

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 18 September 1991

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Chairman:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings

Members:

The Hon. P.B. Arnold
 Mr M.J. Atkinson
 Mr M.R. De Laine
 Mr D.M. Ferguson
 Mr G.M. Gunn
 Mr I.P. Lewis

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I intend to adopt a relatively informal procedure. Changes in the composition of the Committee will have to be notified to the Chair before they take place. 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 4 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, and I suggest about 10 minutes should be sufficient for those statements.

We intend to take a fairly flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions based on three questions per member, alternating the sides. Members may also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning before switching to the next member. I suggest that members ask just one question rather than a series of questions which can prove to be non-productive.

I remind members of the suspension of Standing Orders that allows members of Estimates Committees to ask 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 Estimates of Receipts. Reference may also be made to other documents, such as the Program Estimates or the Auditor-General's Report.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I do not intend to make any introductory remarks with respect to the Auditor-General's lines in the budget.

Mr LEWIS: We are grateful to the Auditor-General's Department for the trouble it takes in the interests of the public of South Australia to report the way it does to the Parliament rather than to the Government. That does not mean that I do not think the Government is unworthy. It means I think that Parliament is an important institution in that it ensures that people not only know that checks are being done but they are seen to be done by that means. That is important. It does not matter who is in Government from time to time. It is just coincidental that the Minister at the table has the responsibility for the department's expenditure included within the range of portfolios for which she is responsible. We are naturally grateful to her for being able to take matters of importance to the Auditor-General into the Parliament from time to time.

Auditor-General's, \$10 354 000

Witness:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan, Minister for Environment and Planning, Minister of Water Resources and Minister of Lands.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr K.I. MacPherson, Auditor-General.
 Mr K.J. Bockmann, Deputy Auditor-General.
 Mr P.A. Deegan, Administrative Officer.

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

Mr LEWIS: Will the Minister provide details of external consultancies?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Auditor-General to respond.

Mr MacPherson: Do you mean external consultancies in the sense of the contract audit arrangements that we have in place? In addition to that, there are quite significant external consultancy commitments in relation to the State Bank. I can deal with both of those if that would help to answer your question.

Mr LEWIS: It was my intention to ask the supplementary question as it arises from the Program Estimates. I had understood that the external consultancies included the State Bank. Will the Auditor-General provide us with details of any external consultancies that are within the framework of his responsibilities, particularly in relation to the State Bank, providing us with the likely cost of the investigation into the State Bank's affairs in the process?

Mr MacPherson: The total anticipated cost of the inquiry being undertaken by me is \$6 million. That will cover the total cost of the report, which is to be delivered as an interim report in relation to the internal matters of the bank, and will also cover the cost of reporting in relation to the external audit, which is due for report in March next year. The amount in the Estimates of Payments shown under program 3, Special Investigations and Reviews, is for the consultancies we have engaged with respect to audit, legal and banking expertise.

If it may help you to understand the way in which we have approached this investigation, I advise that what has been sought to be done is to bring together the requisite expertise from sources external to my own department to supplement my departmental resources to ensure that we are able to cover the spectrum of issues we anticipated meeting in the bank. We engaged Messrs Clayton Utz early on to provide strategic legal advice because they had been involved in the Tricontinental inquiry in Victoria, and we felt that if we could coat-tail some of the experience they had, that would save us considerable cost in reinventing the wheel.

Subsequently, in the legal area we have engaged a solicitor, who is a former partner in Fisher Jeffries, on a full-time basis (Mr Ian Weston). He is now a full-time member of my team. In addition, we have engaged the services of a Melbourne QC (Mr Ray Finkelstein) on a consultancy basis to advise us generally. On the auditing side, we have engaged Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu, Coopers & Lybrand and Ernst & Young. They are providing the auditing services that we believe will equip us to discharge this commitment.

With respect to banking services, we have engaged Mr Dick McKay, the former Chief General Manager of the National Bank in South Australia. He is a member of our core team and will provide banking advice and indicate

areas that should be the subject of inquiry by us. When one aggregates each of these areas, that is the group to which we are committed with respect to the payment of the \$3.9 million which is shown under program 3.

Mr LEWIS: Supplementary to that, were no other consultancies, other than the consultants who were hired to investigate the State Bank, involved in that \$3.95 million?

Mr MacPherson: Not in the \$3.95 million. Using the word 'consultants' in a broader sense, we have engaged a number of independent audit firms to undertake contract audits on our behalf and I would be happy to provide details of those.

The CHAIRMAN: If Mr MacPherson has them available now, I think we will have them read into the record.

Mr MacPherson: I can read them into the record; they are available. I will list them in the order that I have them here. The contract auditors were as follows: the Adelaide Medical Centre for Women and Children, Deloitte Ross Tohmatsu; the Durham Trust Fund, KPMG Peat Marwick; International Panel and Lumber (Australia) Pty Ltd, KPMG Peat Marwick; International Panel and Lumber (Holdings) Pty Limited, KPMG Peat Marwick; SABB Pty Limited, Price Waterhouse; SGIC Pty Limited, KPMG Peat Marwick; and Shepherdson and Mewett Timber Trading Trust, KPMG Peat Marwick.

Mr LEWIS: Have people been helpful in providing information to the Auditor-General in his inquiries in relation to the State Bank?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Auditor-General to make a direct comment on that, if he thinks it is appropriate.

Mr MacPherson: Yes, they have. I understand the honourable member's interest in this area and I suppose everybody is very interested, but the short answer is that there has been no lack of cooperation. I should point out that under the Public Finance and Audit Act we have compulsive powers which allow us to summons individuals to attend and give evidence and, in fact, we have done that. That process also enables us to require persons so summonsed to give evidence on oath and, in fact, we have adopted that process also. So, in the event that there is any suggestion of non-cooperation, other procedures are available to us to ensure that we do have cooperation.

Mr LEWIS: I ask that question, because I noted that the Auditor-General had kindly provided for the Committee information, including the comment about the solicitor from Fisher Jeffries. When he made that comment I wondered if the powers of subpoena had been needed. Given that he has had to use those powers of subpoena, in how many instances has it been required and for whom has it been necessary?

The CHAIRMAN: I know that this may seem a very minor point, but all questions will go to the Minister. I ask all members to direct their questions to the Minister through me.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Auditor-General to comment on the question that the honourable member has asked.

Mr MacPherson: I feel I should make it clear that the use of the compulsive powers is designed both to protect the person whom we asked to come in and, also, to underpin the integrity or credibility of the evidentiary processes which we adopt. The use of compulsive powers ought not in any way to suggest that somebody has sought to be awkward or obstructive or to hinder the inquiry. It is merely a process which underpins the credibility of our evidence gathering processes. I should also add that our report is to be delivered to the royal commission and we see it as very important to

adopt a process which underpins the credibility of what we do, so that they do not need to revisit the areas that we have had to investigate or have investigated.

Mr LEWIS: When was the Tandanya report completed? Can the Auditor-General say whether or not he has an ongoing brief on that matter?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The Tandanya report has not yet been completed. I ask the Auditor-General to provide the additional information that has been requested.

Mr MacPherson: The Tandanya report is in the final stages of completion. In undertaking that inquiry, we have used our powers under the Public Finance and Audit Act to ensure the credibility of the evidentiary base. We expect to complete that report in the next few weeks and make it available to the Minister.

Mr LEWIS: Can the Minister provide examples of any other programs, projects or Government activities that are relevant to the needs of our Aboriginal community which have been or are intended to be investigated by the Auditor-General's Department?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I have no knowledge of any further programs that are being investigated by the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General is not aware of any further programs. As the relevant Minister, I have not requested the Auditor-General to look at any other programs.

Mr Bockmann: That is certainly the case.

The CHAIRMAN: Some sections of the Auditor-General's Department may have some bearing on other Ministers, and it may be better to question those Ministers concerned. I do not wish to restrict the member for Murray-Mallee in any way, but it might be easier to question directly the Minister concerned. Unfortunately, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs appeared before the Committee yesterday. In future Committee hearings it would be more appropriate to direct relevant questions to the relevant Minister in relation to future work to be carried out by the Auditor-General's Department.

Mr LEWIS: I ask that question simply because all Government departments have particular work to do. For example, the Department of Agriculture looks at matters relating to agriculture. The Auditor-General's job is to examine Government agencies, departments, records, functions and the handling of money. Of necessity, if one wants to identify the work being undertaken by a particular department, one needs to identify the client organisations to which one wishes to address the inquiry about that work. In this instance, it arises because of the number of requests that have been made to other members of the Opposition and to me—and I am sure to members of the Government—by people in Aboriginal communities who are involved in various projects now that they have seen that the truth is coming out about what is happening at Tandanya.

Aborigines are people, just like us, and things can go wrong. If things do go wrong, or someone believes that they have gone wrong, where the public interest is concerned, people will request that the matter be investigated. I have had those kinds of requests from people, and I have told them that I could not investigate the matter and that they must go to either the Ombudsman or the Auditor-General. Recently I have provided complainants with names and addresses of the people whom they should contact in both instances. For that reason, I asked the Minister to discover whether any such requests had been made to the Auditor-General's Department from people who are involved in various projects, which are agreed by the Government and the Opposition as being worthwhile but in relation to which, somewhere along the way, some members who were involved in them felt that things had not been done exactly according

to Hoyle. It was not my wish to be in any way mischievous in an attempt to glean information that was not, in my judgment, a legitimate inquiry. So, I beg your indulgence for having made the inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not have the view that you were being mischievous.

Mr LEWIS: Has the Auditor-General examined the accounts of any regional or other country hospitals? If so, which hospitals? Could that information be made available to us? I ask the question for the same reasons: I am now discovering people who are elected to hospital boards and who do not feel that their hospital's interest is being properly addressed by the way in which funds are being applied to this provision of services for the community through the hospitals. They are most anxious to know whether it is possible, or indeed whether it has otherwise happened, that the Auditor-General has examined hospitals—any regional or other country hospital—to see whether the funds are being applied in the way in which they were originally allocated.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Before asking the Auditor-General to answer the second question, I would like to make a comment about the honourable member's question about whether there were any other Aboriginal projects that the Auditor-General had been asked, through me, to investigate, and the answer to that was 'No'. But I would remind the honourable member that perhaps some of the programs that his constituents have expressed concern about may indeed be funded by the Commonwealth Government, and in that case unless there was some direct State involvement it would not be appropriate. I thought that I would clarify that, because quite a number of Aboriginal programs are funded by the Commonwealth Government.

With respect to the question about hospitals, I am certainly unaware of any programs that are being investigated, but I would ask the Auditor-General to answer the honourable member directly.

Mr MacPherson: Yes, we do audit a number of country hospitals. As I understand your concern you are really focusing on the question as to the way in which the boards of those hospitals are able to manage the resources that are made available to them. That in turn has the implication of whether or not they are being adequately informed as to issues that should be brought to their notice and the decision-making processes. I am not in a position, off the top of my head, to say exactly what happens with respect to each hospital. Would it help the honourable member if I explained how we approach the audit process with respect to those matters, and he could then identify whether or not there were any other issues he felt were of public interest concern?

The audit mandate requires us to ensure, first, that the funds that are received are applied in accordance with the purposes for which they were made, and that is what we would regard as the compliance auditing requirement. That is a mechanical accounting-type process which requires one to trace the source of the funds, the application of those funds and to ensure that the application is consistent with the purposes for which they were advanced. We would give a certificate to say that that had occurred and that they had applied the funds in the appropriate way if we were satisfied that that was the case.

The second aspect that we would look at in relation to country hospitals is whether the procedure they had adopted was in accordance with the law. If we had any doubts or reservations about that we would explore that with the management and in fact seek independent legal advice if we felt that was necessary.

The third aspect we look at as part of the audit mandate is to determine whether or not the way in which the hospital is being managed is efficient, in our view, or whether or not we need to take into account in that audit the need for what we call a 'value for money review'. That is the audit mandate with which we approach the review of country hospitals and, indeed, all entities that we audit. Without a specific instance, it is very hard to focus and say that, yes, this was okay or, no, it was not. However, if the honourable member does have any particular concerns and they could be communicated to the Minister later, we would certainly pick them up and seek to respond to them.

Mr De LAINE: I have just one question. I refer to page 334 of the Program Estimates. Under 'issues and trends' I see that the department introduced risk based auditing on a trial basis last year, and I assume it has been fairly successful, because I note the extension of that audit, in the objectives for the coming year. Can the Minister outline the concept of risk based auditing, and give an assessment of the trial of that concept?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I think it is appropriate that I ask the Auditor-General to provide the honourable member with that information.

Mr MacPherson: Perhaps I could help the honourable member's understanding by giving a historical perspective. There are three basic systems of auditing. One is transactional auditing, which checks everything, and the audit certificate is only as good as the transactions we have looked at. That was the earlier approach to auditing, which was phased out in the early 1970s and which was replaced by systems based auditing, which looked at the flow of funds through an organisation and identified certain controls that should be in place. The auditing process was focused on ensuring that there was compliance with those controls, and that there was appropriate sampling so we could be in a position to give an assurance that there had been compliance and that the entity's financial statements reflected a true and fair view. That is becoming inordinately expensive to administer, and the profession is now generally moving to supplement that with what is called risk based auditing.

