Vale Road; the Grove Way, between Main North Road and Golden Way; the Golden Way, between Golden Grove Road and Grove Way; the Port Augusta to Port Wakefield Road, between Merriton and the District Council of Red Hill boundary, including the bridge over River Broughton; and South Road, between Castle Street and Daws Road.

However, as I have said, the department continues to place heavy emphasis on low profile but very effective expenditures. For example, \$83.9 million will be spent on preserving the State's existing road network by the implementation of responsible road asset management practices, and \$11.8 million will also be spent on road safety related activities primarily to reduce the risk of accidents by publicity promotion and alternative traffic management solutions. Ongoing productivity improvements and a road network that persistently is compared favourably with interstate road systems are testimony to the value for money approach to meeting South Australia's road-user needs.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments for Road Transport and Works and Services, Department of Road Transport, open for examination.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to page 205 in the Program Estimates and the subject of black spot. Does the proposed capital expenditure of \$7.499 million referred to include the Federal Government's promise of \$5.4 million to the State for participation in the national black spot program, or is this sum solely State funds?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is solely State funds.

Mr OSWALD: Is the issue of South Australia's blood alcohol concentration limit for fully licensed drivers the only issue upon which the Federal Government is awaiting confirmation before agreeing to transfer the black spot fund into South Australia and, if so, when does the Minister intend to introduce legislation to lower the State's blood alcohol limit from .08 per cent to .05 per cent?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: On the first question the answer is 'Yes', and on the second question I advise that the matter is still under consideration by the Government.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to page 190 of the Auditor-General's Report under the heading 'Private contractors'. What is the proposed value of construction, maintenance and other work this year? As private contractors last year were awarded construction work to the value of only \$19 million or 21 per cent of total payments, which was down from \$23 million in the previous year, is it proposed or envisaged that this year private contractors will again attract a falling proportion of such work in favour of the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Essentially, it depends on the availability of Federal Government funds and when contracts are awarded.

The Federal Government in the main has a provision that requires all its funded projects to go out to tender. Some of those the Department of Road Transport tenders for and is very successful at winning. In others, private contractors win the tender. I will ask the Executive Director to enlarge if he wishes.

Mr Payze: I do not think that the Minister's answer needs amplification. Frankly, the extent of contract work depends on the projects that are available for going out to contract.

Mr OSWALD: Part of my question referred to the proposed value of construction, maintenance and other work this year. The Minister may want to take the question on notice. It would appear from the Minister's reply that there has been a downgrading of work going to private contractors. I was trying to ascertain whether that was Government

policy as it seems a coincidence that the department keeps winning all the contracts and the amount of work going out to private contractors is diminishing year by year. I do not believe that that is healthy, and the Government, perhaps at a time when private enterprise is struggling in this State, could consider enlarging the amount of the cake going out to private contractors rather than presiding over a continually diminishing amount going out to the private sector.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It seems that the taxpayer is interested in more road for the dollar. If the amount of road that can be built for the dollar is greater using the public sector than using the private sector on certain contracts, I would have thought that everybody in the Parliament who had a responsibility for the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars would applaud it. Why on earth would we want to give work to the private sector when it would cost us more? Why would we want to do that? Would not the taxpayers of South Australia quite rightly be enraged that we gave unnecessary amounts of money to the private sector for some ideological reason?

The Auditor-General has commented very favourably on the financial management practices of the Department of Road Transport. When we tender for a project our costings are accurate. It has been surprising on occasions how far we come under some of the private sector tenders. Some areas of the private sector have had a field day at the expense of the taxpayer when it comes to road building. I would have thought that everybody in this Parliament would applaud getting more roads for the dollar, irrespective of who builds them.

Mr OSWALD: Will the Minister explain to the Committee what costs are not incorporated in departmental tenders? For example, the private sector, in working out a price on a job, must incorporate payroll tax and other commitments such as workers compensation, and the like, which the department does not have to include in its costs. I am sure that the department would run out cheaper on many occasions than private enterprise.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: With respect, that is nonsense. We went through a lengthy debate before lunch on the cost of workers compensation to the Department of Correctional Services. I would have thought that any member would be able to work out that other Government departments also pay the cost of workers compensation.

Mr OSWALD: What about payroll tax?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We pay payroll tax. I am absolutely staggered that the member for Morphett does not know that the Department of Road Transport pays workers compensation premiums and payroll tax and that it does not tender for Federal Government contracts on particular roads because it is a charity. It is not a charity. We are attempting to get the maximum amount of road for the taxpayers' dollar. Sometimes we do not win the contracts, but in certain areas, with location and plant, the private sector comes in cheaper than us and wins the contract.

However, on other contracts we are cheaper and we win the contracts. I assure the member for Morphett that all costs are included, including workers compensation and payroll tax. I am genuinely surprised that after all these years the member for Morphett just does not know that departments pay workers compensation and payroll tax.

Mr QUIRKE: On road assets preservation on page 204 of the Program Estimates, I note that it is proposed to spend almost \$84 million. Is it necessary to spend that level of funding merely to maintain our existing road network?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In the past the department has consistently considered asset maintenance expenditure as non-discretionary. The department's recently revised pro-

gram structure reflects the continued importance that the department places upon asset maintenance. The road assets preservation program has as its objective:

To preserve the safe, efficient and reliable operation of the principal road transport system.

Expenditure under that program includes all road maintenance, including restoration and operating costs. Maintenance expenditure is determined from the minimum required to maintain the roads to set standards which ensure that an appropriate level of services is provided. Reduction in expenditure available to the assets preservation budget in effect results in the need for the department to reduce its standards. As many of those standards are road safety based, the extent of any such reduction is limited.

People should take note of that point when we are continually asked to build more and more roads. It would be easy to agree to most of those requests if we did not need to maintain the existing road network, but it would be short sighted of any Government to embark on an extensive road building program for whatever reason while neglecting its existing road asset. That is something which, as good managers, we will not do in spite of the fact that it would probably be electorally popular, for a short while anyway, to meet the never-ending requests for more roads rather than to spend a considerable part of our income on maintaining the existing asset.

Mr QUIRKE: Page 184 of the Auditor-General's Report refers to a decrease of \$564 000 in registration and drivers licence collections from 1988-89 to 1989-90. Why did that occur when those fees were subject to an increase early in the 1989-90 financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In the financial year 1988-89, \$18 million was collected in drivers' licences. However, only \$11 million was collected in 1989-90 due to fewer licences falling due in 1989-90. The introduction of photographic licences will provide an opportunity to even out the annual rate of licence renewals. That in turn will even out the cash flow. It is just one of the problems that we acquired when we introduced the three-year licences. The cash flow is then very uneven.

We do well in the first year of introducing three-year licences but then there is a bit of a drought after that, so it is difficult to even out the position. The popularity of photographic licences has helped us to do that. People are applying for photographic licences and extending the period. That has enabled us to even out matters. There is no real magic formula for that. Once we issue three-year licences to everybody we shall get peaks and troughs in our income.

Mr QUIRKE: Page 207 of the Program Estimates shows that capital expenditure on support services will increase from \$12.132 million in 1989-90 to \$25.784 million in 1990-91. Why will that substantial increase occur?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The increase in capital expenditure of \$13.7 million has mainly resulted from the change in program structure resulting in the inclusion of land acquisition and property management functions as support services for the first time in 1990-91—that was an increase of \$10.7 million; the purchase of road materials prior to the commencement of the Todd Highway project, which is an increase of \$600 000; increased plant and equipment, a \$1.1 million increase; and the cost of relocating material section staff to Northfield depot and the amalgamation of all heavy vehicle operation functions at Regency Park, which is an increase of \$700 000.

The support services category includes items other than purely administrative functions. For example, plant and property management functions are included in the Department of Road Transport's support services. It is therefore

misleading to view support services expenditure as purely administrative overheads.

Mrs KOTZ: My question relates to page 271 of the Program Estimates in relation to the third arterial road. In 1985 the Bannon Government promised to build that road to be completed in the early 1990s, and in 1987 the Government amended the commencement date to 1993-94. Over the past year what work has been undertaken by the department on developing a preferred construction staging sequence, a planned report, environmental assessments and consultations with councils, residents and affected parties? What is the current commencement date and what are the current costs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Again there are many questions which I will not even attempt to go through in the way in which they were asked. If the member for Newland chooses to give me the piece of paper from which she read I will certainly deal with the questions in that way.

Suffice to say that the starting date for the third arterial road is still expected to be 1993. The final cost of all works associated with it from go to whoa are considerably more than that—about \$90 million. Extensive consultation has taken place with people in the region. Updates are constantly sent out, as I am sure the member for Fisher will attest.

The buying of land for the corridor is now complete. Just about all the land that is required for the third arterial road has been purchased. It is on an owner-offer basis. We have not had to compulsorily acquire any land. People have been coming forward and offering the land to us. We have been able to come to satisfactory commercial arrangements with everybody.

Quite extensive design work has taken place. If the member for Newland or any other member wishes to see an example of that, they are welcome to make arrangements to go to Walkerville and look at how far the design has progressed. It is impressive. Much work has been done. The best part of \$10 million has already been spent on design work. The design work is well under way. The member for Newland would be very welcome to examine that matter in detail, as would any other member.

Mrs KOTZ: I thank the Minister for that courtesy, and I will present him with the paper with the rest of those questions. My second question relates to page 216 of the Program Estimates and is a very succinct, straight to the point, question. How much is to be allocated this year to provide ferry services along the Murray River? Has the Minister considered seeking tenders for the operation of these services from the private sector and if not, why not?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The figure is \$5.45 million and the answer to the second question is 'No'.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 217. Has the Federal Government provided funds this year for detailed design work on the Mount Barker road and, if so, how much was provided and what progress is anticipated to be made? As the Federal Government has already spent \$4.9 million on preliminary design work and the selection of a particular route for the new road, is the Minister aware of the total sum of funds that the Federal Government will be required to expend on the detailed design work and, later, on the construction work?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not think I have the final estimate; I am not sure whether the Federal Government does. I think we have spent the best part of \$5 million so far on design work. Maunsell and Partners are still engaged on that consultancy, as far as I know.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: I have three questions in relation to programs in the southern and south-western

suburbs. On page 51 of the Capital Works Program, reference is made to Robinson Road, Seaford, and also widening and reconstruction program for South Road, part of which is in my electorate, between Anzac Highway and the Torrens River. Is the Minister confident that both of those can be completed on the dates that have been mentioned on page 51 and within the sums that are specified: \$3 million for Robinson Road, Seaford and \$14.5 million for South Road widening?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is very difficult as regards Robinson Road to give a final figure. The project has commenced, as I am sure that the member for Walsh is aware. It is due for completion in December next year. The estimated cost is about \$3 million. The estimated cost of \$3 million was based on preliminary design only, and a final cost estimate will not be available until the detailed design is finalised.

The second question related to South Road between Anzac Highway and the Torrens River. The overall concept for upgrading has been endorsed by the Public Works Committee—a very fine committee of this Parliament. This project has been divided into four sections; detailed planning work has been completed for the two southern sections from Ballara Street, Mile End, to Hale Street, Everard Park, including the community involvement phase. Design work is proceeding on these sections, which are in the West Torrens Council area. Planning work is in progress on the two northern sections in Thebarton council area between the Torrens River and Ballara Street. Preliminary planning reports have been forwarded to the Corporation of the Town of Thebarton for comment prior to placing the proposals on public exhibition. The cost of widening and reconstructing the 4.9 kilometres from the Torrens River to Hale Street is estimated to cost \$14.5 million when completed in 1994, so the honourable member can see that it is quite an expensive stretch.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: Still on the subject of the south-western suburbs, there has been an ongoing controversy for over a decade on the realignment of Tapleys Hill Road in Glenelg North, but there does not seem to be any reference in the capital works program to anything about the realignment of Tapleys Hill Road between Sturt Creek and Anzac Highway.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Walsh is quite correct; the capital works program includes only those projects that are to commence or will continue construction activities in this financial year. I am very pleased to advise the member for Walsh that the construction of this project is scheduled to commence in November 1991. Design and land acquisition are well advanced, and they are on schedule. Estimated cost is \$5.7 million and will be funded by the Federal Government as part of the national arterial program.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: In relation to another electorate on my side of town, when will the department commence upgrading Panalatinga Road, in view of its increasing accident rate and the rapid housing development in adjacent areas?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is a road that gives a great deal of concern to those who use it and those who have some responsibility, along with the council, for the condition of the road. The planning phase for this north-south arterial road to service the Woodcroft development area is being completed, including the public involvement process. Design of the roadworks and necessary acquisition for the initial stages are now under way with construction tentatively scheduled to commence in mid 1991 on the section

from old South Road to Pimpala Road. A submission to seek Public Works Committee approval is being prepared.

Mr SUCH: Can the Minister indicate the cost and other benefits that will accrue from constructing the third arterial road, rather than upgrading the existing South Road and, in particular, the section from Seacombe Road to just north of Lander Road?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: This is really inviting me to conceptualise and theorise, and I am certainly quite happy to do that. Essentially, the Government has made an assessment, and I hope that the member for Fisher agrees that, on any cost-benefit analysis, the establishment of the third arterial road stands up very well. Others may argue that some upgrading on South Road south of Darlington is a better way to go, and I just do not believe that that is the case. I believe that, even with a significant upgrading program, that road will still lack the capacity that will be given by the third arterial road.