Risk based auditing is based on statistical sampling within a community or an entity and, based on those samples, computer reviews are undertaken to determine the tolerances within which we seek to have assurance. We can set them very high or at a lower level and the degree of assurance we can give in the auditor's certificate depends upon the degree of sampling that we undertake. Not to go along this methodological path today would be inconsistent with the way in which the profession generally is moving. Risk based auditing is not the be all and end all; it must be supplemented with systems based auditing processes and transactional auditing processes where they are deemed to be necessary. At the end of the day the commitment for the audit process is to be able to give an opinion that provides a high level of assurance that the financial statements reflect a true and fair view, in the case of corporations, or present fairly in the case of entities that do not fall within corporations law.

Within the department itself, only last year we introduced risk based auditing on a trial basis in three entities. One was the Grand Prix board, one was the Department of Mines and Energy and the other was the Royal Adelaide Hospital. We selected those three because they were representative of small, medium and large audits and we were anxious to ensure that, if we were to introduce this process on a broad banded scale within the office, at least we had some idea of the issues that we were likely to encounter. We were satisfied that it is worth pursuing and developing

on a broader spectrum, and we are extending it into further audits this year. Because of the training requirements necessary, we cannot undertake it right across the board in one block, but we will phase it in over a period of a few years.

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

Lands, \$9 901 000

Minister of Lands, Miscellaneous, \$11 000

Chairman:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings

Members:

The Hon. P.B. Arnold

Mr M.J. Atkinson

Mr M.R. De Laine

Mr D.M. Ferguson

Mr G.M. Gunn

Mr I.P. Lewis

Witness:

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

Departmental Advisers:

Mr J. Darley, Chief Executive Officer and Valuer-General.

Mr M.F. Whinnen, Director, Operations Services.

Ms D.A. Stimson, Director, Regional Operations.

Mr L.B. Kidd, Registrar-General.

Mr C. Lunnay, Acting Surveyor-General.

Mr T. McNamara, Manager, Management Accounting and Budgeting.

Mr R. Lai, Management Accountant.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: In addressing the Committee some 12 months ago, I highlighted the progress of the Department of Lands towards a more commercial outlook. This thrust has continued throughout 1990-91 and, from the figures contained in the financial papers of the 1990-91 budget, it can be assessed as a very successful year.

Clients: In order to provide a secure land tenure system, effectively manage Government land and property assets, and collect and maintain land information for the benefit of all South Australians, the department strives to achieve an optimum level of client satisfaction. The department's leadership in the development of systems and procedures which reflect current advances in technology is acknowledged world-wide. These advances are all directed towards improving customer contact. Indeed, throughout the year, the number of remote users of the Land Information System increased from some 270 to 350, an increase of 30 per cent. Much of this is due to the effort devoted by the department in getting closer to its clients and responding to their needs.

Staff: Commitment to staff is an ever-important key to success. Throughout 1990-91 a series of planning forums was held and staff input to change and efficiency measures were sought. The Chief Executive Officer (John Darley) undertook a program of communication and consultation with all staff during which he visited each worksite to discuss future directions. Many initiatives followed from the information exchanged during these discussions.

Finance: The department's financial performance during 1990-91 has been very rewarding and is a credit to all staff. Last year a new financial discipline was adopted by the department. Unlike previous years where containment of

expenditure and maximising revenue were two separate events, in 1990-91 these were combined into a net draw on funds from Consolidated Account. This net concept embraced both capital and recurrent funds.

In 1990-91 the budgeted net draw target was \$14.9 million. The actual result achieved was a net draw of \$12.5 million, an improvement of \$2.4 million. The ongoing review of the department's activities and processes will continue through 1991-92 and the net draw budget target is \$9.9 million, a further reduction of \$2.6 million. Considerable effort is being directed towards a review of the department's structure with emphasis being given to support the key business objectives. The staffing plan for 1991-92 sees a reduction in overall staff numbers and some of the non-contributing functions will cease.

Highlights: Some of the highlights from 1990-91 are:

- The establishment, on a trial basis, of a Land Information Bureau which for the first time brought together the client service, marketing and business development functions.
- The continued development of the computerised title system (known as TATS) and the regular production of computer produced title documents for strata titled units.
- Expansion of the department's presence in overseas consultancies throughout 1990-91. Sixteen officers of the department were engaged, to varying degrees, in consulting projects in four countries.
- The extension of the section 90 information service to embrace council information as part of the one-stop-shop service will be introduced to a number of councils later this year.
- A review of the mapping and geographical information functions was completed late in 1990-91.

The report identifies areas of potential savings and priority project activities.

South Australian Centre for Remote Sensing: In his report to Parliament the Auditor-General drew attention to the subsidised operations of the South Australian Centre for Remote Sensing. This facility was transferred to the control of the Department of Lands in 1989. The centre provides information and support to both the department's mapping function and to other State agencies. Much of this work is done without recharge and on a notional basis, and has contributed to the centre's recording a deficit. Consistent with the reduced net draw target, the department has decided to reduce the level of activity at the centre and to embrace it fully within the geographical mapping function. In future the cost of all external services will have to be met in full by the client.

Conclusion: In these difficult financial times the approach taken by the department during 1990-91, that is, of ensuring that client service is a high priority while at the same time adopting a fully commercial approach, is to the benefit of the public and the approach will continue in the current financial year.

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

Mr LEWIS: On page 34 of the Financial Statement we find that reductions in the department's call on the budget will be achieved by, for example, reducing operating overheads and streamlining the work force, yet under the line of the office of the Minister of Lands we see that staff has increased from 12 to 15. That is hardly reducing and streamlining. On the other hand, we see that there has been a diminution of departmental work and staff numbers from 919 to 858.6. Are we removing the workers at the coalface? What is going on here? It seems to me that it is being loaded

at the top end next to the Minister. Why has there been a proposed figure of 158 full-time equivalents for 1990-91 yet an increase to 167.1 full-time equivalents in the intra-agency support services? That is where the Minister's staff is, and the people who protect the Government from the sort of blunders that it makes from time to time.

That disturbs me, and I am anxious to discover how much of what is stated on page 34 is rhetoric and how much is fact. Why is the Minister increasing the intra-agency support service staff numbers and her own support staff and cutting down the number of people at the coalface?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I should like to make clear that I am not building up my ministerial staff office. I have made comparisons with my counterparts interstate, particularly the Minister of Environment in New South Wales—

Mr LEWIS: This is lands.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I realise that. I did not interrupt the honourable member.

The CHAIRMAN: We had a very friendly day yesterday, and I should like to think that, with 10¼ hours in front of us, we can be equally friendly today. So, we will have the questions and then the answers.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will go back a step for the honourable member. While the funding for ministerial staff comes under the Department of Lands, in fact, the ministerial staff of my department services the portfolios of environment and planning, water resources and lands, any dealings that we might have with the Auditor-General, and a number of other portfolio areas that I have accumulated in the three years since I have been a Minister.

With the disbanding of the Ministry of Local Government, I took on the added responsibilities of the Dog Control Act, the Building Act, the Outback Areas Community Development Trust Act, and I have also picked up a number of things including being responsible for approving the salaries of members of Parliament, so my workload has increased quite dramatically. I make sure that every month, whatever else I do, I sign those relevant official documents.

I discussed this matter with the secretary of my department this morning. We had 15 staff members, which includes three ministerial advisers, operating what is probably one of the most efficient and effective ministerial offices in Government. The workload is enormous, and I would put my workload up against that of anyone else, with the probable exception of the Premier. History and objective assessment will judge me accordingly.

My secretary informs me that we have reduced the staff by .4 at this stage and now have a total of 14.6 full-time equivalents in the ministerial office. My interstate counterpart, Mr Tim Moore (Minister of Environment in New South Wales), could not believe that I run an office with 15 on the staff. He said that it was just amazing.

We run a very tight ship, and my staff, including ministerial advisers, work above and beyond the call of duty, and this is an opportunity to put that on the public record. So, the comments on page 34 are not rhetoric. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to inform the Committee of the reductions we intend to make throughout the entire Department of Lands. We are in the early stages of the voluntary retirement separation packages and we are waiting for those to be put in place. So far, we have had a very positive response from a significant number of officers in the department.

These are being assessed by the executive of the department, and I will be happy to provide that information when we have it to hand. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to comment on the specific aspects of the honourable member's question.

Mr Darley: For the past two years, the Department of Lands has been closely examining each and every activity undertaken by it, to determine its relevance in terms of Government in the 1990s. As a result of those investigations, we have identified up to 200 positions by which we will be reducing the department. Those will occur throughout the department. Some activities are being cut out; others more relevant to the needs of the community are being extended.

As part and parcel of that examination, we were able to identify 135 people who were interested in availing themselves of a voluntary separation package. Sixteen of those dropped out the moment we rang them and asked when they would like to leave. We have recommended to the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations 110 people who could be offered voluntary retirement, and we are awaiting information from them at this stage in order for that process to be put into operation.

As I suggested earlier, the Department of Lands has closely examined each activity it undertakes to identify its relevance for the future and for the needs of the community, and the department will be reducing its staff progressively by up to 200 people.

Mr LEWIS: I find the answer incredible. The Minister now tells us that the money we have allocated and propose to examine here under Department of Lands covers her responsibilities under all other portfolios. Ten years down the track in program performance budgeting, it is incredible that we still do not know why the money is being applied for particular purposes. I do not think that it is fair that the public should be confused in that way. It is about time that that was sorted out.

The costs associated with the administration of other departments and portfolios ought to be picked up properly in the budget lines relevant to those departments and portfolios, and not under lands. Notwithstanding that point, I note that in the past 12 months there has been a transfer of the outback region of the Department of Lands to the Department of Environment and Planning. Exactly when did that occur, and by what process?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, indeed, we have transferred over the responsibility for, I suppose, the implementation of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act to the Department of Environment and Planning, while making it very clear that the whole concept of valuations and the setting of those valuations is the responsibility of the Valuer-General. I remind members that, in fact, the legislation very clearly gives the responsibility to the Valuer-General, who I remind the Committee is directly responsible to the Parliament and who does not take direction from me in terms of the setting of valuations for either pastoral lands or, indeed, for any other area of responsibility he is given.

The transfer followed an investigation into the feasibility of amalgamating the Department of Environment and Planning and the Department of Lands and that was undertaken by an independent consultant. Although this full-scale amalgamation did not eventuate, the consultant recommended the transfer between the agencies of those activities which were inconsistent with the key activities of the individual agencies and were more appropriately located in the other agency. It was considered that, in having an efficient, responsive and effective Government—and the agencies of Government are the departments—and to ensure that we have the greatest efficiency and servicing of the community, some facilities and subdepartments should be transferred across from the Department of Lands to the Department of Environment and Planning and that some would be transferred from the Department of Environment and Plan-

ning to the Department of Lands. I believe this will probably happen in other areas of Government.

The transfer of the outback management group provides an opportunity to integrate land management activities in the Far North of the State and the transfer occurred on 2 September 1991. I inform the Committee that I have received a letter dated 12 September from the United Farmers and Stockowners which states:

On behalf of the pastoral task force, thank you for the support given to Dr Ian McPhail and, in particular, to Nicholas Newland in their prompt and careful attention to the transfer of the administrative responsibilities for the pastoral legislation from the Department of Lands to the Department of Environment and Planning.

I will not read the letter but they go on to say that they believe that there is a cautious optimism and that Mr Nicholas Newland has helped to foster and create that cautious optimism. They believe that this transfer is progressing in a very smooth and effective way.

It seems to make a lot of sense to have agencies in terms of assessment of the land, which was one of the responsibilities given to me as the Minister by this Parliament in terms of the Act, located where the most professional input can be maximised. The Director-General of Lands was very happy with this move across to the Department of Environment and Planning, as was the Director-General of Environment and Planning.

I believe that the pastoral industry itself will welcome the one-stop shop approach which is being developed by Government agencies. I would also add that we are working very closely with the Department of Agriculture, with the soil conservation boards and with the land care groups that have been established to ensure that we provide the maximum quality of service and input of information to people in the outback, but specifically, as this question relates to the pastoral industry, to pastoralists both on an individual basis and to the industry generally.

Mr LEWIS: That, too, is incredible, is it not, Mr Chairman? The Minister prefaced her remarks by saying that the Valuer-General answers to the Parliament and not her and then, in the next breath, she said that the particular section of the department we are talking about answers to the Valuer-General. However, the Parliament was not consulted about the transfer—no-one associated with it was consulted about that.

She then made a statement at the conclusion of her answer that the Director of both departments is very happy. I draw attention particularly to the fact that the Director of the Department of Lands is happy with the way in which the arrangements have been made. That is a neat shuffle of the cards in the one hand, because the person who is at one and the same time the Director of the department and who is happy with it is also the Valuer-General, and the Valuer-General answers to the Parliament, but the Director answers to the Minister. That is the subtle difference.

It is astonishing that the Minister can do what she has done and I suppose she will continue to do it. It is fairly typical. I will leave it at that and ask my final question in this group of questions. Which other sections of the department does the Minister intend to transfer to other departments under her control? Indeed, I will widen that and ask which other sections of other departments she intends to incorporate under her control in the Department of Environment and Planning, because I heard her mention the Department of Agriculture and soil conservation boards. It amazes me to find that the Minister is doing these kinds of things without as much as a by-your-leave or anything else. We noticed that the department's personnel numbers have been reduced and the Minister claims that is through effi-

cient management. However, we see slabs of personnel being shifted out of the department into other departments, which would reduce the number of personnel in the Department of Lands compared to the number last year.

Which other sections from her department will be transferred to the Department of Environment and Planning? How many departmental staff have already been transferred to that other department, which process contributes to this reduction that the Minister claims is streamlining operations? Why was the transfer not made in the opposite direction?

Mr FERGUSON: Is this a supplementary question?

Mr LEWIS: I am trying to understand. The Minister canvassed many matters in her answer.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for a whole series of questions. I will answer the first part that he raised in his second or third question. He talked about how remarkable and how strange it was that, on the one hand, I was able to transfer within two departments. Let me remind the Committee of the way in which I operate this huge complexity of portfolios: that is, we operate as an executive of four, with the three chief executives and me. I think probably that is a very efficient and effective way of operating such a huge area of responsibility.

However, having said that, I believe it is quite proper, in the interests of efficiency, to achieve an integration of staff who are undertaking like activities. Indeed, the reason for transferring the outback management section of the Department of Lands across to the Department of Environment and Planning was to be able to provide more professional and scientific support to the program and it was in the interests of efficiency.

I explained to the Committee that the head of the Lands Department was in fact very relaxed about that move, because it was based on an independent consultant's report which looked at the way in which we can provide a greater efficiency and accountability to the people of South Australia. I would have thought that the Opposition, represented here by the member for Murray-Mallee, might welcome that streamlining in accountability and efficiency.

I then went on to say, quite properly, that in terms of valuations the Valuer-General reports to the Parliament with respect not only to setting the valuations (and that means setting the rents for the pastoral leases) but also the whole range of other valuations in regard to property valuations, for rating purposes, and for other means.

There is absolutely no conflict about that. The Valuer-General has been the Director of Lands since I became Minister. This is now the fourth Estimates Committee, and I should have thought that the honourable member would know that. There is no conflict there: that matter has been canvassed thoroughly in the Parliament and elsewhere. The Valuer-General reports to the Parliament. So it is appropriate that the rent setting remain with the Valuer-General as the Act requires. I am sorry that the honourable member does not understand the process.

With respect to the transfer of the Outback Management Unit across to the Department of Environment and Planning, 24 people were contained in that unit, and they have moved across. The figures that the Director of Lands provided to the Committee, indicating that we are aiming to reduce the department by 200 people, do not include the 24 people. Again, I would like to clarify any misunderstanding or misinformation. The target reduction of 200 people is independent of the 24 people who have gone across to the Department of Environment and Planning.

At the moment, we are looking at the geographic computer section in the Department of Environment and Plan-

ning moving across to the Department of Lands. Again, this was one of the recommendations of the consultant's report into a better streamlining and a more efficient operation of both Environment and Planning on the one hand and the Lands on the other.

Bearing in mind that I have said to the South Australian community on a number of occasions that I operate a natural resource portfolio grouping, we work very closely and have regular seminars with the three departments, working through issues that relate across the portfolios. I believe that this is the proper and correct way to go. It is not a matter of one department being isolated from the other two departments for which I have responsibility. There is a cross-flow of personnel, ideas and programs. We are moving to streamline the way in which we operate these departments to provide a better and more efficient service to the Government and, indeed, the people.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind Committee members that proceedings before the Estimates Committees should be in question and answer form, involving a probing of the Minister's portfolio. When the Estimates Committees report back to Parliament, there will be ample time in grievance debates for members to have their say on how the Committee system went or to question individual parts of a Minister's portfolio. We have been on the subject of Lands for about 33 minutes, and we have had three questions. Yesterday, the Committee managed to get through nearly 130 questions, so it does not bode well so far.

This makes no difference, provided members work within Standing Orders. I suggest to members of the Committee, however, that, if they want to maximise the time available today, they should use it for questions and answers and not for philosophical approaches to a particular Minister's portfolio. I assure members that any conflict between them and the Minister will be dealt with. When the Minister is giving an answer, he or she has a responsibility to canvass the whole question involved. Any Minister—not just this one—could say that the answers were too short, so we should look for a compromise.

Mr FERGUSON: I would like to refer to matters relating to my own electorate. I hold the selfish view that I should be looking after my own electorate: I understand the sale of land opposite the Henley Beach High School by the Lands Department involved a joint venture between the Department of Lands and the Henley and Grange council. Has the Minister's department had the opportunity to assess how much more money was generated by taking in a joint venture as against selling the land as broad acre land?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I ask Ms Stimson to answer that. If we cannot get you the exact details of that, we will be happy to provide them subsequently.

Ms Stimson: We do not have the exact figures, but we will be happy to provide those later. From our assessment, we believe that, by undertaking a joint venture and subsequently selling developed allotments, rather than making a broad acre sale of undeveloped allotments, we are able to gain a better financial return for the Government, particularly the Education Department, which was the major beneficiary from the sale of these allotments.

Mr FERGUSON: Will the Minister provide details of the proposed sale of land at the back half of the Findon High School, which I understand is also a joint venture between the Minister's department and the Housing Trust? How does that compare with the sale of land at the Henley Beach High School?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We do not have the exact details required, but we will be happy to provide them.

Mr FERGUSON: I am quite keen on the proposal of joint ventures to bring in a better financial return because it assists schools in my electorate. I understand that the Kidman Park High School oval will soon be declared surplus to Education Department needs. Will the Department of Lands consider disposing of that land in a similar way to the two areas to which I have already referred with joint ventures, either with the Woodville council or with a private entrepreneur, in order to maximise the return that the Government will get from the sale of that land?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: In respect of the Government's position on joint ventures, I am sure members would be aware that it is the Government's preferred decision with respect to a whole range of areas. Certainly, we will consider the point that has been raised with respect to the disposal of this parcel of land.

Mr GUNN: In relation to the availability of land for freeholding purposes at Coober Pedy, the Minister would be aware that a number of applications have been made by people who currently occupy dugout sites. The Department of Lands has been approached on a regular basis to have those properties made freehold. These people have been sent a costing, which they believe is particularly high. To put it mildly, they have expressed to me considerable unhappiness and annoyance about that costing because they believe that a great deal of value of the land is contained in the actual construction of the dugouts and that the land has relatively little value in its natural state. They believe that in view of Coober Pedy's isolation—and the area in question is some distance from the centre of the town—they should be able to freehold their homes at a more reasonable cost to them. Some of those people have limited financial means. The Minister would be aware that that has been going on and that there have been ongoing concerns. I would appreciate it if the Minister could say whether everything possible is being done first, to bring this matter to a conclusion and, secondly, to reduce the costs involved.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As the honourable member knows, I recently visited Coober Pedy. Whilst that was one issue, it was not the main issue that I looked at while on my visit. However, it is the intention of the department to look sensitively at the issues that the honourable member raised. Prior to 26 July 1989 the price of freehold—and I think we are talking about an area called Pooch Gully—was about \$2 300 per allotment based on survey costs that were undertaken by the department and service costs incurred by the district council. The reason the cost was as low as \$2 300 was due to the fact that a great many allotments were included in the initial Pooch Gully survey. Therefore, that reduced the overall cost per unit price.

There were delays in completing the survey and this caused delays in people being able to get freehold title, and for that reason the department allowed a 12 month concession whereby the freehold cost would remain at \$2 300 until 25 July 1990 at which date the department's policy of market value would apply. As the honourable member would know, we have a policy throughout the State for market value. At the moment we are working on ways of reducing those survey costs. However, under the market value approach, which has applied since July 1990, all freeholding prices for dugouts are based on the current unimproved value of the land at the time of the valuation. The unimproved values in the Pooch Gully area vary between \$3 000 and \$4 500 depending on the location, quality and quantity of the dugout ground available, and this of course must be supported by market evidence.

Some lessees who applied for freeholding after 25 July believe, as the honourable member has said, that they are

being disadvantaged by the department's market value policy as compared to the previous set cost of \$2 300. It is again the decision and responsibility of the Valuer-General, who is impartial and who values according to the market evidence at any point when he is asked to come up with a valuation. If any of the honourable member's constituents believe that their freehold value is excessive, and they can support their claim with market evidence, the Valuer-General will review that property valuation.

I believe that the department indicated its willingness to be fair and to treat people as equitably as possible by having this 12 month, if you like, concession to continue at the set price of \$2 300. However, we must not only treat people right across South Australia equitably in terms of setting valuations for rentals on things like shack sites, aquaculture and with pastoral leases but also we must be seen to be treating people in a fair and equitable way, and that does apply to Coober Pedy. I suggest to the honourable member, if his constituents are concerned with the fair market values that are now being put forward, that his constituents can approach the Valuer-General with a request for a reassessment of those valuations.

Mr GUNN: Is the Minister or the department working on a program to ensure that everything possible is being done to arrive at a system of determining pastoral rents that are fair and reasonable and take into account the serious downturn in the pastoral industry, particularly in the wool industry, so that a system can be devised that will, for all time, ensure that the viability of these pastoral properties, which are particularly important to the economy of South Australia, are not put in danger and that the people know exactly where they are going? I think that everyone would agree that the debate taking place over pastoral rents has not only been ongoing but has created a great deal of anger, and annoyance and ill will towards the department. People feel as though their needs are not being taken into account and that their viability does not appear to be a matter that is receiving high priority. I think it is important that the Minister clears up any misunderstanding as a matter of high priority.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The answer is 'Yes'. I believe it is vitally important that I, as Minister, and the Valuer-General work as closely as possible with individual pastoralists in the pastoral industry to ensure that the spirit and intent of the legislation is complied with; in other words, that there are fair market rentals for pastoral leases and that all the criteria laid down in the Act are adhered to. In a moment I will ask the Valuer-General, who is directly responsible to the Parliament for this Act with respect to valuations, to respond to some of the points raised by the honourable member.

However, it is appropriate for me to take this opportunity to say that the United Farmers and Stockowners Pastoral Task Force approached the Director-General of the Department of Environment and Planning requesting that a mediator be appointed to mediate on the methodology under which pastoral rentals were being set.

Mr LEWIS interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: This is directly relevant to the question, Mr Chairman. I received that information. I subsequently sent a memo to the Director of Lands, and indeed to the Valuer-General, requesting that the Director of Lands accede to the request of the United Farmers and Stockowners, and he has agreed to that. I understand that the Director-General of Environment and Planning has already written to the United Farmers and Stockowners informing them that my decision, as Minister, is that a mediator will be appointed. I believe that we will quite sensibly share the

cost of that mediator in terms of looking at the methodology.

I believe it is relevant to the honourable member's question, because I think it demonstrates a willingness not only by me as Minister but also by the Director-General of Lands and the Director-General of Environment and Planning to do everything possible to ensure that we can address the concerns of the pastoralists with respect to setting fair market rents and to informing, as openly and constructively as we can, individual pastoralists about the methodology and, at the end of the day, how their rents are in fact derived. Because it is not my responsibility to specifically determine those rents—that is the responsibility of the Valuer-General—I will ask the Valuer-General whether he can add anything to my answer.

Mr Darley: The law requires the Valuer-General to determine fair market rentals for pastoral leases. By talking about fair market rentals, that is fair to the community of South Australia and fair to the pastoralists. In other words, there is no intention in the concept of fair market rental to put pastoralists out of business. There are basically two methods in determining rentals. The method that we use is a method that derives from comparing actual rentals paid for pastoral country with the particular pastoral country in question. The method used by the United Farmers and Stockowners, and one that we also use in other areas, is to assume land value and then assume a rental value in accordance with that value of land. The Minister talked about a mediator, and I have agreed that we will jointly appoint a mediator to consider both methods, and to report back.

Mr GUNN: As the Minister would probably be aware, the last aerial photographs of agricultural land in South Australia occurred in 1986. Does the department intend carrying out another program of aerial photography, as these updated photographs will be most helpful to people involved in the agricultural sector and in other sectors which have an interest in agricultural matters? I understand the department has an aeroplane for these purposes?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, it is the intention of the department. I understand that the aerial photography to which the honourable member refers is an ongoing program and it is certainly the intention of the department to continue and proceed with that ongoing program. I do not have the actual details of the dates on which particular aerial photography will be undertaken in the various outback areas, but the Acting Surveyor-General will be happy to provide the honourable member with that information. I do not believe that that needs to be incorporated in this whole process, but I will ask Mr Lunnay to provide that for the honourable member, for his information.