I am hoping to incorporate a bus-only lane or a multi-vehicle use only lane in the third arterial road. Whilst that would not be difficult to do on South Road, I am not sure that it would give us quite the results that we expect. I hear that there are numbers of lobby groups in the south who have particular favourite projects instead of the third arterial road. There are those in favour of light rail, and I think there are still some in favour of heavy rail. Some are in favour of an O-Bahn from Darlington to the south, which is one proposal that mystifies me; I really cannot work that one out. Whilst quite nice things in themselves, none of them provide—as in my view a third arterial road would—for expansion of industry in the south, for the heavy vehicles which are very necessary to industry in this State and which will be necessary for industry in the south. So, for many and varied reasons, I believe that the third arterial road is necessary. It is a better option than upgrading the existing road network.

Mr SUCH: As a supplementary question, would the Minister provide a considered response to that question, particularly in relation to that section from Seacombe Road to just north of Lander Road?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not know that a further considered response would be any better than the very considered response I have already given. However, in an effort to assist the Committee, I will ask the Executive Director of the Department of Road Transport if he has a considered response to that question.

Mr Payze: The question really was whether or not we could quantify the benefits to be gained from building a new facility as distinct from widening the existing section of Main South Road from Seacombe Road to Lander Road. I am not in a position this afternoon to answer that question with regard to the quantification of benefits in dollar terms. However, I can speak a little about the engineering feasibility or otherwise of such an option.

With regard to the desirability and long-term capacity of such a facility, we would be looking at five lanes in each direction. There are significant topographical and engineering restraints that would not enable us to achieve that capacity in that section of Main South Road that has been mentioned, not the least of which is the position as it is cut and benched into the existing hillside. Irrespective of what the benefits might be, quite frankly there are problems with the engineering feasibility that would make such an option non-viable.

Mr SUCH: Referring to page 218 of the Program Estimates and bicycle helmets, when will legislation be introduced to make the wearing of bicycle helmets compulsory? Will the legislation require that helmets be compulsory for

all riders or will it provide for Australia Post riders to be exempted as in Victoria? Does the Minister propose to adopt the same mode of legislation as introduced in Victoria where all riders were required to wear a helmet as from 1 July, or the model proposed for New South Wales where the compulsory wearing of helmets will be introduced in stages, involving cyclists aged 16 years and over as from 1 January 1990 and persons under 16 years as from July 1991? Finally, does the Government propose to offer the bicycle helmet rebate scheme after it has become compulsory to wear helmets? If so, for how long, and will Foundation South Australia be participating again?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The question of the compulsory wearing of bicycle helmets is still under consideration by the Government.

Mr SUCH: With reference to page 219 of the Program Estimates and environmental amenity, what measures are being taken by the department to assist local government authorities in tree planting on the edge of arterial roads and on very wide medians? As I understand it, there are problems with respect to insurance and often objections from the department to such tree planting.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Road Transport has a very extensive program for tree planting and revegetation of the kerbside. If in the construction or refurbishment of our roads or in alterations to intersections we must interfere with the vegetation, whether native or otherwise, we do that at all times in consultation with the council, I can assure members that, before any trees are removed, the Minister must be convinced that there is no alternative and that the appropriate local government body agrees there is no alternative. When we do that, we try as much as is possible to replace the vegetation we have had to disturb. In fact, we try to go at least one better and put more there than was there originally.

It is a very extensive program. In some areas, it is fairly expensive but the expense is worthwhile. There is no question that, in the past, the engineers who built roads just went from A to B in the shortest and cheapest way. That is no longer acceptable to the Government or to the Department of Road Transport, and it certainly would not be acceptable to the community. I will ask the Executive Director to expand on that answer and discuss the way we liaise with local government bodies and others in the provision of vegetation, whether native or otherwise.

Mr Payze: There are several aspects to this that need amplification. First, I refer to the legal aspects. In terms of the Highways Act, the Commissioner of Highways is responsible for roads between kerb and gutter, so any action taken within the road reserve outside the kerb is in fact the responsibility of local government. Any action taken to revegetate the road reserve outside the confines of the carriageway must be done by negotiation and agreement with local government. However, between the kerbs and on the medians, the responsibility for vegetation or landscaping is clearly that of the Commissioner of Highways.

As the Minister has already said, we have an extensive tree planting program, not just on projects relating to existing construction works but also on projects where roads have existed for many years. We see our responsibility for revegetation within the road reserve equal to that of replacing vegetation lost during the construction process. At this point, we are engaged on the Greening of Adelaide project. As an example, today I dealt with a cooperative venture with the Glenelg, West Torrens and Unley councils regarding the development of Anzac Highway as an avenue, where extensive revegetation both within the median and outside the kerb and gutters is proposed. Yes, we do have an

extensive program of negotiation with local government and we also undertake considerable works within our own budget provisions.

Mr ATKINSON: Mention is made at page 51 in the Capital Works Program that stage 4 of the Gawler bypass will commence in February 1991. When stage 4 of the bypass is completed, what will the project have cost and how will it have been funded?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Stages 1 and 2 of this four-stage project were completed in April 1988 at a field cost of \$14.2 million. Construction of stage 3 (Trotting Track, Road to Angle Vale Road, including the Gawler River bridge and the bridge over Clifford Road connector) is due for completion in December 1990; estimated field cost of \$12.3 million. Stage 4 (the duplication of 1.6 kilometres and construction of twin bridges over the railway and Main North Road) is due to commence early in 1991; estimated field cost of \$10.2 million.

This project is being funded by the Federal Government as part of the national arterial road program. Anyone who has seen the progress to date on the Gawler bypass will agree that, while it is a very expensive and complex engineering project, it is certainly money well spent. Those of us who used to drive through Gawler in the days before the bypass can certainly attest to that. Also, I would compliment the department and the designers of the bridge. The bridge at that location is a very good example of design work. It is a credit to the designers of the project and the workers who constructed it.

Mr ATKINSON: There appears to be no reference in the Capital Works Program to the Ovingham Overpass. Has the department any plans to proceed with the overpass, first promised more than 20 years ago?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have some bad but not unexpected news for the member. There is no allocation for the overpass this year. However, it is a project that we keep in mind and it will be given a priority at some stage. It is measured alongside all our other priorities. Although funds have not been allocated this year, the design is completed. The member for Spence is welcome to look at the completed design.

Mr ATKINSON: Without wishing to seem ungrateful about the completion of the bridge over the northern railway line at Bowden (referred to at page 51 of the Capital Works Program), is there any reason why the median strip on the new bridge could not have been planted with grass, as is the median strip further towards Hindmarsh?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I attended the bridge opening a fortnight ago with the Federal member for Adelaide (Dr Catley). I made some inquiries about that because the Mayor of Prospect also was concerned. At the time I could not answer his question, but I have subsequently made some inquiries and there is a genuine reason why the strip is not grassed. It is a question of drainage and water reticulation. I am advised by engineers who know, that it is just not practical to do that. It is unfortunate, because it would have made a difference, although people who use the facility believe that the whole redevelopment is extremely worth while—grass or no grass.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to page 182 of the Auditor-General's Report. Under the heading 'Implementation and Performance' he states:

The system now known as DRIVERS became operational on 17 July 1990. Shortly after implementation, it became apparent that the processing capacity of the computer was inadequate.

A computer from another Government agency was installed to facilitate processing until a temporary upgrade of the Motor Registration Division's computer was carried out in August 1990. The department advised that the upgrade would be sufficient to provide a satisfactory level of service until a thorough examina-

tion of the DRIVERS computing requirements can be undertaken. Detailed costings of a solution are not currently available.

As at 30 June 1989 the project had cost \$9.419 million. What was the proposed cost when Cabinet approved the project in June 1985? What was the cost of the upgrade in August 1990?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The cost of the upgrade has been nothing; Fujitsu loaned us the add-on piece. I do not have the 1985 cost with me, but I will try to get it before 6 p.m.

Mr OSWALD: The cost of the upgrade in 1990 was zero?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes. Fujitsu has loaned us the extra piece that we have added on.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to the same paragraph of the Auditor-General's Report. What are the current concerns that warrant the proposed 'thorough examination of the DRIVERS computing requirements'? Have detailed costings been prepared since the finalisation of the Auditor-General's Report?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We are having difficulty understanding the question.

Mr OSWALD: As a supplementary question—which may assist—are those concerns related to the capacity and compatibility of the computer to enable South Australia to participate in the national registration and drivers licensing activities as approved by the transport Ministers, or are there other areas of concern with the computer and its capacity?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not believe that the first part of that question is a concern. The concern in the broad is that the hardware is not big enough, it is not powerful enough for what we want it to do. The machine was bought on the best advice available. We indicated what we wanted. One does not buy these things off the shelf; one does not go into the supermarket and buy them using guesswork. The team that put the proposal together sought outside advice, or advice from manufacturers, for example, and we were assured that the machine was probably adequate. Everyone, including people in the private sector, keep telling me that the problem with this estimating is that it is not an exact science. Until one gets the system operating there is an element of uncertainty, about whether or not the machine is powerful enough. Of course, one way not to be in a position where one can be criticised is to go for overkill and to buy the biggest machine on the block. One can then rest assured that the machine is big enough and, of course, one would then be accused of wasting taxpayers' money, and quite rightly so.

It seems to me that if what one requires the system to do is worth doing, and the costs are within reasonable parameters, one ought to go ahead with the system. I do not want to go right back in history; I notice the member for Morphett went back to 1985; I can go further back than that, because this docket starts during Michael Wilson's time as Transport Minister, as does the JIS docket. I agree with what the Liberal Government decided at that time; that is, to go ahead with a computerised system for motor registration and the drivers' licences. I think that the system is of benefit to the State and its motorists. There is no doubt that it will cost more than was originally thought. Even if the final figure had been the initial figure, I still think it would have been worth while. Had the final cost been known at the start, I think the Government—whether it be a Liberal Government, in this case, or our Government—still ought to have gone ahead with the project. The fact that the Government thought that it would not cost as much as it ultimately cost was a little bit of wishful thinking on the part of a number of people.

Basically, over that period, the public sector did not have the expertise to take on a job of this size, although it is changing quite significantly. The main reason why the public sector does not have that expertise is that, by and large, it does not pay people enough to attract them from the private sector. A lot of the people whom we train at lower levels of computing, on the completion of their training, leave to go to the private sector for more money. There is a market out there and the public sector is not in the market with the rates it pays. Until such time as the Government develops the expertise and pays a sufficient rate to hold those with that expertise, we will always have problems with some of these larger computer projects.

It is cold comfort to me, but people in the private sector who have gone through an exercise of a similar size have assured me that they have had exactly the same problems: difficulty in estimating the size of hardware that is required. People who have been in the business for 20 years tell me that it is only a 20-year science; it is not like surveying, which has been done, and where techniques have been developed and polished for decades. That is not the case when one is estimating the amount of computer clout that is needed for a given job. However, it does not help me at all to know that the private sector is struggling in this area, too.

Almost certainly, a further upgrade of the computer will be required. It is handling the customer side of the Motor Registration Division very well indeed. We do not have a great deal of complaint with it in that section, but there are other associated functions and development, and so on, for which we need the computer to perform. I believe that, even with the upgrade that the company has loaned us at the moment, it will still probably not be sufficient, so a further upgrade will be required. I do not know the cost of that at this stage. The motor registration operation costs about \$350 million a year, so, if one is talking about upgrading computers that cost \$500 000, \$1 million, or whatever, I think that that ought to be put in the perspective of how much money the Motor Registration Division handles, that is, about \$350 million per annum. That is a very large amount of money indeed. I think that whatever we pay, within reason, to ensure that that money is collected as efficiently as possible is worth while.

Mr OSWALD: The Minister referred to the docket going back to Michael Wilson's days as Minister. Certainly, there may have been some preliminary discussions going on at that time but, if the Cabinet gave its approval for the project in June 1985, three years after the Tonkin Government lost office, I hardly think the Minister can blame Michael Wilson in his Ministry for the mistakes that the Government made in 1985 and onwards. The product would have been purchased in 1985 on the advice of the Data Processing Board, or whoever was advising the Government. It has been my observation, after seven years on the PAC, and as an observer since then, that the Government has made a series of mistakes in relation to computer acquisition. In this respect I refer right back to the early days of the Flinders Medical Centre, the Data Processing Centre, itself, and some other Government departments. So, let us not blame a Minister in the 1979-1981 period for equipment that was purchased as a result of a Cabinet decision made in 1985, just for the sake of making political points. My question relates to page 218 of the Program Estimates, under the heading 'Black Spots'. What black spot sites have been identified by the department? What is the road safety history of each site? What work is required at each location and at what cost?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I refer, first, to the honourable member's preamble to that question. I did not detect any link between the preamble and the question. Nevertheless, I can assure the member for Morphett that the Cabinet submission went through the Tonkin Cabinet. That was quite proper in my view. I support it and I have said that in the House before in relation to this particular issue of computerising the Motor Registration Division. It was a far sighted decision, as was the decision about the JIS, which went through the same Tonkin Cabinet. I am not allocating blame: I am praising Michael Wilson and, to a lesser extent, Roger Goldsworthy for these decisions. I can assure the member for Morphett that the Cabinet decision was made then.