Mr DeLAINE: I refer to page 325 of the Program Estimates. One of the 1991-92 targets is the transfer of regulations for the surveying registration to the South Australian division of the Surveyors Institution Australia Incorporated from the Surveyors Board. In 1989 a green paper examined the Surveyors Act 1975, which was published for comment. One of the recommendations of that document was that the Surveyors Board and the Surveyors Disciplinary Committee be abolished and the responsibility for the registration and licensing of surveyors be transferred to the Institution of Surveyors. What is the current status of this initiative?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Part of the Government's determination is to reduce statutory authorities, and this is one of the ways in which my department is moving to do that, and members would be aware of some of the other ways in which we are moving to do it. Since the issue of the green paper there has indeed been extensive consultation between

the Surveyor-General and the Institution of Surveyors on this matter, and a Bill has been prepared for presentation during this session of Parliament. One of the features of the Bill is the abolition of the Surveyors Board and the transfer of its responsibilities to the Institution of Surveyors. If assented to by both Houses, the Bill would also abolish the Surveyors Disciplinary Committee and would recognise the Commercial Tribunal as the appropriate body to consider disciplinary actions against registered and licensed surveyors. These provisions demonstrate the Government's commitment to the principles of deregulation and the removal of statutory boards and committees.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to Financial Paper No. 3, page 122, Program 5, which relates to valuation services. What has been the public reaction to the latest rating and tax evaluations determined by the Valuer-General, and how does it compare with the previous year?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is good news. I am delighted to inform the honourable member that the acceptance by the general public to the valuations, bearing in mind (I remind all members) that no rating or tax valuation is ever totally acceptable to the community, certainly this year has been generally very good and not significantly different from other years. There has been a downward trend in the level of complaints and objections. Just to put the thing into perspective, 671 000 properties have been valued in the 1991-92 rating year, and the valuations were determined having regard to sales and to real estate market trends as to the dates of the valuations. To date, some 4 965 complaints or objections have been received. This represents .74 per cent of the properties valued. This compares favourably with 5 223 valuation complaints or objections in the previous year; that is .79 per cent of properties valued, so it is down, slightly this year. It also compares favourably with 6 272, or .96 per cent, received in the preceding year, 1989-90. Of those 4 965 objections received to date, 1 756 have been reduced, or approximately 35 per cent; this compares with 29 per cent last year and 44 per cent in the preceding year.

Mr De LAINE: My third question relates to the same subject, and I take the attitude of the member for Henley Beach; this is particularly relevant to my electorate, where the Valuer-General's property valuations are used by local government to set council rates. Does the Valuer-General look only at the current market value of properties or does he consider the way in which that property is used? I cite an example in my electorate where a bowling club has been established for 60 or 70 years and the current valuations are causing council rates to escalate at such an alarming rate that the very existence of the club is threatened. Many of these clubs are on currently valuable land and the membership quite often consists almost entirely of pensioners. They are just getting rated out of existence. Is the use of the land considered, rather than just the current market value?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Because this relates specifically to the methodology that the Valuer-General uses, I will refer this question directly to him.

Mr Darley: Valuations have regard to both of those considerations. First and foremost is market value and also the use of the land. In the majority of cases the land of bowling clubs and those sorts of community facilities is generally under the provisions of a proclamation under the Planning Act whereby it cannot be subdivided and, therefore, we must take that into account.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Across South Australia there are probably many thousands of Crown perpetual leases and irrigation perpetual leases, which have a rental that has

been set on them in perpetuity as low as \$2.50 and \$5, and so forth. I understand that the cost of servicing the lease, as far as the department is concerned, in sending out rate notices for renewal of those leases and the administrative costs involved are probably about \$20 or \$25 annually, so the Government is really making a net loss of \$20 per lease on many thousands of perpetual leases in this State. Has the Minister considered converting those perpetual leases to freehold titles, purely having regard to the administrative costs involved in creating the title and the on-costs that go with it without an actual fee or a charge for the freeholding, because, as we stand at the moment, the State is losing significant money year by year in having to service leases as low as \$2.50 and \$5.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am aware of the issues that the honourable member has raised. I guess it is a dilemma that we face, because the current freeholding policy was introduced in 1983 and I think it may be more than overdue for a review. To ensure that this scheme remains viable the department has established two in-house reviews, which will report very shortly, and I will be very pleased to make the information available to the honourable member. The first involves the Surveyor-General and the Registrar-General, and is examining the standards that trigger survey prior to the issue of freehold titles. The second is a reassessment to ensure that survey costs are being met by the most appropriate party or parties.

On a more fundamental basis, the Director of Lands is continuing to seek, in consultation with the UF&S, a formula which will enable the Government to move out of perpetual leases altogether. I guess that is part of the answer that the honourable member is seeking. However, it is not the complete answer. This cannot be accomplished cheaply. This is the other point that must be canvassed when looking at this issue, because of the survey needs, both to establish surveyed coastal or riverfront boundaries, and that is not something that can be done easily, and also to meet the prescribed survey standards laid down in the law.

A major commitment will be required from the major rural sector, and that is why we must have ongoing negotiations and discussions with the body representing the rural sector. The current rural recession, or depression, is hardly an auspicious time to achieve such a major change. However, in preparing the new Crown Lands Act, the department will be aiming to provide me with an Act that will streamline dealings with perpetual leases from the point of view of both the lessee and the Government.

Such an exercise could not be done without putting the lessees and the Government to fairly significant expense. For the lessees, the rural recession means few would be able to afford such a program. For the Government, additional resources in terms of survey, conveyancing, documentation and liaison of course would be required. Therefore, it is quite clearly not the time to undertake conversion to such a program. However, having said that, I acknowledge the point made by the honourable member, that it is costing the department money in terms of the rental that we are receiving.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Exactly, but we have to weigh that against the huge costs that would have to be borne both by the lessee in converting to freehold and the taxpayer in providing the necessary survey and conveyancing that would be required. It seems to me that I need to wait until I have the results of the two internal reviews. We could weigh up the obvious costs and benefits to the community and to the individual lessees and then take a decision. Obviously it would be a decision I would want to take, and

I would want the support of the Opposition in doing that, I guess. Most importantly, I would want to negotiate and liaise with the UF&S in terms of the effects on its constituency.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Can I suggest to the Minister that, if the proposal can be considered seriously, even in the existing economic circumstances, most of the costs involved are in the freeholding figure put on as a result of the valuation and the percentage of that valuation that will be applied as the freeholding price, at least in the situation relating to the leases that are costing the State and, consequently, the taxpayers, money. An offer should be made to the lessees so they can either accept or reject. It might reduce significantly the ongoing costs to the department.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Valuer-General to comment on that. That question starts to get into the area of how we determine the valuation that is put on community-owned land that is currently leased, admittedly in a perpetual sense. What valuation do we put on converting what is ostensibly land owned by the community?

Mr LEWIS interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Well, it is Government policy, but the Valuer-General should comment.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the Minister does not respond to interjections.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am sorry, Mr Chairman, but I had taken to heart your point about our being a convivial Committee, and I am certainly trying to do that. It is important that the Committee recognises that there are specific policy issues that the Government determines, but there may be some points relating to the Valuer-General's responsibility, and I ask him to comment very briefly on that.

Mr Darley: I am not so sure that the problem is valuation. As the honourable member would realise, rural land has never been cheaper in South Australia than it is today. In my discussions with the UF&S, we are trying to reach agreement on a total freeholding cost, in other words, the price of freeholding. In the last discussions that we had, I was looking at freeholding 19 000-odd perpetual leases, and that figure amounted to approximately \$12 million. That was my estimate of the price of freeholding. At that stage the UF&S had moved from a position of offering \$2.5 million to \$4.5 million, so we have a gap of about \$7.5 million that we have to close, even on this market, but we are still discussing the matter.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Still referring to the valuation area, back in 1981 I introduced a Bill to amend the Valuation of Land Act. One of the principal purposes of that Bill was to provide for notional values of primary producing land because we were confronted with a situation where land surrounding a town tended to be valued on potential land subdivision use rather than for primary producing purposes. Of course, the owner of that land was being taxed virtually out of existence. How does the Minister apply that amendment to the Act? Does each valuer within the department in South Australia use his or her own discretion as to whether or not a notional value will be applied? If so, what criteria are laid down by the department for each valuer to follow?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Because it relates to some specific details about how this occurs, I will ask the Valuer-General to answer.

Mr Darley: The concept of actual use valuations applies. Each valuer across the State is required to have regard to the particular use of the land. If it is used for primary production or grazing purposes in the metropolitan area, they must have regard to what a purchaser would pay for

that land to use it purely for primary production purposes in the metropolitan area. That will be different from the South-East simply because of the distance between the South-East and the city. You would expect to pay more for land closer to the city than you would in the South-East or on the West Coast. The situation with regard to rural areas is the same. If the highest and best use of the land is for primary production purposes, the valuation determined is based purely on actual use. If you are talking about land in rural areas very close to townships, once again the concept I have suggested would apply. Any enhancement in value because the land is close to the township has to be ignored, and that actually happens.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I know of a number of instances where a notional value has not been applied and, in discussion with the valuer concerned, the valuer has stated that it is really at his discretion; yet the land concerned is purely primary producing land and does not even have a residence or building of any sort on it. It has been used for no other purpose, but the notional valuation has been declined. I am just trying to determine the guidelines, and I think the Valuer-General has actually done that.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would ask the honourable member to draw to the attention of the Valuer-General those particular cases, perhaps when they arise. Obviously the general policy is to adopt the notional value across South Australia. If that is not happening, I would be very pleased if the honourable member would draw it to my attention. I would make sure that the Valuer-General is informed, or I would be quite happy for the honourable member to draw it to the attention of the Valuer-General directly.

Mr Darley: I accept the answer given by the Minister in that regard. Generally speaking, we endeavour to identify these across the State. In any system there is an opportunity for some to slip through. If any member of the public is concerned about that, I would be pleased if they contacted us, as has been done previously.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: That clarifies it very well. If the land is being used for primary producing purposes, it is valued on that basis, and that is fine. In relation to valuation and freeholding, I know of instances where a person wants to subdivide his property. A portion of the property is not being used, but a group in the community wishes to utilise that land for reforestation purposes and beautification of the area and, in particular, to control salinity.

The person who actually owns the land and who applies for subdivision is required, at significant cost, to freehold the portion which he is using or on which he is living. In virtually giving land for community purposes, that person is confronted with a cost of thousands of dollars. I should have thought that it would be reasonable for the Minister to grant an exemption to the freeholding charge in that situation, or to allow the perpetual lease to remain with the property on which the person lives and on which he operates an agricultural or horticultural undertaking, and to subdivide the remaining land for the benefit of the State.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will be prepared to look at the honourable member's proposal, provided that there are identifiable benefits to the community in terms of the examples he gave, namely, looking at reducing salinity, providing a revegetation program or whatever is identified.

Mr ATKINSON: In relation to the rate of objections to valuations (Program Estimates, page 328), I am mindful of the Minister's answer to the member for Price, but as I read the objection rate in the table on page 328, objections to valuations appear to have more than doubled between 1988-89 and 1990-91. Are we talking about two different things?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The figure that I gave referred to objections and complaints. The comparable figure for 1990-91 was .79 per cent, a much higher figure than .26 per cent. The .26 per cent relates only to objections, not to objections and complaints. I was including everything that someone might ask about a valuation, whether it be a complaint or a formal objection. In the figures we provided in the budget estimates documentation, we are talking only about an objection rate which, in fact, is lower than both the combined figures.

In terms of the combined objections and complaints, we still have a downward trend from .96 per cent to .74 per cent this year. I hope that that trend continues in the future, but it depends on the marketplace. People often do not like their valuations going up, although they are increasing their assets.

Mr ATKINSON: Supplementary to that, that means that the number of people making a formal objection, and thereby taking the risk that their valuation will increase as a result of the review, is increasing.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes and no. If you compare the figure with that of 1987-88, .12 per cent, it goes to .1 per cent in 1988-89, .29 per cent in 1989-90 and back to .26 per cent in 1990-91. I do not really think that statistically you could draw a trend from that, because it seems that the figure was a bit lower, has gone up and then dropped back. We do not have enough years of statistics to be able to make a definitive statement. I gave the total figures because they indicate a downward trend although, as the honourable member pointed out, just looking at the objections, you could not possibly draw a trend line from the data presented.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to the Program Estimates (page 327). One of the specific targets for 1990-91 was the conversion of termination shack leases to non-transferable life tenure. Are there any instances of shack leases being converted from life tenure to transferable tenure, and for what reasons would this be done?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, that has happened at Blanche Harbor. I am sure that the member for Murray-Mallee will be delighted to hear this information. There has been a fair amount of disinformation in relation to the Government's policy on shack sites, in particular in relation to the sites at Blanche Harbor. I am pleased to acknowledge that many shack lessees at Blanche Harbor will now have the opportunity to purchase the freehold of their sites, and that is now happening. I should like to remind the Committee that the decisions to allow freeholding of shack sites are not made on whim. The Government has been very aware of the potential environmental impact on continued shack site occupation, and freeholding decisions are always made in the context of the overall impact.

It is for this reason that a management plan plays an important role. I as Minister have not overturned any of the recommendations of that management plan and instituted large scale freeholding for any political reasons. Almost two-thirds of the lessees at Blanche Harbor will eventually be able to purchase the freehold of their sites. The only change which has occurred in terms of the policy I announced and which has been in place since the previous member for the area approached me on this issue is that I have consented to allow the remaining one-third of lessees to hold a 40-year lease.

What I have given to the Committee is the background to this business of freeholding, and that took place about three years ago. Some disinformation has been spread around the community, which suggested that for the one-third remaining lessees who had a terminating life tenure—and

it was for those people only—what had been agreed before I introduced the new shack policy—and I want to make that very clear—was that the remaining one-third of lessees who came under this category I have mentioned could hold a 40-year lease. I said that, because they had only a 40-year lease, they could sell or transfer that lease. I am not moving from the position that these leases will not be freeholded, because that is in fact the situation—they will not be freeholded but, where a 40-year lease exists, they may sell or transfer that lease.

The reason I have done that is that, before we introduced the new policy, I gave an undertaking along those lines to the then member for Stuart, the Hon. Gavin Keneally. I gave a commitment to the Mayor of Port Augusta also. I want to make it very clear that I have not treated any electorate more favourably than any other. I am, indeed, honouring my word and I would have thought that that might be acknowledged.

These shack areas will remain under Crown ownership. It is therefore mischievous to suggest that this decision somehow represents an under the counter freehold transaction. There is no freehold transaction for the remaining one-third of Blanche Harbor leases that have been granted a 40-year tenure, because that honours a commitment given before the new policy came into being in 1989.

Mr ATKINSON: Under the heading 'Administration of the State Land Titles System', page 326 of the Program Estimates states that one of the 1990-91 targets of this program was to develop strategies for the second and subsequent stages of the Torrens automated title system. The computerised title has now been operating for more than 12 months. What efficiencies have been achieved?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: In the 12-month period over 40 000 automated title records have been created on the new TAT system, over 3 000 of which have been issued as the result of the deposit of new strata plans. The remainder have been created as part of the behind the scenes conversion program, which is automating all existing strata titles. It is a huge undertaking, but I think the Committee will be pleased that we have now achieved a conversion of some 40 000 of these titles.

Under the TAT system the new strata titles are issued and returned to clients more quickly than we could do under the manual system. The system also facilitates subsequent dealings with all the automated titles, with registrations effected within a matter of days, so we are providing a much more streamlined service. TATS provides simple and effective searching of the register. Title searches are produced immediately at the Lands Titles Registration Office, while access to other title information is also provided from their own offices. Indeed, I believe that this has been a very significant move forward in providing a much more efficient service to the community.

Mr LEWIS: We have all heard of off balance sheet companies. I wish to draw attention to the off-budget-paper activities of the Government. This question relates to the urban projects fund. This morning we heard the member for Henley Beach talk about transactions which do not appear anywhere in the budget papers. These transactions related to his own electorate. He unashamedly pointed out that he was involved in these transactions for the benefit of his own constituents. For the benefit of the whole of the State, will the Minister provide the Committee with a list of the transactions in which the Urban Projects Fund has been involved during the past financial year, citing their precise location and the value of the land at valuation prior to the transaction, the sum derived from the sale and the disbursement of the proceeds of the sale to the parties

interested in the transaction and benefiting from it, and state the purpose for which the land was being used at the time the transaction occurred, that is, just before the transaction occurred, and what it is proposed to be used for after it has occurred?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am not aware of an Urban Projects Fund.

Mr LEWIS: Perhaps I can help the Minister.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Could the honourable member give the Committee the line to which this relates?

Mr LEWIS: It is mentioned in the Auditor-General's Report. The Urban Projects Fund was involved in the transfer of \$1.8 million worth of land, for instance, for the Port Adelaide City Council, and the Premier said yesterday that reference to any of those transactions would be found under the Lands Department. He told us to take our inquiry to this Committee and I do so.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for that. I would be pleased to provide the information with respect to this Urban Projects Fund in terms of Department of Lands involvement. I think the honourable member asked about six or seven questions. I will not give a blanket commitment to the Committee that I will provide all that information, because in my first few months as Minister of Lands I was asked a question by one of the Opposition members that would have tied up officers of the Department of Lands for several months doing nothing else but providing information. I have not had the opportunity of seeing that question in writing.

I will certainly provide as much information to the honourable member with respect to that question as is possible, but I will not give a blanket commitment to provide information that may indeed tie up the officers of the Department of Lands for several months while they find information before and after every single transaction in which the Department of Lands is involved.

Mr LEWIS: That is astonishing. This is not just finding out where cars have gone, or anything like that. These transactions involve huge sums of money and it is off budget papers. The only way the Opposition became aware of the new device that the Government is using was as a result of the Auditor-General's Report, and I find it very disturbing indeed that the Minister even suggests it is appropriate to withhold that information from the public. If the Government can use the public funds for purposes of engaging in transactions which result in raising money for the Government and put the taxpayer at risk, then it is good enough for the Government to be accountable for it. That is why the Auditor-General drew attention to it. I am not asking for the information right now, but I think it is outrageous that the Minister should suggest it should not be provided—

Mr FERGUSON interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: —and that she would not provide it. They are transactions involving the sale of substantial parcels of land, the like of which the member for Henley Beach raised, and it is hardly fair for him to interject on me in such a fashion.

Mr FERGUSON: I was just moving an extension of time.

Mr LEWIS: I take exception to that, because it clearly indicates that he thinks it is a joke.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would like very briefly—

Mr LEWIS: We will have to continue with this Committee after lunch.

Mr FERGUSON interjecting:

Mr LEWIS: I thought I had the call, Mr Chairman. If the member for Henley Beach wishes to take a point of order, I am quite happy for him to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee is being very kind. In this instance, the member for Murray-Mallee is kindly giving me permission to hear a point of order, and I congratulate the member for Henley Beach for his insistence that I take his point of order. I draw attention to the fact that it is now 1 p.m. As I understood it, there had been an agreement between the Minister and the Opposition—and I use the words 'the Opposition' because that is where the negotiations take place—that Lands would be concluded at 1 p.m. I understood from what the Minister said that there would be a response when the Minister had read the question in *Hansard*, but that she would not give a blanket answer to provide all that information. That is the Minister's response. The Chair or the Committee cannot question that response inasmuch as whether the Committee wants more or less information. It is now 1 p.m. Are there any further questions?

Mr LEWIS: Yes, Mr Chairman, there are.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is important to make clear that I am always prepared to give adequate information. I certainly, will provide any details of properties disposed of by the Department of Lands. I have now found from the Auditor-General's Report that the Urban Projects Fund is under the Special Deposits Account, and I believe that comes under the Department of Premier and Cabinet. To the extent that the honourable member's questions relate to the Department of Lands, I will be pleased to provide that information.

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

The CHAIRMAN: Have members of the Committee come to any agreement as to when the votes on the Proposed Payments for Lands and Minister of Lands Miscellaneous will be closed?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: During the break, I did not have the opportunity to discuss that matter with the Opposition, unless my colleagues on the Government side wish to ask any more questions. I have requested that they do not, in the interests of allowing as much discussion and as many questions as possible this afternoon. It is up to the Opposition how many more questions it has on the subject of Lands, but the Government does not have any more.

Mr LEWIS: It is apparent from page 123 of the Estimates of Payments that external consultants were employed to look at the environmental sustainability of shack sites. How many reports were done and when will those shack management reports be made public?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I ask Ms Stimson to inform the committee on the precise details that the honourable member requires.

Ms Stimson: The consultants at PPK have produced one report, but it comprises seven volumes. That report is now available for examination by members of the public. The Department of Lands and the Minister of Lands are convening a series of public meetings to enable shack holders to come to those meetings and ascertain the results of the report as it relates to their specific shack area. Also, during the past two weeks, all owners of unacceptable coastal shack sites within the State have received letters signed by the Minister outlining the result of the consultant's study as it applies to their shack area, enclosing a copy of the relevant section of the report and also attaching a schedule of the meetings and inviting the shack owners to attend those meetings.

Mr LEWIS: Will the Minister provide a copy of that report to the Parliamentary Library and to the Opposition?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would be pleased to accede to the honourable member's request.

Mr LEWIS: In relation to the Centre for Remote Sensing, when will the revised business plan be ready? The Opposition would like to know what revenue the Centre for Remote Sensing received from other State and Federal Government agencies which used its services for supplying information which was decoded by it, using, I understand, satellite imagery. We note that the owners of windmills, be they on streams or bores, are paying the windmill tax. We understand that their locations were discovered by remote sensing. We also note that submersible pumps on streams are not being taxed. That was the quaint occurrence which compelled us to seek the information that we now seek about the operations and payment being made for the services provided by the Centre for Remote Sensing.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I shall resist the temptation of talking about the windmill situation, as it comes under the area of Water Resources. I will be delighted to pursue that matter this evening. The honourable member may recall that, in my opening remarks, I talked about the Auditor-General's comments with respect to the Centre for Remote Sensing. However, if the honourable member did not have the information in front of him when I read it out, I am prepared to go through it again.

With respect to the Auditor-General's Report, since the centre has been in operation under the auspices of the Department of Lands, the overall annual deficit has been reduced by some \$254 000. However, as I acknowledged—and as was indicated by the Auditor-General in 1991—it still incurred a loss of \$512 000, half of which is subject to depreciation on equipment. The Department of Lands considers that the centre is unlikely in the current economic climate to increase its revenue to the targeted \$600 000. Moreover, the equipment at the centre does not have the capacity to output beyond this level without further capital investment.

While an increase in revenue to the \$600 000 level would cover annual salaries and contingencies of the centre, it would not cover the annual depreciation burden of some \$209 000. The draft business plan has already been prepared. In fact, the department also believes that the Centre for Remote Sensing will not in the foreseeable future become revenue neutral. I understand that they will be recommending to me, as the Government representative responsible for this area, that the centre be closed. These remote sensing functions, which contribute to value added product within the State's information system, should remain within the department, as I clearly outlined in my introductory statement. The balance, including those services used by other Government departments, would have to be obtained from interstate, as there is no private remote sensing industry in this State.

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

Environment and Planning, \$52 246 000
Minister for Environment and Planning, Miscellaneous,
\$1 445 000
Works and Services—Department of Environment and
Planning, \$6 970 000

Chairman:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson
Mr M.K. Brindal
The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore
Mr M.R. De Laine

Mr D.M. Ferguson
The Hon. D.C. Wotton

Witness:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan, Minister for Environment and Planning.

Departmental Advisers:

Dr I. McPhail, Director-General, Department of Environment and Planning.

Dr B. Morley, Director, Botanic Gardens.

Mr J. Hill, Director, Departmental Services.

Mr D. Ellis, Director, Planning.

Mr N. Johnson, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr C. Harris, Director, Environment Division.

Mr R. Stafford, Director, Environment Management Division.

Mr N. Newland, Director, Conservation Land Management.

Mr B. Leaver, Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Mr M. Madigan, Director, Waste Management Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed expenditures open for examination and invite the Minister to make an opening statement.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The wide sweep of issues encompassed by my portfolio continues to include many issues of vital and increasing interest to the South Australian community. The grim national economic climate has in no way dampened community concern that our native wildlife be protected; pollution be controlled; our precious resources be recycled; our coastlines be protected and conserved; and our heritage be protected and conserved.

Global environmental issues continue to press on Governments. Society is looking for leadership and answers on key global problems. Such problems include: the destruction of the ozone layer; the greenhouse effect; rising sea levels; and the degradation of agricultural lands. Demands increase for a better balance between economic growth and preservation of our heritage and lifestyle. Planning of our cities, landscapes and sustainable use of resources are issues of considerable public concern, all placing demands on Government for positive policies and programs.

I will quickly list some of these key programs. There are certain key programs that stand out above the general management of the portfolio, and they include the following: Environmental Protection Authority; proposed environmental protection legislation developing a proposal to integrate the various current approaches to pollution and waste management. These will be consolidated into a single Environmental Protection Act bringing together protective measures covering air and water quality, land contamination, noise controls and management of solid, liquid and other wastes.

Murray-Darling Basin: A continued significant input into the Murray-Darling Basin coordinating authorities. Strong South Australian involvement is ensuring proper attention is being given to the major Murray River issues, in particular, salinity management, riverine area conservation, and that includes the establishment of the Murray River National Park, and proper water quality protection, including addressing the question of nutrients.

The Planning Review: The Premier's planning review is proceeding on schedule. The '2020 Vision Ideals for Metropolitan Adelaide' was released in April and there has been widespread consultation with the community. The review

has now embarked on a concerted program to produce the strategic plan and is involving Government agencies in the endeavour. My department has very close formal and informal links with the Planning Review. My Director-General, the Director of the Planning Division (Mr David Ellis), Mr Phil Smith and Mr Colin Harris, Director of the Environment Division, are directly involved. Also, my department is a major source of basic information and data. Moreover, I believe the Planning Review is clearly a most important vehicle to understand and determine the community's requirements for the Adelaide of next century.