The member for Morphett also said that the Government has had a history of difficulty with the introduction of computers in the public sector. That is certainly true, as the private sector has had difficulty. The only reason that the Liberal Party has not had difficulty in introducing computers is that it has not been in a position to do it. I am assured on all the evidence that is available to me from the private sector that it does not matter who is in government, whether it is a Liberal Government or a Labor Government: on these large and complex projects, the private sector experiences the same problems. The only reason that the member for Morphett can sit there and say that the Labor Government has had problems—and that is true—is that the Liberal Government has not been in office, and we can understand why.

In relation to the question about the black spot program, that amount of detail is not available here, but I will be very happy to get it for the honourable member. It is a question of priorities on black spots. I think that barely a road in South Australia does not have a black spot somewhere on it. It is just a matter of deciding which are the worst. We have in the Office of Road Safety a very extensive and sophisticated reporting mechanism with the South Australian Police Department, where we identify the accidents and their severity.

The member for Morphett and anyone else is welcome to have a look at that system. I am not sure how much it is proper to incorporate in *Hansard*. If the member for Morphett wants to see some of the principal black spots in the State and to know how much will be spent on them, I am quite happy to have the data incorporated in *Hansard*, or I will give it to the member for Morphett if he thinks it will be of use.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that, in regard to the length of the information that the Minister has offered to the Committee, if any member wishes to see that information, the Minister can make it available on that basis.

Mr OSWALD: We would be happy with that because we do not want to go the expense of incorporating such a table in *Hansard*. By way of a supplementary question, has the list of black spot sites been forwarded by the Minister to the Federal Government for funding approval?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No. The member for Morphett said how interested he is in the black spots program; yet, apparently, he is not sufficiently interested to want the Federal Government's \$12 million to fix up some of them. Although I know that not all members of his Party will vote that way, the Opposition has said that we should not pick up that \$12 million if it means accepting the conditions.

Mrs KOTZ: Where is the legislation? I haven't seen any legislation.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I know that the honourable member will vote for it. She is a responsible member of Parliament.

Mr QUIRKE: What is the capital expenditure of \$1.631 million in the program 'Administration and enforcement of State taxation legislation' (page 204, Program Estimates)?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The capital expenditure of \$1.6 million relates mainly to the purchase of capital items for the drivers' system. Funds for these items were provided under the recurrent budget for 1989-90.

Mr QUIRKE: I note that roadworks have commenced on the Salisbury Highway and at the Salisbury Highway/Park Terrace intersection, and that page 50 of the capital works program indicates that the total project will be completed by June 1993. However, when will the proposed rail underpass be completed to alleviate the existing traffic congestion in that area?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Construction of the first stage of this project (Leslie McIntyre Avenue to Park Terrace) has commenced. Project completion to Commercial Road, including the rail underpass and the Little Para River bridge, is programmed for December 1992. The total estimated field cost is \$16.7 million, funded by the Federal Government as a national arterial project.

Mr QUIRKE: Will the Minister say whether any funds will be allocated this year, or are in the pipeline, on improving the traffic flow through Main North Road and on Montague Road between Bridge Road and Main North Road because of congestion which is very heavy during peak hour?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: A new link, to be known as the Montague Road extension between Main North Road and Port Wakefield Road, is proposed. That project is scheduled for the 1992-93 financial year, but it will be coupled with the construction of a new road link between the Salisbury Highway at its termination at Port Wakefield Road, through Dry Creek, to connect with a northerly extension of South Road, which will be staged over three years, commencing in the 1991-92 financial year. The new road, to cost \$29 million in estimated field costs, will be funded by the Federal Government under the National Highways Program. A section of Port Wakefield Road between the Montague Road extension and Cavan Road will be widened in conjunction with the connector project. This work is expected to cost \$2.3 million and will be funded by the Federal Government. Compatible with those two projects is the proposed new link of which I have spoken.

Mr QUIRKE: My question referred to the existing Montague Road situation, not the proposed extension. I am concerned about the traffic flow between Bridge Road and Main North Road on Montague Road, and I am happy for that to be taken on notice. I am also interested in any proposals to alleviate traffic congestion on Main North Road from Parafield Airport to Gepps Cross. Again, I am happy for that to be taken on notice.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The best estimate I can get at the moment from our forward works program for the widening of Montague Road to alleviate that problem is 1994-95. I will get back to the honourable member with more details about that.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to page 221 of the Program Estimates. With the proposed introduction of motor registration payment facilities at agencies of Australia Post (I note that legislation is before the House of Assembly for this purpose), what impact will this initiative have upon current operations of motor vehicle registration branches, including the rationalisation of offices and the employment of staff? Is a cost-saving component expected from this change? If so, would the Minister outline the projected cost saving estimates? Does that new initiative indicate the failure of the recently introduced new and costly computer systems

installed within currently operating motor registration facilities?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To deal with the comment about the alleged failure of the new system, I thought that I had dealt with it, but I am happy to deal with it again in response to the member for Newland.

I do not believe for one minute that the system has been a failure. That is not the problem. The system is excellent and I strongly support it. It is worthwhile for motorists and for the State as a whole. We will need, in my view—for what it is worth in these matters—some greater computer power to make sure that we not only deliver services at the front counter but are in a position to do development work, training and so on. Before we upgrade the hardware, I want to be doubly sure that there is a reasonable chance of our buying sufficient without buying too much.

It is impossible to predict how many people will pay their registration fees through the post office. From memory, about 70 per cent of our motor registrations are simple renewals. If all those people paid through the post office it would certainly have quite a dramatic effect on our present motor registration branches. If only 10 per cent paid, obviously it would not be so dramatic but, if 50 per cent paid, it would be half way between dramatic and trivial. Until people go into post offices and pay, when we can count the numbers, it is difficult for us to estimate. I am sure that the member for Newland would agree that that is the case. I hope that many people will go into post offices and pay their simple renewals there. The more outlets we have the less congestion there will be.

One of the problems with motor registration is that everybody wants to pay at lunchtime. If we had the number of staff available to make sure that nobody waited for more than a minute at lunchtime we would have to have standing around all day several times the number of staff we need for that one hour. That is one of the problems. A person can pay his motor registration at our offices at 10 a.m. and be the only one there. If one goes at lunchtime one can find 200 people there. I am not quite sure what to do about that. Let us hope that people will be reasonable about it. If a number of people pay through the post office it would obviously take pressure off the branches.

Simple re-registrations will still need to be processed. It will not make any significant difference to the amount of computer power that we need. Again, it is not only staff we need for that one hour a day when everybody wants to pay—we also need computer power to cope with that one hour a day. The computer can be slumbering quietly for the other six hours. We need computer power for that peak. If it alleviates that peak to some extent it will be quite useful.

Mrs KOTZ: As a supplementary question and for clarification of a point that the Minister made, am I to understand that the introduction of the Australia Post agencies as a point of payment for motor registration is being done purely as a speculative effort rather than some form of groundwork or strategy being implemented to ensure that whatever traffic may occur through the implementation of making payments into those agencies will be covered? Bearing in mind the Minister's point about computer systems which have already been installed within motor registries and which are not handling the work due to the lack of a correct specification for the work load that has gone through in different portions of the day, if that is already causing problems what problems does the Minister envisage within Australia Post agencies?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I was trying to find a question. With respect to the honourable member, it is feast or famine.

I either get six questions or I cannot find one. The proposal to use Australia Post is based on convenience for the customer. It will be more convenient for the customer to have more outlets. There is not a motor registration office on every corner but there is pretty well a post office in every shopping centre.

Mrs KOTZ: If it can be handled. If there is any form of traffic, what programming has been done?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Let me deal with that again. The expectation is that customers will find it more convenient. Rather than our opening more and more registration offices—all members want registration offices in their electorates—we have come to an arrangement with Australia Post to handle the simple, ordinary registrations for us. I believe that ordinary registration renewals comprise 70 per cent of transactions. Those will be forwarded to us and processed at night when the computer is not so heavily used as in the lunch hour.

I cannot say that there is any additional problem. It will help. If it takes registrations out of the motor registration office in the lunch hour and puts them in the post office when the computer is doing next to nothing it will be of enormous assistance to us. It is much more convenient for the consumer to have more outlets where they can pay their motor registration. If all the 70 per cent go through post offices as opposed to fronting up at our motor registration offices, quite clearly there will be significant savings in staff and so on. I would not anticipate 70 per cent going through post offices but I hope for a considerable number. I cannot tell you how many—I do not know.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to page 216 of the Program Estimates and I preface my question by saying that there are several portions to this question and I am quite happy to take any or all on notice. As the department proposes to include a total of 450 traffic signal sites on its computerised coordination system, does that number include all the sites in the metropolitan area beyond the boundaries of the Adelaide City Council? What progress has been achieved in the past year towards including the last 90 of the 450 sites into the system? Is the Minister aware whether Adelaide City Council is introducing a system similar to that operated by the department? Were discussions held with the Adelaide City Council when the department was installing its computerised coordination to determine whether the council would join forces so that one and not two signal systems operated in Adelaide? Would the department's system have the capacity to include all the signals in the Adelaide City Council area?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will take those questions on notice.

Mrs KOTZ: My last question is on the Auditor-General's Report page 190. Last year the number of weekly-paid employees decreased by 54 from 1 667 to 1 613, although there was an increase in the number of weekly-paid maintenance employees of 19 to 872. The Auditor-General's Report notes that the fall in the number of employees was due mainly to a planned decrease in the number of construction and maintenance personnel required to undertake the department's program of works. Was this planned decrease due simply to a decrease in funds for road construction and improvement works or was it a deliberate policy to scale back the number of weekly paid employees?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no deep plot. I will ask the Executive Director to respond to that.

Mr Payze: The position with regard to the deployment of weekly paid personnel in the construction area relates to the type of project and its funding mechanism. With regard to Federal funding in the national highway, national arterial

category, there is a requirement that all work should be done by public tender. Therefore, with regard to whether or not sufficient funds are available for all construction gangs to maintain continuity of employment, that really relates to whether or not one of two things has happened: whether the Department of Road Transport is able to win a contract of a project or a number of projects funded by the Federal Government in that national highway or national arterial category; or whether there are sufficient State funds to fund our construction gangs on State arterial-type projects. In that regard, we looked to the future and it was planned that we had to reduce one of our rural-type construction gangs during the 1989-90 financial year. The disbanding of that gang was planned, there was no retrenchment of employees, those employees were redeployed into the maintenance area and our overall numbers reduced by natural attrition.

Mr QUIRKE: What major changes have been made to Federal road funding arrangements to this State, as announced in the Federal budget?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Federal road funding for South Australia in 1990-91 in the national highways and national arterial road categories has been reduced in real terms from 1989-90 by approximately 3.5 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively. Federal funds for the projects in the State arterial category will cease after 31 December 1990 and the remainder of these funds will be distributed to the national arterial category on a national needs basis. The provincial cities and rural highways program is a new program introduced by the Federal Government, which is to provide \$100 million per annum Australia-wide over the next three years, commencing in 1990-91. The distribution of funds to the States is to be on a needs basis, as determined by the Federal Minister for Land Transport, and South Australia is currently preparing a submission to obtain a share of those funds. Increased emphasis has been given by the Federal Government to funding urban public transport projects in the current budget. The distribution of funds is to be made on a needs basis. South Australia is currently preparing a submission for a share of those funds.

Mr QUIRKE: I note that on page 178 of the Estimates of Payments document a significant amount of departmental revenue is generated from fees and charges for services provided by the department. What action is the department taking to ensure that the fees it charges for services it provides achieve cost recovery and that the general taxpayer is not subsidising these services?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To ensure total cost recovery for its services, the department has developed a pricing policy that incorporates the recovery of the following cost items: direct costs, labour, materials and plant hire; local indirect costs (those indirect costs over which the local manager has control); support unit costs; organisational costs imposed from outside the service area (for example, accounting personnel functions, and so on); and a return on assets employed (the cost of using capital for equipment over which service area has control). Where practicable, the price is determined to recover the above costs and will be compared with similar services provided by other organisations and other State road authorities. On completion of the cost determination exercise, it is the department's intention to have the exercise reviewed by a firm of financial consultants to ensure that all costs have been taken into account and that the department is not subsidising the service with funds allocated for roadworks.

Mr QUIRKE: What are the comparative workers compensation data for the past two years for all employees?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In 1989-90, there were 83 injuries per million hours worked and 48 injuries that resulted in lost time per million hours worked, compared with 102 and 57 respectively in 1988-89. With regard to rehabilitation, in 1989-90, 46 employees were able to be returned to their previous work, compared with 28 in 1987-88 and 38 in 1988-89.

Mr SUCH: I asked an earlier question, relating to the third arterial road. Given, as I understand it, there will be something like 10 lanes in that corridor, how does the department plan to accommodate traffic flowing from that road into or out of the arterials of Brighton, Morphett and Marion Roads?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As I stated in response to an earlier question on the third arterial road, very significant design work has been undertaken. The final design has not been completed, but I can assure honourable members that they would be welcome to come to the Department of Road Transport at Walkerville and see how far we have got with the design, including the suggested modifications around Darlington and feeding into those other arterial roads.

It is possible, but it would be rather boring reading, to give a verbal description of all the various engineering projects that are being designed to take care of the very real problem at Darlington; a visual representation is far better. I can assure the Committee that considerable design work has already been completed, and I think it would be easiest for those who are interested to contact the Director of Road Transport, and they will be able to see what is proposed in those areas.