Mount Lofty Ranges Review: A planning process of major importance continues in order to protect Adelaide's vital water catchments in the Mount Lofty Ranges. It is intended to replace interim planning controls with a management plan and a new supplementary development plan which will specify controls on development, following a continued detailed implementation process.

Multifunction Polis: The Premier has announced that the MFP project will proceed and the Commonwealth has agreed to finance establishment of the MFP Corporation. An existing element to the project is the proposal to locate the new Commonwealth Environmental Protection Agency's centre for environmental research and related activities at Gillman. Detailed site assessment studies have been undertaken by the Kinhill Delfin joint venture. The work has been publicly released. An environmental impact statement is now being prepared by PPK Consultants to ascertain the basis on which the development will proceed. As well, an SDP is under preparation to encompass statements for general Adelaide MFP principles as well as detailed requirements for the Gillman core site.

Natural Resources Council: The Government is committed to establishing a natural resources council to provide integrated natural resource management advice. A white paper will shortly be produced on the establishment functions and structure of the proposed council. Meanwhile it is the Government's intention to set the body up on an interim basis. I will shortly announce its membership, and I hope to announce a distinguished community member as its chair in the near future.

Management of Remnant Native Vegetation: The Native Vegetation Act was proclaimed in April 1991. This Act shifts the conservation of remaining native vegetation away from a clearance application administration process to long-term management of remnant vegetation.

Consolidation of the national park system: The national park system at 16.7 million hectares is a major conservation asset. The Government will continue to include areas of high native conservation significance to the system based on recognition of the duty of this generation to make these critical and crucial long-term conservation land use decisions while there is still time. Major proposed additions include the Tallaringa lands west of Coober Pedy, the great salt lakes and the Strzelecki Desert.

Visitor use and enjoyment of parks: Under the Government's management policies the use of the parks for visitor enjoyment and tourism continues to expand. Since the introduction of revenue retention policies in parks some \$6 million has been raised and added to park budgets. This financial year \$2.75 million will be raised and spent on visitor programs. This includes the employment of over 70 extra staff as guides, seasonal rangers and information officers.

Wilderness protection: The Government is implementing its policy of preparing separate wilderness protection legislation. This legislation will provide for the identification and stringent protection of wilderness in South Australia.

The legislation is being prepared following wide community discussion and consultation.

I am pleased that most of the initial concerns that were expressed about this legislation have been dispelled, and I am grateful for the close involvement of the Australian Institute of Mining in formulating an acceptable approach.

Pastoral management: The administration of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act has been transferred to the Department of Environment and Planning from the Department of Lands. This will allow for more efficient use of scientific resources and the complementary management of the conservation based pastoral management system with the management of other outback lands administered by the department.

I am delighted by the positive reaction of the pastoral community to the initial contacts made by Mr Nicholas Newland which are to be followed up by Dr McPhail and Mr Newland next month.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I note that the staffing in the Minister's office has been or is about to be increased from 12 to 15. Information may have been given previously, but I would like a specific reply on the responsibilities of each person and which of the officers were appointed under the Public Service Act and which were ministerial appointments. I would be quite happy for the Minister to take that on notice.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would be delighted to provide that information. I must say that when I saw the increase from 12 to 15 staff in the estimates, I was amazed, because we have had 15 people and I think that has probably been an oversight. There has been no increase in my ministerial office; indeed, we decreased the number from 15 to 14.6, which will not show up until next year. Within the office there are an overall office secretary, two correspondence clerks, four administrative officers, one appointment secretary, one receptionist, one senior administrative officer, one press secretary, a clerk to the press secretary, a parliamentary clerk, a ministerial secretary, and three ministerial officers.

This matter was raised this morning, and there was an overt criticism. I want to put very clearly on the record that I have probably one of the busiest ministerial offices in this Government. Indeed, I spoke of this to my ministerial counterparts in other States (and I shared this with the Committee this morning, but I am aware that we have three new Opposition members here now). My ministerial counterpart in New South Wales, Mr Tim Moore, who is the Environment Minister and who has no other portfolio, was absolutely amazed that I could run an office with 15 people. He could not quite believe it. Again, I would like to put on record that in my ministerial office both the public servants and other ministerial appointees work over and above the call of duty.

I am very privileged to have one of the most effective and efficient ministerial offices in this State, if not in this country and, if further information is needed, I am certainly prepared to provide some of the hours some of these people work, over and above the call of duty. I believe we run an effective and efficient office. When we consider the huge range of portfolio responsibilities, the enormous amount of correspondence that comes into my office and the huge number of speeches, appointments and everything else that is carried out, we would probably find that it is a model for other Government departments.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I might just indicate to the Minister that, while the Opposition very much supports the work of the Botanic Gardens, we will not be asking any questions of the officer from the Botanic Gardens.

I refer to Program Estimates, page 298, where, under issues and trends, mention is made of efficient deployment of resources to facilitate effective management of areas dedicated as national and conservation parks and it is stated that high visitation in parks continues the demand for public facilities and maintenance needs in parks. I am aware of an article that appeared in the *Advertiser* the day after the budget was brought down, which suggested that funding for the State's national parks had been maintained. Does the Minister confirm, however, that some parks have experienced a 17.5 per cent reduction in revenue, and is the Minister also aware of the concern in the community of a number of people? I would refer particularly to scientists from the University of South Australia who have indicated their concern about the current expenditure in national parks. They also want to see more scientific investigation and experiment going into the management programs.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As I indicated in my introductory speech, there has been a significant increase in visitation to parks, and the honourable member would be aware of, and I know he supports, the Government's policy on charging people for entry into a significant number of parks right throughout the State. The desert park system operates for our arid parks in the north of the State and we are charging for parks within Adelaide itself. All these have indicated an overwhelming commitment by the community to pay what are very reasonable entrance fees. The reason for that is that the money goes directly back into providing the facilities that the honourable member mentioned for visitors to our park system. I think the honourable member also talked about a decrease of 17.5 per cent in revenue to some parks.

I am not aware of any decrease in revenue allocated to any of the parks. In a moment I will ask the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service to respond specifically, but I think it is important for me to remind the Committee again that we are talking about raising \$2.75 million this year through our visitation to parks programs and that money will be directly allocated to include the appointment of more than 70 extra staff as guides, seasonal rangers and information officers. It is appropriate at the beginning of this line of questioning to put clearly on the public record that, notwithstanding that we are in the middle of a very serious recession, we have made a commitment as a Government, and I have made a commitment as the Minister, that we will maintain the quality of management of our parks in terms of rangers, other park staff and improving the facilities that are available for visitors.

It is vitally important that we do that, and I would hope there would be due recognition from all members of Parliament that, notwithstanding decline and decrease in other areas, we are determined to press ahead with improving the quality of park management, because one can always improve on that.

The honourable member also referred to the whole issue of enhancing and furthering scientific investigation. He may well be aware that, in the announcement about separate wilderness legislation, I made it very clear that those areas that will have a separate wilderness category will be identified for the quality of biological diversity in those areas, among other criteria. We will certainly not be preventing research from taking place. We will be ensuring that people who carry out that research will do so with the full knowledge and support of the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

We have programs through a number of our budget lines for supporting research to the extent that we can. We work very closely with other institutions with respect to our

breeding programs for our rare and endangered species. We work very closely with the zoo, for example, on the programs that are carried out at Monarto. I want to make sure that a balance is provided to the Committee in terms of the commitment, funding and ongoing staffing for what is now the largest area of land on mainland Australia that comes under a national parks and wildlife classification. This has presented specific management issues, if you like, and I believe that the section of the department responsible for the management of parks has responded magnificently to meeting those challenges.

It is important, right at the beginning of this consideration of our budget, to make sure that those comments are very clearly on the public agenda. Having said that, I now ask Mr Bruce Leaver, the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, to perhaps flesh out some of the specific areas that the member for Heysen has highlighted in his question.

Mr Leaver: The reduction in revenue which, of course, through our arrangements means a reduction in resources available to the area where that revenue is collected, has mainly occurred over the past financial year in the South-East. Obviously, this was a result of the depression, with families having less money to spend when they visit the park areas—in particular, the cave areas—and the tendency of visitors to opt for the cheaper range of facilities and services rather than the more adventurous and expensive ones.

Through that period there was a significant drop in revenue. I might add that that has picked up, according to recent reports from my officers. The level of tourism use through the South-East and the parks system there has picked up demonstrably. Bookings are now fairly healthy. For example, the increasing use of the Bool Lagoon education programs has resulted in their being booked out for some months. The sort of downturn that we saw last year, because of the depression, hopefully is picking up again.

The impact of the recession has been fairly patchy. For example, Cleland's revenue has been down modestly, but Kangaroo Island has continued to expand significantly as a very popular visitor destination. I guess that is related to the easier access arrangements regarding Kangaroo Island for the visiting public, the general marketing of Kangaroo Island and its increased popularity as a national and, indeed, international tourist destination. With respect to revenue arrangements, if one area of the State is really picking up in the parks system, it is Kangaroo Island. This year we expect to receive between \$750 000 and \$800 000, every cent of which will go back into those parks to provide expanded visitor facilities and services.

Turning to the comments about increased scientific resources, I do not think there would be a park director around the world who would not put a case for increased resources to study and understand the natural resources and the operation of the ecosystems in our parks. One trend in South Australia over the past four or five years has been the increased qualifications of base level ranger staff. Rangers traditionally came up through the ranks from the park assistant type background, but all rangers today have tertiary qualifications. There has been a commensurate restructuring of their jobs and of the degree of delegation from what was previously handled through central areas of administration, so the ranger in the field today operates at a far more senior and far more delegated level than previously.

All newly appointed rangers have tertiary qualifications, and those who have been in the system for a few years have been encouraged and, indeed, assisted to obtain tertiary qualifications. Whilst I, like all national parks directors,

would like extra people with scientific qualifications, nevertheless the general level of scientific expertise of our field staff has risen significantly over the past few years.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Supplementary to all of that, the question I asked related to Government revenue. I did not say anything about revenue resulting from entrance fees to national parks. Has there been a 17.5 per cent reduction in revenue from the Government in some parks in the National Parks and Wildlife Service?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am sorry, I misunderstood the question, but the honourable member used the word 'revenue', and I understood 'revenue' as being money that is raised. I think the honourable member means an allocation from the budget to the operations. I will ask the Director-General to comment on that question.

Dr McPhail: The figures in relation to the allocation of funds to each of the divisions of the department, as members will understand, comprise a range of headings, some of which vary from year to year in their impact. One of the areas of greatest impact this year relates to the purchase of plant and equipment, which varies, particularly with motor vehicles, trucks, and so on, in terms of Government rules, as to when those items are replaced. In this financial year we have a significant drop in the outlays we will have to make in terms of the replacement of plant and equipment. In the following year we can expect that to pick up again, as I say, simply by the application of the standard rules on vehicle and plant replacement.

In terms of other allocations, members will have noticed with respect to salaries, wages and related payments that there is a slight increase in relation to the parks service. I will be happy at some other time to provide the details, but there are those variations, which are intrinsic to the system, which create those apparent fluctuations from one year to the next.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: When inflation is taken into account, I would have thought there was a decrease rather than an actual increase.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Is the honourable member referring to program 6, Flora, Fauna and Park Management (Estimates of Payments, page 111) and the increase from the actual 1990-91 figures of \$11,808 million to \$12,188 million? With my mathematics, that indicates an increase over and above what we actually spent last year, which was over and above what was proposed and voted. It seems to me there is an increase. The Director-General was trying to delineate an area where there might well have been a decrease, and that might be what the honourable member was referring to. There is certainly an increase over all.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I would be happy for the Minister to take the following question on notice also. Will she provide a comparison of staffing levels in the national parks system between this year and the previous five years? Given the way the report has been prepared for the years 1988-89 and 1989-90, it is impossible for the general public to recognise the actual staffing numbers in national parks, now that they all seem to be lumped under the Department of Environment and Planning. Further, is the Minister aware of the concern being expressed relating to the time taken to replace rangers who have been moved to other appointments?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I must say that the day-to-day management of the parks system is the responsibility of the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and I am happy to refer that question to him. However, it is important to note that for some time an attempt has been made to suggest that, somehow, we are not staffing the parks adequately and are cutting back. I want to make very

clear that there has been a reorganisation—which I should have thought would be welcomed by members of the Opposition—to get park employees, from ranger level to administrators, out into the parks system.

We probably have one of the leanest administrative units administering our parks system from offices if you like. We have the most evolved management structure in Australia. It might be useful for Mr Leaver to pursue that question and to address the issue of the time taken for rangers to be replaced or for new rangers to be appointed in some of our parks.

Mr Leaver: We recruit our rangers from an eligibility list. From time to time, as the numbers on that list draw down as a result of filling vacancies, we recruit from the job marketplace and put suitable people in priority order on to a list. It depends on the quality of the applicants, but it normally varies between seven and 10 people. As the list draws down, a new list is taken up. The speed at which we fill a ranger vacancy is measured only by whether the list is still current or is in the process of being reset.

There is a distinct chance of delays in filling vacancies, when managers have been given targets to work within their budgets. Often, they will use up resources earlier in the financial year, depending on their visitor pressures, and if they use those resources earlier they must make savings later, because at the end of the year, like all of us, they must live within their budget. It is quite commonly part of a planned strategy to hold vacancies in order to meet budgetary commitments. Normally, we allocate staff resources at a higher level than that at which the total staffing allocation of that area of the department is set, because there is always a delay in filling a vacancy, and so on.

Managers may hold vacancies from time to time in order to meet their budgets. Often, that is done on a strategic basis by over-filling vacancies when times are busy. It usually depends totally on the unit of management concerned, because they have the devolved responsibility to manage those budgets.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I have some information for the honourable member, which gives me an opportunity to explain the figures. On 1 July 1987 there were 239.4 equivalents, which included public servants and weekly paid people employed under a salaries and wages category. On 1 July 1988 there were 241.4 equivalents; 1 July 1989, 270.5; 1 July 1990, 272.5; and on 1 July this year, 271.8. The difference from last year to this year indicates an apparent decrease of about .7 of a person. That relates to straight salaries and wages employees.

As well as that, we have the number of field staff paid under that system as well as under the General Reserves Trust, and the honourable member would be aware that we have made a public commitment to put that money into facilities and salaries. I will give the grand total from last year to this year, and the honourable member may feel that that is adequate. On 1 July 1990 we had a total of paid people of 244.2 full-time equivalents. These are people out in the parks. On 1 July this year we had 254.8, which is an increase of 10.6 field staff from last year.

That might make a little more sense in analysing where we are moving, in terms of the commitment to ensure the proper and ongoing management of our parks system. If the honourable member requires any further information regarding this matter, I will be happy to provide it.

Mr FERGUSON: During last year's Estimates Committee, I praised what I call one of Adelaide's gems, the Botanic Gardens. Very few cities in the world have such botanic gardens. How many people have visited the Bicentennial Conservatory since it opened, particularly this year? When

I visited the conservatory, I noted that there was a souvenir shop at each end. What are the sales in the souvenir shops, and how much revenue has been generated by souvenirs?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The latest figures show that we had passed the magical half million visitation figure. As at 16 September, 500 771 people have visited the conservatory. The revenue from admissions from November 1989 to July 1991 has been \$663 477, and the revenue from admissions for the 1990-91 financial year was \$302 847. I do not have the figures in front of me for souvenirs, but I will ask the Director of the Botanic Gardens to provide further information.

Dr Morley: I do not have the precise figure for the honourable member, but I will obtain it subsequently. The revenue from sales in the conservatory souvenir shop was more than \$20 000 for the past 12 months.

Mr FERGUSON: As a supplementary question, would there be a net profit figure? There would be some payment to the staff of the conservatory: do you have an idea of the figure?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Is the honourable member talking about the souvenir profits separately, or the total?

Mr FERGUSON: In total.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: In relation to the figure of \$663 477 that I gave for the period from 1989 to 1991, or the one financial year, \$302 847, the honourable member is requesting information about how much of that is profit. I would have to ask the Director, but it is my understanding that we do not actually separate out all those figures. However, the Director may well tell me that that is not the case.

Dr Morley: Yes, there is an element of profit in that figure. The problem with interpreting it as a profit at this stage is that it has to be set aside to cover running costs, and in the longer term there are capital cyclical maintenance costs which also will have to be met in 15 to 20 years time. So, what appears to be profit today should really be being invested for the future for that long-term cyclical maintenance.

Mr FERGUSON: What are the plans for the replacement of the car park at the Botanical Gardens?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: This has become an area of great interest to the general community of South Australia. Following Cabinet approval, the board of the Botanic Gardens has commissioned Maunsell Pty Limited to make recommendations on traffic and parking management within Botanic Park. Traffic within Botanic Park has increased, as I am sure all members would be aware, particularly since the completion of the bicentennial conservatory. I think those figures would indicate a huge increase in visitation to the gardens in general, but specifically the attraction has been the tropical conservatory.

The commission follows earlier studies and is to address the character of the park while improving visitor amenity and safety. We have actually had public comments on the Maunsell report. I understand there have been about 34 submissions on the report and the proposals, and that submissions are now being considered by the board of the Botanic Gardens. It might be useful for the Director to add any information to those comments.

Dr Morley: I can add little more than the Minister has already explained, other than to say that the public consultation process has provided additional information and I anticipate (and I am guessing a little now) certain slight modifications to the original proposal which will take into consideration public concerns. That final project will then be considered by the board and, depending on the board's view, that will be submitted to the Minister for consideration by her and subsequently, we hope, Cabinet.

Mr FERGUSON: I now want to turn to the Wilpena project which you, Sir, would well remember was fiercely debated in the Lower House. What is the state of the project, and has Ophix been able to obtain finance for the development?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As the honourable member would know, approval has been given for the project to proceed. In the intervening period we have seen a fairly serious and severe recession. I have to say that the project has not at this stage actually commenced. I believe that is rather sad because, as members would know, it was my concern that we should move ahead with this project, because I did not believe that we could sustain the degradation that is currently taking place, and has taken place over many years, around the sensitive mouth of Wilpena Pound. That degradation continues while facilities that have been in existence for many years remain there.

It is my fervent hope that we can ensure that we move those facilities three kilometres away from the mouth of the pound and that, at the very least, the replacement of the existing camping and medium to low course accommodation can be provided in what was the Wilpena Station and is now part of the Wilpena National Park. Mr Bruce Leaver, as Director of the national parks, has the day-to-day responsibility for this area. As you would recall, Mr Chairman, the legislation that passed through both Houses gave him that responsibility which was delegated from me. I ask Mr Leaver if he would comment on any other aspects raised by the honourable member.

Mr Leaver: My understanding of the status of the financial structure of the project is that the debt component of the project is secure but that the equity component remains to be finalised; there is no indication at this stage as to when that will be finalised.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: I would like to question the Minister on the Wilpena project, and I refer her to page 86 of the Auditor-General's Report which, under the heading 'Flora, Fauna and Park Management', refers to reimbursements of service charges from the Wilpena lessee. The reimbursement in 1990 was \$72 000 and in 1991 it is anticipated to be \$48 000. Can the Minister indicate the components of the service charges and the reason for a reduction in the current year?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That is a fairly detailed question. I can ask one of my officers to provide the honourable member with the answer to the question relating to the reason for the reduction from \$72 000 in 1990 to \$48 000 in 1991. I ask Mr Hill to provide that information.

Mr Hill: The Auditor-General's Report compares actual outgoings for one financial year with another financial year. Those numbers are therefore at the mercy of the cash flow that occurs and not necessarily the rates that are levied. An account which might have been due for payment on 30 June but which was paid on 1 July can have that effect. There has been no reduction in the service charges. The elements of the service charges relate to electricity generation, rubbish removal and the provision of water.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That is the existing Wilpena lessee.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: I understand that.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am sure the honourable member did, but I am not sure that everyone else did.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: Is the Minister satisfied that the lessee of the new site, Ophix, has complied fully with all the terms of the lease?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That matter has been raised in the past. I am of the opinion that that is the case, but I will

ask Mr Leaver if he would like to answer the honourable member's question.

Mr Leaver: In regard to the delay in the implementation of the process, some conditions of the lease required certain action in the preparation of certain planning documentation within 12 months. Following the passing in Parliament of the enabling legislation, the timeframe for the production of that planning documentation, together with deadlines as to when the drafts had to be submitted, was extended to date from the passing of the Bill. To date, all those deadlines have been met, and I expect that planning documentation to be submitted by the amended time.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: As a supplementary question, I think that, as that environmental maintenance plan is required by law to be laid before Parliament, the Committee is entitled to know what time extensions were sought in respect of each of the requirements and what time extensions have been granted. In addition, it is my understanding that the terms of the lease require the lessee to maintain, replace, repair and rebuild the demised premises in good and substantial order and that the heritage buildings on the site have not been repaired or kept in order and are in fact in a very serious state of deterioration and degradation. What knowledge does the Minister have of this situation and what does she intend to do about it? In addition, what time extensions were granted for the statutory requirements of laying before Parliament the environmental maintenance plan and other documentation?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Quite a number of questions are contained in the honourable member's separate question, and quite a deal of information is required. I will ask Mr Leaver, the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, to provide the information where he has it readily to hand. Any subsequent information that is required will be provided to the Committee by 4 October.

Mr Leaver: The only extension in time was, in fact, in the obligations under the lease. The time-frame set out in that legislation, in a statutory sense, is being complied with and will be complied with. As I said earlier, the interim deadlines for the submission of documentation have all been met, and I can see no reason why statutory obligations in relation to tabling those documents should not also be met.

In relation to the condition of the leased premises, the main area of concern is the buildings from the previous Wilpena Station site, some of which are of major historic significance. The lease obligations are to stabilise those buildings. This year there has been one project of stabilisation, and a follow-up project is to commence shortly. The lessee has been told in writing that, if the stabilisation is not up to an acceptable standard after the projected project, the security guarantee that has been lodged for the project after the signing of the lease will be called upon to ensure that the buildings are stabilised to a proper standard.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I think that addresses the concern that the honourable member raised about the ability we have to ensure the ongoing protection of those buildings. It very clearly puts into perspective that it is something which we consider to be important; it is happening, and we will ensure that it continues to happen.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: Minister, I asked the Director to answer my supplementary question about the extension of time for fulfilling the lessee's obligations under the lease. I had asked what was the extension of time, and what was the date now given to the lessee. I do not believe I received an answer to that question.

Mr Leaver: I apologise for the confusion. In my mind, which could well be confused, I thought a question was

being asked about extension in time under the lease, and that there was then a supplementary question referring to any extension of time under the statutory obligations. Under the lease, the extension in time was to date from 12 months from the passing of the enabling legislation. Any extensions in time under that enabling legislation have neither been asked for nor given.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: I want to make sure that I understand what Mr Leaver is saying: that the extension of time was from 12 months of the passing of the enabling legislation. Will Mr Leaver tell the Committee precisely for what purpose that extension of time has been given?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I ask Mr Leaver to answer that.

Mr Leaver: It was given to enable the completion of the environmental maintenance plan, the landscape plan, the recreation interpretation plan, and the historic interpretation plan.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: In accordance with the legislation, that would mean that those plans would be tabled before Parliament rises at the end of this year, that being 12 months and a week or so from the passing of the legislation?

Mr Leaver: That is correct.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: I refer to page 87 of the Auditor-General's Report relating to statement of sources and application of funds for the year ended 30 June 1991. Can the Minister provide the Committee with details under the heading 'Special Deposit Working Account' where the application of funds for firefighting costs has increased dramatically from \$162 000 in 1990 to \$831 000 in 1991? Similarly, ozone protection costs have increased from \$98 000 in 1990 to \$369 000. Does that mean that more funds are being drawn from that special deposit working account? What is the reason for the significant increase in both cases?

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

Mr Hill: The firefighting costs are a reflection of the costs of fire suppression and are, in fact, funded. The reason that they appear under the deposit working account is that, these days, because of the way in which the system works, the actuary's office has a role in funding those costs, so that they will simply reflect the fire experience in the two years.

Mr Stafford: The reason for the increase in the ozone protection costs drawn from that deposit account are along the lines that legislation has only recently been introduced and, as the section has grown and full implementation of that work has been put into place, the associated costs with administering that legislation have increased. The anticipated expenditure to be drawn from that deposit account in this financial year will be somewhat less than the \$369 000 drawn last year, because in the last year's figure there were requirements for computing equipment and various other facilities to be put into place which will now last the duration of that particular piece of legislation, and will not require further expenditure of that nature during this financial year or in the outstanding three years before the use of all those materials is completely phased out.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 297 of the Program Estimates under the heading 'State Herbarium' where it states that a book on the plants of the Adelaide Hills has been completed. What is the cost of producing that book and, if it is to be sold, what returns are expected from its sale?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I ask Mr Morley to answer that.

Dr Morley: As with the production of other identification manuals, most of which are normally published by the Government Printer through the auspices of the South Aus-

tralian Handbook Committee, they are produced not for commercial gain but for community benefit. The illustrated book of plants of the Adelaide Hills is one such manual, but it is a more popular work (although scientific) intended for the lay person rather than the specialist. Accordingly, preparing the illustrations and the text for the book was part of the normal routine work of the State herbarium. The two staff members involved also put a great deal of their own time into the illustrations and the text.

However, unlike handbooks, this book was published commercially by Kangaroo Press, thus no publication costs, which had to be met by the Government or by the public, were involved. The arrangement has been that the two authors agreed to forgo any royalties and any profits go to Kangaroo Press, the company having underwritten the cost of publication of the book.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to Program Estimates (page 293). What sort of proposals are being looked at for the redevelopment of the Hackney bus depot site when it is vacated?