Mr SUCH: My second question relates to safety for motorcyclists. Has the Rider Safe program for motorcyclists been evaluated and, if so, what are the conclusions? Is the Minister aware of the Federal Minister for Road Safety having received the report of the inquiry he ordered just prior to the last Federal election into the issue of compulsory lights-on for motorcyclists and, if so, has the Minister been informed of the outcome and action, if any, that Mr Brown proposes to take on this issue, which was one of the original conditions in the Federal Government's 10 point black spots funding program?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That report has been received by the department. I have not seen it yet, so I have no knowledge of it, but I would point out that this Government's position on compulsory lights-on is crystal clear. It would be a matter for State legislation, and we do not propose to introduce legislation making it compulsory to retrofit motorcycles with the mechanism that would ensure that the lights were on at all times.

My view is that it is a problem which is solving itself. The design rule is to be introduced by the Federal Government and it will ensure that all motorcycles will be manufactured with this facility. Already, between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of motorcyclists choose of their own volition to have their headlamps on while riding. This desire of the overwhelming majority of motorcyclists to ride with their headlamps on coupled with the fact that all new motorcycles will have the facility incorporated anyway (as many of them do now) means I think that the problem will resolve itself. There is no need, in my view, for any retro-fitting.

That is the view of most, if not all, States and that part of it has not been an issue with the Federal Government. We have made it clear that we are not in favour of retro-fitting. I have made my position clear to the various motorcycle organisations and I have had no difficulty with that proposal. The rider safe program has been a great success, but I will ask the Executive Director of the Department of Road Transport to enlarge upon that briefly.

Mr Payze: The understanding that Cabinet had in approving the rider safe program was that it would receive a full report on its performance after sufficient time had elapsed with regard to experience thereof. That report is currently being compiled and I expect it to be submitted to Cabinet within the next three months.

Mr SUCH: Referring to page 51 of the Capital Works Program, the anticipated completion date of Flagstaff Road is post-1992. Will the Minister give a more precise indication? Furthermore, is the \$6 million a revision downwards in the cost from that which was stated some time ago, and can that program be accelerated? Finally, is the four lane option still a possibility for the northern end of that road?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thought that post-1992 was a rather elegant way of putting it, but it depends upon the availability of funds. The \$6 million is the field cost only; it is not the cost of acquiring the land, design, etc. I am not sure if I can help the honourable member any further with the matter. The answer to the third question is 'Yes'.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: Are there any plans to upgrade Cross Road between South Road and West Terrace, Highgate? I have been a regular traveller on that road for one reason or another for about the past 30 years. It is long overdue for some improvement. The section that falls within the Marion council area, between the Emerson crossing and Anzac Highway is excellent, with four lanes plus parking lanes, and it is well sealed. East of Emerson crossing, up to Urrbrae, Cross Road is very narrow and poorly sealed. No lanes are marked for much of it and effectively it is only a single lane each way because the surface is so poor in the kerbside lane that, with the combination rollercoaster/cobblestone effect on motorists, most tend to drive well out from the kerb close to the centre of the road.

In my taxi driver days about 30 years ago I noticed that the southern kerb was prepared for widening, because the fence line was taken back a fair distance, although the trees and telephone poles and so on were still left alongside the kerb. Obviously, some preliminary work was done about 30 years ago for the widening of Cross Road, and I just wonder whether 30 years later we will move to stage two?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: These things do take time and must be planned properly. One cannot rush into things and repent later. The honourable member will be pleased to know that the Department of Road Transport is currently assessing the immediate and long-term improvements required for Cross Road between South Road and West Terrace, Highgate. A consultant is currently engaged on this project, and his role is to assess community concerns and facilitate the community involvement process. A staged upgrading is the most likely option.

This will involve the flaring of the intersections of Cross Road and Duthy Street and Cross Road and Winston Avenue, and resurfacing between existing kerbs to provide a smoother travelling surface. The first stage is scheduled for the 1992-93 financial year at an estimated field cost of \$2 million, funded by the State Government. In the future, Cross Road will require widening and reconstruction. As part of this upgrading, a staged removal/replacement tree program is envisaged using advanced growth trees. I will ask Mr Payze, who knows the road almost as well as the member for Walsh, to enlarge on that answer.

Mr Payze: The particular section of Cross Road has been on the metropolitan Adelaide road widening program since I think 1947, so the provision for widening has been a longstanding commitment of Government. The actual project has local sensitivity associated with it with respect to the trees which are currently on and adjacent to the kerbs

along the complete length: hence the reason for a very complete and detailed community assessment program.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: And the possibility that the trees might die of old age in the meantime!

Mr Payze: Yes—and the possibility that the trees which we might plant (advanced species thereof) clear of any overhead powerlines, might be able to grow into far more stately species than the ones presently there. The long-term option of widening, with the provision of advanced growth trees, is the option which I believe the community will accept.

The Hon. J.P. TRAINER: I am sure that hundreds of thousands of motorists will be pleased to hear that. Referring to motor vehicle registration, in relation to the importation of American vehicles and their conversion to right-hand drive, what difficulties are encountered in meeting design regulations and passing the inspection in order to be satisfactorily registered? I particularly have in mind MG sports cars, in which I have a personal interest. There is a thriving industry based on Californian MGs which, unlike European models, are not affected by rust from the salt that is put down on the roads of England for the harsh winter to melt the snow, which makes them rust more quickly.

The Californian models are good propositions for conversion to right-hand drive after importation to Australia. Have any difficulties been encountered, particularly as I understand that there is a means whereby people purchasing an MG in California can be sold something under false pretences because it is actually a car from, say, Maine or New York that has been on salt covered roads but has been passed off as a Californian vehicle?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Vehicle Engineering Branch has guidelines. I do not hear many complaints from people who wish to get cars registered. I am not sure what those guidelines are, but I will certainly find out for the honourable member. As regards the problems of vehicles that have been run on roads in Maine and reregistered in California, I know nothing of any of that kind if chicanery. I am sure that such a thing would not happen in Australia.

Mr OSWALD: Is it a fact that the Swanport Bridge over the Murray River moves up and down several centimetres, particularly in the middle, when heavy vehicles move over it, and that it cannot be stabilised even with cables? Is the bridge safe, particularly for heavy transport and large interstate buses?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ask the Executive Director of the Department of Road Transport to respond to that question.

Mr Payze: I am not aware of the bridge moving more than one or two centimetres in the middle, other than for thermal expansion or contraction. I am certainly not aware that the bridge is in any way unsafe. I will have to take the question on notice and I will investigate it immediately.

Mr OSWALD: The information was given to me by representatives in the district, so I assume that there is some concern in the local area. My next question relates to the Auditor-General's Report (page 187) and road safety course fees. Does the decrease in the fees from road safety courses last year—\$302 000 compared with \$505 000 the previous year—relate specifically to courses operated from the Oaklands Park Safety Centre?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We will have to obtain that information for the honourable member.

Mr OSWALD: As a supplementary question, will the Minister confirm what are the Government's plans for the future of this road safety centre?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, we will do that.

Mr OSWALD: Can the Minister provide details of projects in the schedule of works for 1989-90 which were not completed?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We have that information here, and I shall provide a copy of it for the member. The material is available to anyone who requires it.

Mr SUCH: What evidence is there that the solid median strip scheme has helped cut the road toll? How extensive will that program be during this financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ask the Executive Director of Road Transport to respond.

Mr Payze: Before the Government approved of the centre of the road median program there was complete and well documented research done on the experience that the department had with a similar median that had been installed on Marion Road. The accident history before and after the installation of a centre of the road median on Marion Road suggested that we could achieve about a one-third reduction in total accidents as a result of such an initiative. I do not have the figures for the total length of centre of the road median that we installed, nor do I have at my fingertips the length proposed to be installed this current financial year, but should the member wish to have that information, I should be only too pleased to provide it for him.

Mr SUCH: Has the road worker safety program produced positive results: that is, the 'Don't Knock Our Roadworkers Program'?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I believe so. It has made people more aware of our roadworkers and made them take greater care. On another matter, I did offer to supply to the Committee earlier information about the sum approved by Cabinet on 24 June 1985 concerning the motor registration computer. In 1985 dollar terms (there has been a five-year inflation factor on top of that) the amount was \$4.5 million.

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

Works and Services—Department of Road Transport,
\$84 267 000—Examination declared completed.

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

State Transport Authority, \$130 000 000.
Works and Services—State Transport Authority,
\$7 000 000

Chairman:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson
Mr K.C. Hamilton
Mrs D.C. Kotz
Mr J.K.G. Oswald
Mr R.B. Such
The Hon. J.P. Trainer

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Transport.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr J.V. Brown, General Manager, State Transport Authority.
Mr I. Fitzgerald, Director of Finance.

Mr R.J. Heath, Director of Operations.

Mr G.L. McLaughlin, Financial Planning Accountant.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination. Minister, would you care to make a statement?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The State Transport Authority's goal to provide an efficient and effective public transport is being achieved. Over the past four years, operating costs have fallen, in real terms, despite the introduction of new services and facilities. In fact, the estimated cost of operations in 1990-91 of \$130 million represents an increase of only .6 per cent over the actual result of \$129.2 million in 1989-90. During the 1989-90 financial year, the STA and the Government put in place a number of new initiatives to benefit the travelling public. Amongst these were the Hackham West, Woodcroft, Craigmore and Sheidow Park bus services.

Public transport fare increases have been held at CPI levels, and from November 1989 all retired South Australian residents over the age of 60 years have been able to enjoy concessional travel on all STA services. In addition, from 30 January 1990, all South Australian schoolchildren have been able to travel free of charge on the public transport system at all times. Families benefit to the extent of hundreds of dollars per year as a result of these entitlements. Steps are being taken to upgrade the authority's vehicle fleets and a contract has recently been awarded to Clyde Engineering for the supply of a further 50 3 000-class railcars.

This highlights the Government's intention to maintain a fast, modern rail system for the outer suburbs. Tenders are presently being called to supply 307 new air-conditioned buses. A trial is presently proceeding utilising 10 CNG buses to determine their effectiveness within the service. If these trials prove successful, there is a provision to incorporate this innovation in the new buses. One of the reasons that CNG-powered buses are being considered is the fact that such vehicles are much kinder to the environment, having considerably lower emission levels.

The authority has also announced that it plans to plant an additional 240 000 trees to complement the 60 000 trees presently growing on its properties. These trees will have the ability to absorb all the carbon dioxide presently being produced by the authority's vehicles. The recommendations of the Fielding report have, in most cases, been accepted and are in the process of being incorporated into the authority's day-to-day operations. In particular, the review of labour productivity in the bus area has now been completed and a plan is being formulated so that further savings can be achieved in this area. Alternative ways of providing services are also being researched to increase patronage without significantly increasing costs. The network is being modelled to assist in the process and the STA will be presenting preliminary recommendations later this calendar year.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 228, and the heading 'Public Transport Services'. Does the Minister agree with concerns reported last week by the police in a briefing paper to the Minister of Emergency Services stating that graffiti on trains and buses has increased since the introduction of free 24-hour travel for students?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have not seen that briefing paper, so I cannot comment on something I have not seen. However, graffiti has increased, not just on STA property but, I think, on property in general for a number of years. It is a sad fact of life with which we have to live. Had the honourable member asked me that question this time last year, prior to free public transport, my answer would have

been the same; that is, 'Yes, because, unfortunately, it has escalated year by year, and that is a great pity.'

Again, it is cold comfort for me that the incidence of graffiti is not escalating just here in Adelaide; it is escalating in every other city in Australia and, I suppose, in most cities in the world. It is very difficult to find any correlation between free public transport and the incidence of graffiti. I think that if one looks at the systems interstate, where they do not have free transport for children, one will see that there is, in fact, a much higher incidence of graffiti on their systems and around the cities in general. It is just one of those things with which we have to cope. I think that since the advent of the texta pen and the spray can throughout the Western world, we have ensured that the incidence of graffiti will continue to increase.

Mr OSWALD: The briefing may not have been passed to the Minister from his colleague, the Minister of Emergency Services but, nevertheless the briefing paper exists, and it is the view of the police that there has been an increase in graffiti since the 24-hour free travel for students was introduced. I guess that it is a matter of judgment whether one can link the two things together. It seems to be the view of the police that that is appropriate.

How much has been allocated by the STA to address the problem of vandalism and graffiti this year? What was the figure last year? What proportion of these allocations is to be used for scrubbing out or painting over graffiti? How and where is that money to be spent and who is undertaking the work?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have not seen any briefing paper from the police, nor is it necessarily appropriate that I should. I can only repeat that, if at this stage last year we asked the police whether graffiti had increased in the preceding 12 months, I am sure the answer would have been, 'Yes, it has.' The answer probably would have been the same if the Opposition had asked the same question for a few years before that. Graffiti is a problem for the STA as it is for local government and for the private sector. Whenever there is a blank wall, someone feels the need to mark it. It is expensive; there is no question about that. It costs us a considerable amount to clean it off. It is becoming more expensive as the problem escalates throughout the community, and I am sure local councils would say the same. As long as most of us can remember, the Bowden Railway Station has had graffiti on it.

Mr ATKINSON interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Not just that, either. Some areas have always been a target for vandalism of this nature. I ask the General Manager of the STA to indicate to the Committee the sheer magnitude of the problem with which we are dealing.

Mr Brown: The STA had no detailed accounts of the cost of vandalism until part-way through the last financial year, when it realised that the problem had become epidemic. However, for this current financial year, the accounts have been broken down so that, by the end of this financial year, we will be able to detail exactly how much it costs. Our estimate is something in the vicinity of \$1 million per year to repair the vandalism and damage, including graffiti, in one year.

Mr OSWALD: What was the cost of the measures announced by the Minister in June to introduce electronic surveillance equipment at depots, place guard dogs at depots and improve fencing and other security measures around depots? Where those initiatives have been taken, has there been a marked improvement in the incidence of graffiti?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have those detailed figures, but I will get them for the member for Morphett.

The preliminary information is that they have certainly been effective; there is no question about that. I just point out in passing that, in the Eastern States, they are considering surrounding their railcar yards and bus depots with security fences and razor wire similar to what we have at Yatala. They do not have free public transport for schoolchildren; yet they have a much larger problem than we have. The measures that we have taken have stopped some of the major attacks by vandals to which the STA has been subjected over the past couple of years.

Mr OSWALD: What is the STA's policy in respect of ridding graffiti from stations? As pointed out by my friend opposite, a variety of stations and subways have not been cleared of graffiti for some months, indeed years.

Mr Brown: The STA's policy is to remove graffiti as soon as it becomes noticeable on certain lines. To explain that—in the past, we had a policy of cleaning off graffiti on individual stations as we were advised that graffiti was occurring; in other words, it involves instant removal. However, we were going from one side of the city to the other and the logistics of the exercise were too great for us to handle. We changed the policy and we are experimenting at the moment with one particular line. Every day, or every week, we go through that line and clean up all the stations on that line. That is starting to prove successful. The line in question is the Port line. We intend to continue with that policy in other areas in due course.

Mr HAMILTON: As members would be aware, while in Opposition and in Government, I have addressed the question of graffiti and vandalism for many years. Recently, the member for Stuart, the member for Fisher and I, and representatives of the STA, as the Minister and Mr Brown would be aware, attended an international conference in Melbourne in relation to the twin issues of graffiti and vandalism. I must say that it was very enlightening. I listened with a great deal of attention to what the Minister said about the situation in Victoria of putting barbed wire around railway yards. As a former railwayman, I suspect that that may have limited success because the American experience, as I understand, demonstrated that, whilst it cleaned up vandalism and graffiti in the carriages themselves, the impact was felt in other areas of the community. I see it as a problem not just for the State Transport Authority but for the community. We must address it as a real social problem.

As the member for Fisher and the member for Stuart have suggested, we must address the issue of what has taken place in Gosnells in Western Australia and in Knox City in Victoria. I understand that a representative of the STA has gone overseas to look at these particular issues. The question that exercises my mind is what impact the State Transport Authority Transit Squad has had on the incidence of graffiti and vandalism. There is a big difference between the two.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The South Australian Police/STA Transit Squad consists of one inspector of police, who is on secondment to the STA, one police sergeant, five police senior constables, and 15 STA special constables, including four recently recruited Aboriginal members. In addition to the foregoing, there are four security guards who check STA installations during the hours of darkness. Recently, four additional STA special constable positions and two additional security guard positions were advertised. Nominations for those positions closed on 17 August 1990, and the positions will be filled as soon as practicable. During the past 12 months, the Transit Squad has made 387 arrests and 468 reports and has issued 428 transit infringement notices.

That is a total of 1 283 offenders. A monthly breakdown of arrests, reports and transit infringement notices issued during 1989-90 is available if any member of the Committee requests that information. It is fair to say that the transit squad has had a significant impact on people who want to do the wrong thing, attempt to do the wrong thing or are caught doing the wrong thing on the STA.

That is by no means a blanket cover. I am not quite sure how, with 800 buses and 130 railcars—1 000 pieces of mobile plant, plus all the fixed plant, one could cover it in a blanket way with other than literally thousands of members of the transit squad. Obviously that is just not practical. We are always looking at ways to expand resources. They have been transferred from other areas of low priority into the transit squad. I hope that we can continue that policy because, first and foremost, the system must be safe. We shall do whatever we can within reason to make the system safe.

Although vandalism does not necessarily have any physical impact on passengers, it is offensive to the eye and expensive to clean off, as the General Manager has indicated. I wish to record my appreciation of the work that the South Australian police have done along with the STA in the formation of the squad and the way in which it works. It is a professional squad.

Mr HAMILTON: If I may pursue that matter a little further, last year the Government introduced legislation—I understand that it passed both Houses—which included a reparation scheme in which those who were found guilty of being involved with vandalism and graffiti could be required by the courts to atone for their actions and clean up the mess. The Minister may be aware that that scheme operates in New South Wales. I hasten to add that I am not a great believer in bringing back the stocks, but there is a responsibility on people if they make a mess on STA property and other properties. That is something that the courts could introduce when the legislation is proclaimed, and impose such a penalty on cleaning up graffiti and so on on STA vehicles.

Is the Minister aware of the New South Wales reparation scheme? Does he believe that such a scheme based on what I have seen would be the type of thing that the courts or the STA would be eager to see introduced to clean up some vandalism? Once the message got out into the community, it would not take long for people to realise that if they messed up State Transport Authority vehicles and were convicted they would be required to clean up the mess. I suspect that it is easy to vandalise STA rolling stock, but it would be an entirely different matter for the perpetrators to clean it up.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, the idea is good. I look forward to the legislation assisting not just the STA—it is not just an STA problem; it would be much easier to deal with the problem if that were the case—but the community as a whole in deterring vandals and so-called graffiti artists from marking our buildings, rolling stock or whatever other things on which they choose to ply their trade. When such people are caught it would be excellent if the court involved them in cleaning up the mess they make. As the member for Albert Park stated, it is not an easy job. It would certainly do a lot of them good to have to clean up some of their rubbish.

As an aside, I got into trouble some time ago by saying that there was nothing artistic in what graffiti vandals had done to Mitcham station, a beautiful station. I said that it was rubbish. I did not want anybody telling me that it was working class art or something like that. It was absolute rubbish—garbage. I was taken to task by somebody—I do not know whether it was a sociologist.

Mr ATKINSON interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is right. I was told I just did not appreciate what was being expressed. That may be the case. As far as I am concerned the overwhelming majority is garbage. I must confess that some people have an artistic bent. We in the STA are quite prepared to give them lots of walls or which they can put their murals or whatever. We would be absolutely delighted because some of them are excellent. However, experiments of that nature have failed. Although the original 'artwork' was more than acceptable, it was quickly sprayed over with obscenities and other work of much lower quality. It is a dilemma for the whole community. The STA is only part of that dilemma. I look forward to some of those people having to clean up some of the mess that they make.

Mr HAMILTON: I am glad to hear that the Minister supports that proposition. I must have been brought up in a tough school. If I was caught messing something up when I was a kid I was made to clean it up. Perhaps a little of that could help to address the social problem.

What programs does the STA have in terms of finding products that are graffiti-proof? The Minister will be aware that STA officers inspected a product in Largs Bay. I understand that the STA may be looking at other matters in an attempt to make STA property graffiti-proof.

I asked that question because some time ago I walked along the busway from Tea Tree Plaza down to the city. I noticed the number of restriction or kilometre boards that STA bus drivers were required to observe on the O-Bahn. Many of them were sprayed over with paint. We all would recall with sadness the serious accident that took place some time ago when two STA buses collided. I am not saying that it was a consequence of that, but the consequences of kilometre or speed boards being painted over could lead to danger, and hence my question to the Minister.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, we are testing a number of products on the market, some of which do appear quite promising. I will not name the buildings, but some buildings around the city have been treated with some of these products and, if paint is sprayed on, it is very easy to clean off. Obviously, the paint still goes on, but it is not a major operation to get it off. We have not yet found products that are suitable for all applications; some work well on enamel and some work well on stone, or appear to work well, so it is a continual testing program. Those tests are being made and, as soon as we find products that are useful, we will certainly use them; whilst they may not stop the graffiti, they will make it easier for our employees to clean it off. That in itself will be a help, because we are attempting to copy the New York experience, where a railcar will not be allowed out of the depot unless it is clean, even if it means cancelling services. I hesitate to go as far as that; I think people would sooner be on a bus or a train that had graffiti on it than have the service cancelled. My experience of the New York subway is not so great that I would know whether anyone would notice whether a particular train had been cancelled. My suspicion is that there are so many trains flying around of varying lengths, that probably one or two would not be noticed.

Whilst on the surface, the New York experience has been very positive, it means that a subway train is not sent out even if it means cancelling the service, if there is any graffiti on it. I would not want us to go as far as that.

We do have teams working, particularly at night, to clean up the buses and railcars to see how many we can get out the following day that are completely clean. That program is showing some promise but, of course, it is all additional cost. The community in New York has not benefited from

having clean trains, because the rest of the city has had a tremendous increase in the amount of graffiti, as well as on all the property of the New York equivalent of the STA; all its property, apart from trains, is covered with more graffiti than ever, so it is a very difficult problem.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to page 422 of the Auditor-General's Report. As the business plan indicated that the authority aimed to save at least \$4 million in real terms by 1991-92 by increasing the flexibility in scheduling buses in the peak periods, what progress has been made in realising this goal, or is this an area that the Auditor-General identified as one where performance was either steady or had deteriorated? Since the authority has made little progress in achieving a range of performance and efficiency targets in the past three years or, as recommended earlier, in both the Fielding and Collins reports, can the Minister assure members that, as a consequence of the structural change initiative announced by the Premier in his budget speech, this time the STA will have the capacity, not only to identify areas for improvements, but also will have the resolve, together with the Government's genuine endorsement, to implement such improvements?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The answer to the last question is 'Yes', where it is in line with Government policy. This Government does have policies, which may at times conflict with the STA business plan. That is the way it is, and, of course, Government policy prevails. There are a number of things the STA would like to do in running the operation that we just will not go along with; it is not our policy, the policy on which we go to people and consistently win. The question of structural efficiency is one that is being worked through now with the STA and the unions. Again, that is within certain guidelines that have been laid down by the Industrial Commission. There is no *carte blanche* for any employer, whether in the private sector or the public sector, just to do as they wish any hour of the 24, with their own employees.

I know that in some quarters that may be regretted, but that is certainly not the case with this Government. We are a good employer, and we will continue to be a good employer. That does not mean that there will not be changes from time to time within the Industrial Relations Commission's guidelines, but we will certainly not insist that our employees work in precisely the way that would suit the mechanics of the STA. We treat them as human beings who have certain needs and certain entitlements, and we will continue to do so. I am not sure whether the General Manager has anything further he wishes to add to that; if he has, he is welcome.

Mr Brown: To date, the structural efficiency initiative of the business plan has taken precedence of the other business plan projects, as it is seen as having substantially longer-term productivity benefits. Already, a number of award and work practice changes have been agreed under the structural efficiency project, and these, together with decentralisation of functions to strengthen depot management, are expected in due course at least to provide the majority of savings quoted in the business plan, although not by 1991-92, for the reasons that the Minister has set out.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to page 228 of the Program Estimates, and I preface my question by announcing to the Minister that there are four parts to this question. In relation to the Crouzet ticketing system, the Minister identified before the Committee last year that the system provided the following advantages: the STA could now quickly identify the potential for savings as the data indicated where and when excess capacity was provided. The data also provided early indications of routes with growth trends and, hence, the need

to plan for additional services in future. Therefore, will the Minister explain why, with the introduction of free travel for students, he was prepared to undermine this feature of the Crouzet ticketing system by refusing to insist that students be issued with tickets that could be validated subsequently?

Secondly, since the introduction on 30 January of free travel for students, how many people, and at what cost, has the STA assigned to stand at bus stops counting passengers in an endeavour to gauge passenger numbers more accurately, and does the STA intend to continue with this manual counting practice this year? Thirdly, without the aid of the Crouzet system to count students, how has the STA determined the number of students utilising services, and how has the Government determined the sum of money to reimburse the STA for student travel? Lastly, as the STA estimated in 1989-90 that the Crouzet system had helped to reduce fare evasion by \$1.5 million, what is the STA's estimate of fare evasion for last year, as I note that conductors rarely check whether a passenger's ticket has been validated or is valid?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Again, I point out that when a member has prepared questions it would be helpful if the member could give the Minister a copy of those questions. Alternatively, one question at a time is preferable.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have been quite relaxed and laid-back about the Minister's having advisers either in the Speaker's gallery or seated at the table, and giving advice if it is done in the correct way, the same as I am happy with members on my left having advisers seated in the gallery dispensing assistance. However, I draw a line at those advisers calling out to the Committee, as did the Hon. Diana Laidlaw just then about the information being made available to the Minister.

Again, I point out that it is easier to ask single questions of the Minister so that the Minister can respond. Multi-faceted questions, to use a term that my colleague the member for Henley Beach has used, can be dealt with by means of Questions on Notice. To make it easier for the Committee and also for the Minister, members should ask one question at a time so that we can get them all through fairly quickly.

Mrs KOTZ: I will repeat the first question, and I am quite prepared for the other three questions to be taken on notice, if that will suit the Committee, the Chairman and the Minister.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It certainly does not suit the Minister. The Minister has a lot to say on those questions, once his memory is jogged. They were very interesting questions and ones with which I would like to deal, because there were some misconceptions in them—I remember that much about them. The Committee is entitled to hear the answers. All I am asking is that there be one question at a time and members will get their answer. I am very happy to provide the answers. I do not have to take them on notice.

Mrs KOTZ: Will the Minister explain why, with the introduction of free travel for students, he was prepared to undermine this feature of the Crouzet ticketing system by refusing to insist that students be issued with tickets that could subsequently be validated?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: With the speed of children boarding and moving into buses, I thought that the convenience of passengers far outweighed any further information we could gain on children's travel. Children's travel can be surveyed relatively easily. We already have a huge amount of data collected over the past three or four years

since the Crouzet system was introduced regarding the number of children who travel, where and when.

It seems to me that, in some of these areas, one could go on collecting information for the sake of collecting information and forget why the bus is being run. The bus or train is being run for the convenience of people, and that means getting all passengers seated or moved down the vehicle as quickly as possible. In my view, seeing that about 25 per cent to 28 per cent of our passengers are and always have been children—there has been only a very slight increase—to have these people out of the stream of those having to validate their ticket was a real plus and far outweighed the worth of the data, and that is the Government's opinion.

Mrs KOTZ: How many people and at what cost has the STA assigned to stand at bus stops counting passengers in an endeavour to gauge passenger numbers more accurately? Does the STA intend to continue with this manual counting practice this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As far as I know, the STA always has conducted those surveys and I assume it always will. I do not know offhand how much it will continue this year—very little, I am advised.

Mr ATKINSON: As the only non-driver in the Chamber and the only member who travels on STA trains and buses every working day, I have a special interest in these proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN: You must be a protected species!

Mr ATKINSON: Indeed. Some of the questions tonight would have been better had the members asking them actually set foot on a railway platform recently. When answering a question from the member for Albert Park, the Minister stated that the New York Transit Authority would not allow railcars to leave their sidings if they bore graffiti. Can the Minister inform us of the transit authority's reasoning for this practice?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is a school of thought that the graffiti vandals—I prefer to call them that rather than graffiti artists—get some satisfaction out of seeing their work day after day. I am not sure about that. I do not profess to have any expertise in that area. I try not to be even an amateur psychologist. However, that is the theory behind it. I understand that, if the graffiti vandals cannot see the results of their work, they are very upset and go elsewhere in the hope that their murals will have more permanency so they can get whatever gratification it is they get from looking at them or showing them to others or having others look at them. That is the theory behind it. It is good to have the railcars unmarked. I am not sure that it is good to cancel services to ensure it or to know that the problem has been transferred to the rest of your property and to the property of others outside. However, that is the theory behind it.

Mr ATKINSON: At page 421 (second paragraph) the Auditor-General states:

The cost per passenger journey of providing services over the past five years has increased by 23 per cent in real terms.

How does the Minister explain this increase?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Very easily. There are two components in the statistics—cost and patronage. Combined, they amass the excellent record of cost containment by the STA over the past five years. There has been a .9 per cent reduction in total recurrent costs, despite a large increase in ownership costs of 32.5 per cent, which reflects the essential capital investment program, new vehicles, signalling system, ticketing equipment and busway of the past five years. Operating costs have fallen by \$14.5 million, that is, 8.3 per cent in real terms over this period.

The STA has also been able to extend services to many outer suburban areas within this environment of cost reduction. Over the five-year period since 1985-86 patronage, measured as passenger journeys, is reported as falling from 67.127 million to 54.220 million, a reduction of 19 per cent. However, the following factors need to be taken into account. The two patronage figures are based on different data collections and calculation methods. There was a 5 per cent reduction in the recorded journeys in the first year of use of the Crouzet system, which raises doubt about the accuracy of the earlier manual sampling methods used for estimations.

The 1985-86 base year included free travel for pensioners in the weekday inter-peak period. It is estimated that this artificially inflated that year's figures by the order of three million journeys, that is to say, up to 5 per cent. If these factors are taken into account the reduction in patronage on a comparable basis through 1985-86 and 1989-90, would have been less than 10 per cent. The comparable cost per passenger journey would have been an increase of 11 per cent in real terms—not 23 per cent.

The authority is addressing ways of further improving productivity and containing increases in the cost per passenger journey, even though its mass transit function is extending more and more into outer suburbs. It costs more to provide services into those areas, which provide commensurately lower patronage. The big problem is the ownership cost, the sheer cost of buying new plant and equipment. I think that the STA is to be commended on the reduction in real terms in operating the system. The actual operating costs have decreased, as I have said, by 8.3 per cent over the past few years. That is in real terms and that is in an expanding system where, as the members for Newland and Fisher would understand in their areas, services are being extended.

This is at a time when the STA is reducing its operating costs. It really has been a quite remarkable exercise. It certainly has not finished, because there is always room for improvement. Unfortunately, over the next few years the ownership costs will increase considerably again. I suppose that the STA will be beaten around the ears because the Government has decided to order 50 new railcars and over 300 new buses. We have taken that decision because of our respect for the travelling public and our belief that they are entitled to a modern fast system. Nevertheless, it will mean that the ownership costs will go up again considerably.

If members want the total costs of the STA to decrease, it really is in the ownership area that they have to concentrate. They have to tell us not to buy new buses and railcars, and not to upgrade the signalling system, because that is where the costs are. The operating costs are declining significantly in real terms. While the Auditor-General is as always absolutely accurate, there is more than just the bald statement to be made about the issue.

Mr ATKINSON: On the same page of the Auditor-General's Report (at the bottom of the page) reference is made to the high incidence (150 schedules per week) of paid operator crib breaks, when the award requires only an unpaid meal break to be scheduled. The Auditor-General claims that this generosity has cost the STA \$80 000. Will the authority be moving to have this practice changed?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is true that the payment of crib breaks is not a requirement of the award. However, agreements between employers and employees also apply. The payment of crib breaks on pm shifts has been a custom and practice for many years. The incidence of this payment was reduced from 100 per cent to 56 per cent of pm shifts by negotiations, which established the Broomhill agreement

in 1986 upon which most of the STA's operational negotiations are based. On many pm shifts a crib allowance is paid because it is the most economical option and avoids working an additional shift. For some shifts it could be converted to unpaid meal breaks if it was not for the current agreement.

Whilst the Broomhill agreement provides a more economical situation on cribs than applied prior to 1986, the need to remove the current restriction will continue to be discussed in award restructuring negotiations. However, until unions agree to change, we are obliged to abide by existing custom and practice. This relates to what I said earlier about the way that we treat our employees. Whilst a crib break clearly is not an award provision, as I have just stated, we feel that it is appropriate in some areas.

I suppose that if any members opposite had been employers, as I know the member for Morphet has been previously, I am sure that there were things that were not in the award covering his employees that he nevertheless made available to them. I suspect that a crib break is one of them. It seems a very Australian thing to have a crib break. Whilst I agree that it ought not to be abused and that it ought to be used sparingly and as economically as possible, it is something in relation to which I would be reluctant just to say, by fiat, 'No more crib breaks for people on the afternoon shift,' even though it may in some areas save us money to do that, rather than the alternative.

Again, while the Auditor-General is spot on in what he says—and I am sure the \$80 000 is an accurate calculation—it is something that is not as prevalent as it used to be and it is something that we do constantly discuss with the unions, amongst other things, of course.

Mr SUCH: My question relates to the free student travel scheme (page 228 of the Program Estimates). Since the introduction of the 24-hour free public transport scheme for students the Minister has always deflected any concern about the operation of the scheme by saying that the scheme is under review. Who is conducting this review? A single individual in the STA or a group of people including representatives of bus and train operators, parents, students, school principals and people living in regional and rural areas? What are the terms of reference for the review? Finally, what response, if any, has the Minister given to drivers, representatives of local government associations and others who have expressed concern about the unruly behaviour of some students on buses?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There are two distinct aspects to the question, and I will deal with the last part first. I certainly do not condone any unruly behaviour on the part of students or anyone else on buses, and there are plenty of adults who should know better. However, when we talk about unruly behaviour, we see it in all walks of life, not just on buses. In fact, we see it in Parliament from time to time—usually every day. If I had been asked this question 12 months ago, my answer would have been the same: 'Yes, there are some students on our buses and trains whose behaviour is, from time to time, unruly, as is that of some adults.'

If the question is meant to suggest that there has been an increase in unruly behaviour since the advent of free travel, I would like to know how people make that assessment. There has been an increase—a slight increase, I must say—in the use of the STA by children; it is not a huge increase. As one has more students on the system, I suppose the law of averages suggests that there will be more problems. By and large, the problems are fairly minor, but I know that they can be a nuisance. Well before free travel was introduced, I had complaints about school bags and children not

standing. In fact, I seem to remember that same complaint being made 40 years ago in relation to the Manchester Corporation Transport Department, and travel was not free, although it was very cheap. So, things have not changed a great deal. Therefore, the question of children's manners is an ongoing issue.

In relation to the review, at the end of the year after approximate 12 months of the trial—I will be asking the STA to get together all the various reports that it has collected, its thoughts, and the thoughts of anyone else, including those of the member for Fisher. If he chooses to put in a submission to me, I can assure him that a great deal of notice will be taken of it, as will be the case with all submissions. The STA will report to me and I will report to the Government. However, honourable members opposite have made their position perfectly clear: they do not support free transport for schoolchildren. I think it is a pity because it has helped many people, particularly those in the poorer areas of our community. It has helped those families enormously—by several hundreds of dollars a year—and it would be a pity if, for whatever reason, the provision of free travel was stopped.

Of course, the Liberal Party is entitled to its policy of opposition, but I hope that members opposite will go around to those very poor parish schools that have benefited because the parents of their students do not have to pay for them to go to those schools. It has made a tremendous difference in some of these areas. Again, in school amalgamations it has made a tremendous difference where parents can now have some choice about the school to which they send their children, because they do not have to pay bus fares; and, if there are two or three children, that amounts to several hundred dollars a year. So, it has helped families enormously, and I state my bias here and now that I think the policy is a good policy; it may require some fine tuning—I certainly do not have any kind of closed mind on it—but I appreciate those people who have thanked me, although they are really thanking the Government, for this policy. However, certainly after 12 months operation, as with all things, it is worthy of review and, in due course, the people of South Australia will be advised of the outcome of that review.

Mr SUCH: Supplementary to that, I would like to indicate that the Minister is incorrect in assuming that the Liberal Party is opposed *in toto* to the free bus travel scheme. We have sought to have the scheme reviewed and we are concerned about some of the inequities in the scheme as it relates to children in various parts of the State. Will the Minister consider increasing the powers of bus drivers to deal with the minority of unruly students and other juveniles?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I think I can be forgiven for thinking that it was the Liberal Party policy because I have not heard any member of the Liberal Party say anything about the policy other than in the most disparaging terms. If there are closet supporters of the system in the Liberal Party, I wish they would come out and give some support to those families who are benefiting from the scheme.

Mr SUCH: Will you consider giving powers to drivers to deal with unruly behaviour?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have adopted a practice over the past seven or eight years of always responding to a political statement with a political response. If the question is a direct question, without any comment or politics, I am very happy to respond in kind. In relation to the question, rather than the comment, I am not quite sure what powers the member for Fisher means. If the honourable member means that we ought to give bus drivers the power to put

children off the bus, irrespective of where the bus is, then I am very nervous about that. I am not quite sure what other powers the member for Fisher feels would be effective. However, I certainly would be reluctant to allow bus drivers to put children off a bus other than at the stop to which they were travelling and where, hopefully, someone was waiting to meet them or that stop was close to home, or whatever. From time to time all children, even the best of children, behave in what adults regard as an inappropriate manner. If the honourable member is suggesting putting children off a bus, perhaps at night and far from home, that could be a terrible punishment for what really might be a fairly minor misdemeanour, when one looks at some of the things that happen in life. Does the honourable member have anything else in mind, other than putting children off the bus?

Mr SUCH: I have in my electorate many STA drivers, for whom I have a great regard, and who tell me that there is very little that they can do to deal with the problem; they feel powerless and unsupported by the STA.

The CHAIRMAN: I am trying hard with certain members of the Committee to get them to stick to their three questions. I would hate to think that the Minister is encouraging the member for Fisher to ask more than three questions.

Mr SUCH: As a supplementary question, in relation to subways (page 228 of the Program Estimates) I will quote briefly from a short letter that appeared in a recent addition of one of our newspapers. The article states:

I would like to bring to public attention the concern I have relating to railway subways—Ascot Park in particular. There have been attacks and exposures in various subways and this is causing great anxiety among women. Women feel very vulnerable to the potential dangers that they are exposed to when using rail transport. People using the Brighton Station have an option of being able to use the platform at one end, not the subway, for access to the street. Surely it would not be too much to ask to convert other stations to this option. Twice within a week I was harassed by different groups of young males in the Ascot Park subway. Talking to friends I have discovered that other women have grave concern about having to walk through subways.

I have received similar concerns from women, in particular, who will no longer use the Oaklands Park or Woodville railway stations because of the dark atmosphere in the subways, the graffiti, the smell of urine and the fear of intimidation or attack. The subways are not user-friendly and are turning people away from rail transport. Has the STA undertaken any studies on the costs involved in building pedestrian overpasses at stations to replace subways, or has it investigated other initiatives to overcome the growing unease among passengers about the use of subways?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The short answer is, 'Yes'. I know that the Committee would be disappointed if I left it at the short answer, so I invite the General Manager of the STA to enlarge upon it.

Mr Brown: The authority's policy is to do away with underpasses wherever it is practicable. We also share the concern of people having to use some of those unsavoury areas to get under the tracks. If it is feasible from an engineering point of view to replace a subway with an overbridge, we will do that. However, to date, we have found that ordinary pedestrian crossings—the modern design of pedestrian crossings at grade—are just as efficient. The public prefer to use them and will avoid using an overpass unless that is the only alternative and the topography of the area insists that they use it.

Mr SUCH: I refer to bus air-conditioning, which is detailed on page 55 of the capital works program. Will the Minister indicate the difference in the capital cost and the running cost of adopting the fully refrigerated air-conditioning sys-

tem as opposed to the present evaporative air-conditioning system? Was the environmental impact of the refrigerated system, in particular, the additional energy costs and the question of refrigerant gases, considered? Will the Minister assure the Committee that the existing evaporative air-conditioning units will be operative during the warmer weather and that there is no longer a problem with legionnaire's disease and those units?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I ask the General Manager of the STA to comment on that.

Mr Brown: The operating costs of the refrigerated air-conditioning system are comparable with those of the evaporative air-conditioning system. The difference in the energy usage of the refrigerated air-conditioning system is offset by the labour cost of keeping water in the refrigerated system. The specified refrigerant gas is R22, which is a proprietary product approved by the departments responsible for health and the environment as being a non-pollutant gas. There will be no adverse effects from that gas.

The evaporative air-conditioners will be used in a limited fashion this coming summer, and they will continue to be used until refrigerated air-conditioners are installed in all vehicles. That will take some years. There is no risk of legionnaire's disease. The STA sought the advice of UK specialists in this regard, and it is following very closely the advice received from those specialists. The STA is using the particular additives in the water that is carried in the buses to operate the evaporative air-conditioners.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to the Auditor-General's Report, page 422, and I should like to ask a follow-up question in regard to the business plan. The Auditor-General's Report reveals that the Minister endorsed the STA business plan in February, a plan which identified areas in which the STA hoped to save \$24.1 million per annum by 1991-92. I cannot understand why the Minister endorsed the business plan in February when he has since conceded tonight and also on 5 September in the House of Assembly that the targets identified by the plan were not achievable because of the Government's fare policy, a policy which, incidentally, he administers. As one would assume that the STA was aware of the Government's fare policy at the time of preparing the plan including the introduction of free travel for students, those matters would have been taken into account in the preparation of the plan.

What relevance or status, if any, does the Minister now place on the business plan? For instance, does he require that the STA adhere to its savings objectives of \$24.1 million per annum? Has he agreed that the STA lower its savings target or has the plan been put into the dustbin while the STA now focuses on developing a new corporate planning process?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The business plan is certainly highly desirable. The STA has an obligation to work towards achieving the objectives of the business plan as much as is practicable to do so. Of course it cannot achieve those parts of the business plan which are in conflict with Government policy from time to time, and it is not to be censured for not doing so. That is only reasonable.

The Government has transport policies which from time to time will certainly affect the outcomes of any business plan and any corporate planning process. The Government believes in governing. The STA, of course, is influential on the Government's thinking, but at the end of the day we will make decisions as we see fit in the interests of the people of South Australia.

Mr OSWALD: The Minister says that the business plan is highly desirable. He goes on to say, 'Let us not follow it.' I certainly would not like to be the General Manager of the

STA being told to adhere to a business plan and hearing the Minister say publicly that it is a highly desirable document and then overriding it. That would be an intolerable position for the STA management to work under.

My next question is: How much was paid in workers compensation premiums and payments in 1989-90? What is the estimate for 1990-91?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As regards the preamble to the question, the position of the General Manager of the STA, according to the member for Morphett, is intolerable. It is a difficult job to be General Manager of the STA. It requires enormous skills—personnel, financial and management skills and an understanding that they do not work in isolation and that they must work within Government policy. The present incumbent does all those things very well. It is always open to any general manager or any individual to resign if he finds the Government's policies intolerable. I have not seen any resignations on my desk, and I am not anticipating any. I can only assume that the General Manager of the STA feels very comfortable working with the Government of the day, irrespective of the makeup of that Government.

There is always an option. There is an understanding among statutory authorities that they must work within Government policy. The return in the fare box is only one of the objectives of the business plan—it is significant but it is only one. It is one part of the business plan over which, for Government policy reasons, the STA has little control. At the end of the day it is a Government decision. Nevertheless, it is highly desirable for the STA to consider and work towards many other parts of the business plan. Mr Fitzgerald has had a quiet evening. He has the workers compensation figures at his fingertips.

Mr Fitzgerald: The cash cost of workers compensation in 1989-90 for the STA was \$3.536 million and the cash cost for workers compensation in 1990-91 is estimated at present at \$4.2 million. Both of these costs are below the equivalent costs if we had had WorkCover performing the function for the STA.

Mr OSWALD: I refer again to the business plan, on page 422 of the Auditor-General's Report. While the Auditor-General's Report notes that a consultant's report, reviewing labour productivity improvements in the STA has not yet been finalised, the Minister reported to the Estimates Committee last year that an STA steering committee would be established to canvass the relevance of the consultant's initial findings. What consultancy firm won the contract to conduct this review; what work practices has the consultant identified to the steering committee as potential areas for productivity improvements; and which of these areas have been deemed appropriate for implementation and negotiation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The name of the firm is Price Waterhouse and Urwick, and I will ask the General Manager to enlarge upon the answer I have given.

Mr Brown: The report from Price Waterhouse and Urwick has been received in the past week and it will be considered by the full State Transport Authority meeting next Monday. Thereafter, the recommendations from that committee will be submitted to the Minister for his consideration.

Mr OSWALD: As a supplementary question, just to complete the line on the business plan, has progress been made on the issue of part-time work, which the business plan identified as providing the authority with greater opportunities to use its personnel efficiently?

The CHAIRMAN: Before the Minister answers that, I do not accept that as a supplementary question. It was a supplementary question following the same line as the busi-

ness plan, but it was not a supplementary question to the one dealing with the consultants, which the Minister and Mr Brown answered.

Mr OSWALD: On a point of order, Mr Chairman, in the documents setting up the Committee, it states that there shall be about three questions, and I understand that it was an agreement between both parties that that word 'about', being underlined in the documentation, was meant to imply that the Chairman had the latitude that, if a member wished to add a supplementary question to complete the line, the questions could be extended so that a fourth question, under certain circumstances at the discretion of the Chair, could be put to wrap up that section of questioning. I understand that that agreement was made at a meeting of the Chairmen, the Clerks of the House and the Party Whips of both sides, last week. In other words, it is purely at your discretion.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is of latitude, and the latitude that I as Chairman of Committee B exercise in allowing supplementary questions is that, if there is a follow-up question that deals specifically with the question that has been asked previously, to which the Minister has responded and perhaps has not covered the line of questioning completely, I have allowed a supplementary question to be asked. The point I made to the member for Morphett was that his supplementary question, which I dealt with as his third question, had nothing to do with the question on the consultancy of Price Waterhouse and Urwick, which question was answered by the Minister and Mr Brown. For that reason, I did not allow it as a supplementary question. I am not trying to be pedantic but we have the rules. The rules have been set and this Committee, apart from occasional aberrations, has kept strictly within the guidelines and, at 9.15 p.m., I request the member for Morphett to accept the ruling of the Chair and have this question as his third question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Some progress has been made and negotiations are continuing with the unions.

Mr HAMILTON: Several references have been made to the fact that the State Transport Authority has reintroduced its corporate planning process. Will the Minister advise if the plan will contain any innovative measures to encourage more use of public transport and, if so, will he outline what the travelling public can expect?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The authority's corporate plan will incorporate innovative measures to encourage more use of public transport. This concept will be known as Transit Link. At present we have the two extremes of service provided by the authority. On the one hand, we have express and limited stop services which operate within dedicated rights of way—that is, the busway, tram corridor and the railway network. On the other hand, we have regular stopping services, both within dedicated rights of way and on the roads. Express services within dedicated rights of way have been proven to generate patronage—for example, the North-East busway—while services which are forever stopping tend to discourage patronage, particularly during peak hours. The Transit Link concept is designed to take advantage of many of the operating advantages provided by dedicated rights of way without incurring all the costs involved in providing them.

High frequency express services will be provided, particularly during peak hours, on trunk routes between major regional centres and from regional centres to the CBD using either bus or train or a combination of both through bus/rail interchanges. Regular stopping services will still be needed on these trunk routes. Special priority bus lanes will be provided on selected arterial roads which, with recessed bus stopping bays, would allow their use by other high

occupancy vehicles, for example, taxis and private cars with three or more occupants.

Feeder buses would regularly service the regional centres providing in most cases a better local service than is currently offered. The concept is sound and will be introduced in those corridors where it is proven to be the cheapest method of providing a high quality service. Obviously, economics must always be taken into account. Not only will the initiative be of benefit to the customer through reduced travel times, but it will enable also the authority to turn its vehicles around faster in peak hours and therefore it will be able to provide more services for the same cost.

The main advantages of Transit Link will be felt in newly developed areas and outer suburban areas which currently experience above average travel times. On the other hand, there is probably little that Transit Link can do for inner city areas as service frequency is already relatively good and trip lengths and road structures limit substantial gains in travel times. The components of the Transit Link concept will be an improvement in consultative processes between the authority and the community to ensure that the services being provided are what people actually want. The authority is planning to introduce the prototype of Transit Link in 1992 in a corridor yet to be identified.

Mr HAMILTON: A great deal has been mentioned about the problems of UV rays and their impact on people's health. Every year the State Transport Authority has provided an STA bus which carries people along the beaches and provides information concerning summer events at our beaches. Does the STA intend to continue that practice this summer?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will have to ask the General Manager to respond.

Mr Brown: In recent years that particular service has been operated under contract, and I see no reason why that contract will not be pursued this year by the particular organisation. However, I will seek more information and advise the Committee.

Mr HAMILTON: What is the name of that organisation?

Mr Brown: It is one of the radio stations.

Mr HAMILTON: Referring to the Auditor-General's Report, is it correct that the STA has taken little or no action on audits, suggesting that there is a need to improve management information associated with work force usage? As I stated, that was contained as a criticism in the Auditor-General's Report.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is the STA's belief that for information to be useful to management it must be accurate and readily available to the managers who are responsible for making the decisions. In support of that approach the STA has concentrated in the first instance on developing computerised information systems to assist line managers to control their resources and on delegating more responsibility and authority to these managers. By doing this, they are developing an information data base that can assist management in a number of tasks as well as providing information on work force usage. In the meantime, the authority is doing what it can manually with the data currently available on work force usage.

In addition, the authority has negotiated a new award with its bus and tram operating employees through the current award restructuring process. A key feature of this award is payment based on assessment of each employee's individual contribution to the business. In addition to focusing on delivery of quality services to customers, other issues such as attendance record will be formally addressed several times each year and taken into account in assessing each

employee's rate of pay. This provides a sharpened focus on the use of resources.

Mrs KOTZ: Traffic receipts in 1989-90 amounted to \$41.795 million, and this year are estimated to be \$40.5 million. In his 1988 report Professor Fielding described as a most serious erosion the number of full fare adult passengers, which he noted had declined from 61 per cent in 1980 to 42 per cent in 1987. In respect of traffic receipts last year, what was the proportion of full fare adult passengers and the anticipated proportion this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get those figures for the honourable member. I point out that the Government rejected some of the suggestions and recommendations of Professor Fielding. They conflicted in some areas with Government policy. Because we engage someone to look at the system, it does not mean that we have to accept their report in its entirety. In the case of the Fielding report, we certainly did not. Since Professor Fielding reported, we have introduced the seniors' card, which meant that all retired persons over 60 are entitled to concessional travel—

Mr HAMILTON: How many?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is an awful lot of them, I think about 51 000. I understand that the Liberal Party also had that policy. So it was a bipartisan view that additional concessions ought to be introduced into the system. I think it is inevitable that the number of people travelling on some kind of concession will increase. It seems to me that, if one uses the public transport system as a means of supplying transport services to people who otherwise would not be able to have them, it is inevitable that an ever-increasing number of people will, quite properly, take advantage of that service. From this Government's point of view, that is welcomed. The more people who do not have the financial wherewithal to move around the city or the provincial cities, and the more we can encourage them to get out of their houses or to travel to look for a job or for recreation, the more the Government sees that as using the STA as a vehicle—and I intend no pun—for a number of socially desirable objectives. That is the Government's policy. Professor Fielding may not agree with that; he is entitled to his point of view, and the Government respects it as a considered point of view. However, at the end of the day, the Government's point of view will prevail.

Mrs KOTZ: I thank the Minister and I look forward to receiving his answer to my question at a later date. My second question relates to the Program Estimates (page 228). I understand that in March this year the STA introduced an O-Bahn tourist service which, at a modest cost of \$3.10, provided a return trip on the O-Bahn bus that would collect passengers at predetermined hours from various city locations to travel to Tea Tree Gully with the driver providing a commentary about the city sights, the linear park and the O-Bahn track. However, almost as soon as this overdue initiative began, the service appears to have been stopped. Why has the service been stopped, and will the STA reconsider reintroducing it, but this time accompany the initiative with a marketing campaign and with more efforts to gain the support of hotels and tourist operators in the city and in the Tea Tree Gully area?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The service was stopped due to lack of patronage. The service was too expensive for the number of people using it. As regards promotion, I would be delighted if the member for Newland, or anyone else, could tell me how we can make hotels promote the service more effectively. I know from my own experience that hotels have very many services and packages that they are able to promote to people who are looking for something

to do on any particular day. How one can make them give the O-Bahn service a high priority, I am not quite sure.

I would certainly welcome any suggestion from the member for Newland, or anyone else, as to how we can do that within reasonable cost because, again, we do not want to be accused by the member for Newland, or anyone else, of running a service at a loss, particularly a service of that kind. Therefore, the amount of promotion and the funds that can be allocated for promotion for what is, essentially, a \$2 bus trip is somewhat limited. It is not a very high cost product, and one cannot promote it on the same scale that one promotes first-class air trips or a cruise on a luxury liner: the margin just is not there. The STA will be only too pleased to re-establish the service whenever it feels that there is at least a break-even in it or, hopefully, even a modest profit.

I have found Westfield management to be excellent. There is probably more chance of success with a promotion involving all day Sunday shopping coupled with either a free service or a subsidised service by Westfield, than hoping that the hotels—and it is particularly the hotels—will single out the O-Bahn for special and high level promotion.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to page 228 of the Program Estimates. I note that, in New South Wales, all new public transit buses are to be powered by CNG. Are all the new buses to be ordered this year for the STA in South Australia to be powered by natural gas? Did the STA consider calling for tenders for the bus conversion program rather than undertaking the work at its own Regency Park workshops?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: With respect to the conversions, that have been done, the Federal Government provided the money, Sagasco supplied the technology and our contribution was to assist on the conversions. Part of the tender for all the new buses on order is that they be suitable for use with CNG.

Mr ATKINSON: On page 228 of the Program Estimates, mention is made of the rail passenger information system. I congratulate the STA on the system, which is most helpful. The synthetic voice speaks clearer English than its live equivalent at Flinders Street station in Melbourne. Has the rail passenger information system been extended to all stations and, if not, are more planned?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, it has been extended to all stations. We have problems at some stations with vandalism. That is unfortunate, but it is something with which we have to live. I agree with the honourable member that the system is excellent.

Mr ATKINSON: Occasionally, the system at Croydon station goes haywire and gives patently absurd arrival times. What is the reason for this?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I ask the General Manager of the STA to respond to that.

Mr Brown: With any new system, there are bugs in the software. It is a very complex system, which extends from Gawler in the north to Noarlunga in the south, up into the Hills and down to Port Adelaide. We have had to contend with a few headaches, but they have been few and far between, and the public has been very patient on those occasions.

Mr ATKINSON: On page 87 of the Estimates of Payments, at the bottom of the public transport services list, interest on borrowings and lease payments are estimated to decrease from \$30 million in 1989-90 to \$29 million in 1990-91. That is a big decrease in real terms. Will the Minister explain that decrease?

Mr Fitzgerald: The figures show a reduction which is due to the full year effect of repaying \$6 million in capital last

year, plus a reduction in interest rates particularly from SAFA.

Mr ATKINSON: In the same list in the estimates, fuel, oil and power expenses are estimated to increase from \$12.4 million in 1989-90 to \$14.2 million in 1990-91, a 14.5 per cent increase. At the time the budget was prepared why was the price of fuel, oil and power expected to increase so far ahead of the consumer price index?

Mr Fitzgerald: The budget has been set after allowing for increases in distillate prices from our supplier, mainly caused by Federal Government excise costs, plus some additional fuel requirements for our service changes. All Committee members are probably aware that the cost of fuel has gone up again, even since the budget was prepared, adding a further 5c per litre which, in a full year, with our 24 million litres of fuel, will add a significant extra penalty to the STA's operating costs in 1990-91.

Mr SUCH: My question relates to the Hackney bus depot and the capital works on page 54, under the heading 'Works in progress, infrastructure \$2 000.' Does the reference to Mile End suggest that work is under way on establishing a depot on that site to facilitate the return of the Hackney depot to parklands? If not—there are no references to the proposed Mile End depot under the heading 'New works'—when is work to commence on the new depot and when is it anticipated that the Hackney depot site will be vacated? What is the current estimated cost of the Mile End depot?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: From memory, early 1990-91 is the commencement date. The final transfer would take place in 1993, I thought, but I see it is at the end of 1992.

Mr SUCH: What is the estimated cost?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The estimated cost is \$16 million.

Mr SUCH: My next question relates to the heading 'Support services'. How many STA employees are on leave as a result of work related stress? How does that compare with each of the past two years? How many STA employees have been paid out as a result of stress related claims? How does that compare with each of the past two years? What is the total cost of those pay-outs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get that information for the honourable member.

Mr SUCH: My third question relates to page 231 under the heading 'Support services'. Under specific targets for 1990-91 the document states, 'Conduct passenger surveys and identify options for the southern sector.' Will the Minister elaborate on what is involved in that activity?

Mr Brown: In his opening address the Minister said that the authority is modelling the transport system so that it can investigate ways of providing services more efficiently and effectively. The question relates to that modelling process. The authority has already collected the data in the southern area and, after simulating the existing public transport movement in that area, it will identify options for providing public transport in the southern districts.

Mr HAMILTON: My question is in relation to drug and rehabilitation services within the State Transport Authority. Many years ago, when I was in the railway industry, I had occasion to raise this issue within the union to which I belonged, the Australian Railways Union. It was a matter of considerable concern under the Australian National Railways system. Can the Minister say what progress has been made in that area of the State Transport Authority? Does that drug and rehabilitation officer still work within the State Transport Authority, and to what extent are those services used by members? I hasten to add that, when I raise this question, it is not to attack any member of the State Transport Authority or that industry; it is a matter

that is of very serious concern to many people who work in the transport industry and one that I would hope is not treated in a sensational way, but as a genuine attempt to arrive at what progress has been made in that area to assist those employees who may fall by the wayside.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Albert Park will be pleased to know that a rehabilitation officer is still employed by the STA, and I invite Bob Heath to enlarge upon my brief response to the Committee.

Mr Heath: Several years ago in the days of the South Australian Railways, there was an officer who did nothing else but drug and alcohol rehabilitation work, and this is the situation to which the member for Albert Park refers. These days, we have a much expanded occupational health and safety section, rehabilitation officers and so forth, and also all our supervisors are trained to identify problems with drugs and alcohol. We do not have one person doing that task any more, but we do have reference points that our supervisors can use to direct people having problems to the appropriate help, if it is a drug and alcohol-related problem. So, there are many more people interested in this subject and it is part of every supervisor's job.

Mr HAMILTON: Can the Minister advise what track work is being carried out on the Noarlunga and Gawler lines?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Major upgrading is proposed to be carried out on these two sections of line at a total estimated cost of \$13.1 million, and an amount of \$2.7 million has been provided in the 1990-91 financial year.

Mr OSWALD: I refer to the Program Estimates at page 225. Employment on train services is proposed to decline by 98 FTE positions this year. Will the Minister confirm whether this decline reflects forecasts in the discussion paper issued in May 1990 by the Railway Industry Council that:

Growth in urban rail is expected in all cities except Adelaide, varying from 30 per cent in Melbourne to 74 per cent in Brisbane. In Adelaide, a 20 per cent decline in patronage in 1987-88 is partially offset by a modest growth to 2001-02, resulting in a net decline of 10 per cent over 1986-87.

I will attempt to explain these figures. I am advised by the Railway Industry Council that the figures on which it reached its conclusions were provided by the relevant rail authorities in each State. Will the Minister advise in what areas of the train services employment levels are to be cut, and are the positions to be cut due to the non-replacement of personnel who leave the service or retire early?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will look at that question when *Hansard* is printed and respond in due course. I assure the honourable member that any reductions in the STA will be by attrition or early retirement, or by means other than compulsory retrenchments. We do not involve ourselves in that in the public sector, unlike the private sector. That may make us less flexible in many areas, but certainly far more humane.

Mr OSWALD: Referring to public transport services (page 228 of the Program Estimates), what suburban railway stations does the STA propose to close this financial year and what are the projected savings? In his answer, will the Minister include details of the STA's plans for North Adelaide Railway Station?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get that detailed answer for the Committee.

Mr OSWALD: Referring to support services, page 231, why has the STA purchased a two-colour printing press, a Fuji 65B, at a cost of \$200 000? Is the press to be used for the printing of timetables in two colours? Prior to the purchase of the press, were options considered either to subcontract the work to the private sector or to use the Government Printer where there is an excess capacity?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The brief answer is 'Yes', but I will ask the General Manager to enlarge upon that.

Mr Brown: A machine was purchased for multi-colour productions of timetables and other literature that is printed within the STA. Competing prices were obtained, including prices from the Government Printer at that time, and it was cheaper for the STA, because of the volume of work, to purchase that machine. The matter as to whether the STA does that work itself or has it done by contract is constantly under review.

Mr OSWALD: As a supplementary question, in working out the costs to determine whether you could do it more cheaply than the Government Printer, who has an excess capacity, excess machines and excess staff, in your costing did you include how many additional staff would be needed or whether in fact you would require additional staff? I assume that the \$200 000 is purely the cost of the machine and there could be other expenses also. From evidence given by the Government Printer, it seems surprising that, with all his excess capacity, the job could not have been done for you just as cheaply.

Mr Brown: With all its major acquisitions, the STA undertakes a full economic analysis of the expenditure, whether it be for the purchase of buses, trains or major items of equipment such as this. Labour involvement is also costed, but I will confirm that for the Committee.

Mrs KOTZ: Referring to page 422 of the Auditor-General's Report, he notes that the net cost of the STA to the Government over the two years to 1988-89 decreased by \$6 million per annum in real terms. However, he also stated that it was hard to quantify savings associated with the normal course of business as opposed to business plan initiatives. Can the Minister provide (or hazard a guess) details of what proportion of the \$6 million decrease in net cost reflects savings incurred in the normal course of business due to a reduction of 7 000 000 in passenger journeys over the same period? Has the STA now adopted practices which ensure that it is able to quantify in a manner acceptable to the Auditor-General its progress in terms of savings targets?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not know if the reductions referred to are not acceptable to the Auditor-General. I will examine the honourable member's question and the Auditor-General's Report to see whether any further response is required. As Minister, I am interested in any reductions in the operating or ownership costs of the STA, however they come about; whether they come about through the business plan or through ordinary day-to-day workings of the management team or the work force. A saving to me is a saving and however it is achieved I welcome it.

Mrs KOTZ: I refer to page 228 of the Program Estimates. The introduction of new automatic press-button information systems for rail passengers is noted as one of STA's achievements for the past year. However, if these systems are to be of any use to passengers, they must be maintained in working order. The system at Woodville Railway Station has not operated for at least three months and, as there is no printed timetable available, intending passengers are not aware when the next train will arrive. The system in working order could also have been useful during recent industrial stoppages to warn passengers waiting at the station that no train was to stop at the Woodville station that day. What arrangements does the STA employ to maintain the information systems now that they have been installed at railway stations?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not aware of any three-month delay in fixing the system at Woodville. I will have

the question examined and supply any information I receive to the Committee.

Mrs KOTZ: Referring to page 230 of the Program Estimates, how many houses does the STA own and what was the total rental received last year? As the sum to be generated from property sales this year, \$4 million, is significantly less in both money and real terms compared to recent years, is this simply a factor of downturn in the commercial and property market, or does it indicate that the STA is scaling back on its property disposal program?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Again, I will get those figures for the honourable member, but I point out that there is a limited number of times that one can sell a property. Once you sell all your properties, even with the best will in the world there will be no more. It is a bit of a wasting asset, as it were. We cannot keep selling them unless we are buying them, and we are not really in the buying business too much these days. I will have the question examined and provide any information back to the Committee.

Mr SUCH: I refer to page 228 of the Program Estimates. Have there been any recent approaches to the Federal Government to assist with the electrification of the suburban rail network?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No. The electrification of the suburban rail network is not on our agenda.

Mr SUCH: My second question follows earlier questions concerning graffiti and vandalism. I am told by STA staff that they do not have the power currently to search bags or to confiscate textas, spray cans and other colour change materials. Will the Minister consider changes to give the staff power to confiscate materials that are likely to be used for illegal purposes and to search bags?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Transit Squad has certain powers in this area. Again, I would be a little careful about saying to bus drivers, 'You have the right to search bags and to confiscate property.' I do not want to go down that track in the same way as the member for Fisher implied in relation to bus drivers having the right to put children off a bus when they felt that the child had made a nuisance of himself or herself. I would much rather persevere with education programs and general community programs because these problems are not peculiar to the STA. Saying

to bus drivers, 'You can now act as a policeman, judge and jury, and start searching and confiscating property,' does not seem to be the way to go, and I have no interest in pursuing that line.

In relation to the Transit Squad, which, of course, has properly trained and authorised officers, it is a different matter. Some of the officers in the Transit Squad are, of course, sworn policemen, and they have all the powers of a police officer. Other members of the Transit Squad are special constables and have all the same authority of a police officer. Therefore, if they do not have any powers, neither do the police.

Mr SUCH: What is the justification for increasing the number of white collar staff within the STA in the executive, professional, technical, administrative and clerical support areas? What is the justification for a further proposed increase of 18 officers this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get a breakdown of that information for the honourable member. However, while I am doing that, I know that members of the Committee will appreciate an expanded answer, giving the number of staff in the STA, say, five years ago, and the number of staff employed in those areas today. I also point out that the STA is still an expanding system, and I am sure that the member for Newland, for example, would not want the STA to say that it will not put in new services in her area or in the area of the member for Florey, for example, because it did not want to increase its work force in certain areas. We have an expanding system, and we should not forget that. Where people are delivering services, this Government is very proud of being able to afford to expand those services into those developing areas, and long may we be able to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no time for any further questions, I declare the examination of the votes completed. I would like to thank the officers assisting the Minister.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.59 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Wednesday 19 September 1990 at 11 a.m.