Dr Morley: The board of the Botanic Gardens has engaged a consultant to help it prepare landscape proposals for the rehabilitation of the STA site, and that process is still taking place. So far as I am aware, the actual time of vacation of the STA depot by the STA has not yet been stated. I have not been informed directly. However, it is hoped that landscape proposals will be available for the Minister prior to that time, whenever it occurs. I cannot say much more other than to say that public consultation has occurred on the ways in which the Goodman building may be used for community purposes. Of course, that would need to be integrated with any landscape proposal for the STA site. I think it is true to say that when the site is rehabilitated it will be done in such a way as to be an extension of the Botanic Gardens, which will then have a frontage on to Hackney Road.

Mr De LAINE: Program Estimates (page 293) refers to community demand for home garden advisory services. I believe these days people's lots are much smaller than they were years ago and they seem to be planting fewer fruit trees and vegetables, which obviously created a great need for home garden advisory services. What sort of assistance does the community seek now?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The honourable member is correct in his analysis: the advisory service has provided excellent advice to the community in the past. It is part of a number of services we offer across government. The advisory service offered through the Engineering and Water Supply Department is also a complementary service in terms of not what to plant but how to maintain and water plants and to ensure that the species planted are appropriate. There are a number of these facilities across government. However, whether the community's demand for these services is changing is an interesting point that should be pursued.

Dr Morley: Some years ago, the Department of Agriculture and the Botanic Gardens services amalgamated. In fact, we now employ one of the ex-agriculture advisory officers who deals with fruit and vegetables. There is still quite a healthy demand for fruit and vegetable advisory work. Last year, we serviced approximately 24 000 advisory calls by personal visits, telephone calls or letters. This year, we are seeking to improve our PABX telephone system so that we can stack incoming telephone calls. We have a limited staff; we are in recession and obviously—as Mr Leaver said previously—we could do with more staff. However, we must make do with what we have, and we are seeking to improve our telephone handling system. From the information I get from members of the public, it seems that they continue to value the advisory services provided by the Botanic Garden.

I know the board is delighted to be able to provide those services through the Government.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would like to emphasise the comments made by the Director. The fact that we have made money available to upgrade the telephone service might overcome some of the problems that have existed in the past and provide more access to the community to be able to get the information it requires from a service that is one the community wishes to see continue.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the retail outlet at the Botanic Gardens, which sells souvenirs, close down?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: When I was last at the Botanic Garden I went to that charming shop, which is in a beautiful heritage cottage, and if I remember I purchased quite a few items. I certainly hope that it will not close down. I believe it will remain open and that it will continue to provide that quality of service for Adelaideans and for visitors. The Director assures me that the shop will continue in operation.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Since it is eight years since the Mount Lofty area was ravaged by fire, and 3½ years since a development was announced as one of the most exciting developments that South Australia would see and as it was intended that the first stage of the development would be completed by March 1990, what is the present situation? How much Government money has been spent on the development up to now?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As the honourable member is aware, the Government initiated tenders in 1986 for a project to be undertaken on a site at Mount Lofty. The Government has continued to reiterate the position that it holds, that it is to be a private sector project, although the Government will contribute a serviced site, which will be its contribution and equity to the project. As the honourable member knows, that has planning approval. I believe there is an effort to ensure that investors are interested in the project.

The honourable member would acknowledge that we are in a recession and that there are not investors walking around the State—or indeed anywhere in the world—with pockets full of money wanting to invest in projects. Therefore, a good deal of negotiation must occur and a selling of the project by the proponents of this development. It is important to recognise that no planning approval has been given as yet. The project will require an environmental impact statement. That needs to be pursued and put in place. When the Government is satisfied, and an experienced development company is prepared to commit itself substantially to the project, action will be taken to initiate a newer EIS for the revised proposal and to proceed with this development.

I believe that this project has the potential for being an extremely exciting development in South Australia. There are a number of exciting proposals for that site including an omnimax theatre, which would have a very significant educational component for school students in South Australia. The type of things proposed there will cater for a wide range of people from school students going there as part of an educational experience right through to elderly citizens going to have afternoon tea. This project is certainly something I want to see proceed.

I had to take some very hard decisions very early in my term as Minister for Environment and Planning with respect to a cable car proposal and other matters. I have taken those hard decisions, and I believe they were the right decisions. I believe that as we come out of the recession we will see investment funds being made available for the project to proceed. I look forward to providing the kind of assistance that my department is noted for providing in

South Australian that is fair assistance and information on any proposed developments in South Australia.

With the announcement of the successful developer for the redevelopment of the Patawalonga and environs in Glenelg, I think that this is a turnaround in terms of the stationary situation we have had over the past, say, six to eight months in South Australia. I feel very positive and optimistic that we will see investment in projects not only like Glenelg but also like the Mount Lofty Ranges redevelopment which, as the honourable member says, is crying out for redevelopment following the devastation of that area by the bushfires. I believe the same applies to the Wilpena project, and there are a number of other projects not the least of which are the marina developments around the coastline of South Australia and a particular project on Kangaroo Island.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Page 299 of the Program Estimates states that one of the issues and trends is increasing community concern about air pollution. Page 289 of the Program Estimates shows a reduction in staffing, and the Minister is aware of my concern in regard to this matter because of a question I asked in the House last week. How many inspectors are at present actually in the field? I understand that there are some 5 000 exempted premises under the CFC legislation. How many inspectors carry out that work specifically?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask the Director, Mr Stafford, if he will answer the question, then I will make some comments.

Mr Stafford: The number of inspectors looking at air quality complaints as distinct from CFCs is three; and the number of full-time inspectors in the CFC area is two.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Supplementary to that, does the Minister feel that that number of staff is satisfactory?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Of course I would like to see more staff in every one of these sections of my department, but I think we need to put this into some sort of context. The honourable member raised this matter in the House last week.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The Minister suggested that I raise it today.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That is right. I think it is important to look at the kind of role and function we are moving towards and that is, as I said in my introductory comments, that we are looking to establish an environment protection authority under a consolidated Environment Protection Act. We have made it very clear to the community that we are looking at both a beneficiary-pays and polluter-pays method of moving forward. We are certainly looking at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of some of these units. As part of the reason for establishing a much more modern response to the quite legitimate requests of the community for enhanced environmental protection, we are looking to establish this environment protection authority.

It is important that the honourable member recognises that it is not always easy to provide as many resources in every area as one wishes to, particularly in an economic recession. I remind the honourable member of his own Party's commitment to slash 9 000 public servants from the public sector right across the board. It seems a little interesting to me that the honourable member will obviously now go through every single section in every department and ask, 'Why are you cutting?'—and we are not cutting at all in this case—or, 'Why are you not increasing public servants in these areas?' against a background of his own Party saying that it will cut 9 000 people from the public sector.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: There is a reduction in staff in the air quality area.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: There is a potential reduction of one person, and that is being looked at at the moment in the department by the Director-General.

Dr McPhail: The present staff in the Air Quality Branch is unchanged from previous years. A staff of 14 is funded under recurrent, and a staff of 4.1 is funded under the deposit account. Under the deposit account we have, essentially, the management of CFCs, and that was always intended, from the time the legislation was brought into Parliament, to be self-funding. There are two inspectors there backed up by 2.1 staff in the office. We have three air quality inspectors and nine staff backing them up, and this includes a strong scientific and technological component that is required in this area.

In support of what the Minister was saying about the evolution of the environment protection authority, which is at the moment undergoing public discussion, we are looking towards an integrated pollution management approach and, although we will still have separate inspectors, we see an element of multi-skilling in the inspectorates. We are certainly looking towards issuing to industries a single licence instead of a range of licences, as we have under the separate legislation. We hope that when they are visited by staff of the department they would be looked at over the whole range of their licence conditions.

As well, the department has a range of inspectorate activities over more areas than simply pollution, for instance, in the flora and fauna area and in the planning area. We have a loose integration of those under the leadership of David Barrington in the National Parks and Wildlife area, and he is one of the most expert officers there is in the management of inspections and the conduct of investigations and prosecutions. I believe we are already bringing and will bring to bear the combined resources and experience of the total inspectorate of the agency into each of the areas, and we see that as being a highly efficient use of those resources.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: What action does the Minister intend to take to alleviate the present problems being experienced in relation to buildings such as the House of Chow, Somerset Hotel and Gawler Chambers? Does the Minister intend taking any action prior to the completion of the heritage review, or will the unsatisfactory conditions continue?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for giving me the opportunity to put this on public record. I have had a number of meetings with the Adelaide City Council because, as members would be aware, there is a very big commitment, particularly by newly elected council members, to ensure that the Adelaide City Council moves to get into place what we are calling a 'townscape' heritage plan. I have totally supported this since my appointment as the Minister for Environment and Planning, responsible for heritage.

It is interesting to look at the House of Chow and the Somerset Hotel, because both those buildings were given demolition approval by the Adelaide City Council. I will deal with Gawler Chambers separately. I am delighted that the media are present, because it is one of those very relevant pieces of information that, for some strange reason, does not seem to see the light of day. The Adelaide City Council has given approval for demolition of both these buildings. Having done that, it then calls on the Minister responsible for heritage to come in on some sort of white charger to save the buildings, notwithstanding that, in the case of both these buildings, the heritage committee has not

recommended that those buildings be placed on the heritage register.

What am I to do as Minister responsible for heritage in South Australia? Two options present themselves. Am I to carry out my responsibilities under the Heritage Act, knowing that at the same time there is a comprehensive and thorough review of that Act, about which I am committed to doing something when that is possible, or do I just tear up the current legislation and say that, notwithstanding the heritage committee, I will make my own decision over and above the decisions that have been made by the correct authority that should be making the decision, that is, the Adelaide City Council?

The other matter that I must point out is that, if I were to take that kind of action, can members of the Committee imagine the massive financial liability that I would be putting on the people of South Australia? What I would be doing is to say that we are prepared to pick up the financial responsibility and liability for those decisions. I do not believe any responsible member of this place or of the community would want me to do that. That is one side of things.

With respect to the Adelaide townscape, I want to make clear that I have established a working party, of which David Ellis is the Chair, which is made up of developers, and representatives of the Adelaide City Council and a number of heritage groups, including the Aurora Action Group and the National Trust. The working party has now met three times and has resolved some of the issues. A general picture is emerging of a high degree of consensus about the residential areas, but there is strong opposition from the business community in the core part of the city and in the frame.

The City Planner has drawn up a model for townscape provisions in the city plans, which is now being worked through in more detail. I have consistently called on the Adelaide City Council to move forward as quickly as possible with its townscape plan, and I am delighted that the honourable member obviously feels as strongly about this issue as I do. I am hoping that this public discussion of the issues will give a very clear signal to the City of Adelaide that we also want to ensure on a bipartisan basis that we move forward to preserve and protect our heritage, particularly where it is eligible for the State heritage list, but also to protect and preserve the townscape qualities and general amenity of various precincts of the city.

For the edification of the Committee, I want to say that this second level of heritage protection will not mean that people cannot demolish anything, but that there can be modifications to some buildings, changes to others and, in some situations, demolition. What is critical is that the ambience of the area—the whole quality of that precinct or townscape—is preserved and protected by whatever changes are agreed to by the City of Adelaide. I am determined that we will get it right. I think we are approaching the end of the proverbial tunnel, but there are some other relevant issues about the heritage review. The honourable member mentioned the heritage review and I have released documents on that, but I ask the Director-General to speak briefly about that heritage review.

Dr McPhail: The heritage review is operating in close association with the planning review, as necessary, particularly in terms of listing as it has effect upon development approvals. The heritage review has been wrestling with the issue of local lists and a State list. Until now we have operated the heritage list on a scientific objective basis, which has been listing items that have been seen as of particular State importance. However, we have a strong

community thrust that other buildings that are important to local communities should be protected, rather than preserved.

In the near future I believe we will be able to come up with a process whereby local councils, following adequate heritage surveys, will be able to list buildings and have demolition control over those buildings. I mentioned that it was on the basis of adequate surveys, because we must also give some certainty to the development community in South Australia. It should know exactly what the rules are and must not be subject to arbitrary actions. I believe that we are now approaching a stage where we will be able to release a report that will provide for a process whereby local listings can be commenced.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer the Minister to the Program Estimates, page 299, and the program titled Pollution Management. A 1991-92 specific target is to assess and monitor contaminated land sites and prepare legislation relating to contaminated land sites. What progress has been made in identifying contaminated land in South Australia and what options has the contaminated lands task force proposed to remedy contaminated land in Bowden, Brompton and Ridleyton?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will address this question generally and then ask Mr Garry Stafford to pick it up in some detail. Preliminary investigations have revealed that we have about 30 contaminated sites and about 1 000 suspected sites. I think it is important to put this into a national context and perspective, because it is not an issue that relates just to Adelaide and South Australia; it relates right across the country and to every major city in the world. The Australian and New Zealand Environment Ministers Council and NH&MRC are currently working on the development of draft Australian national guidelines for the management and assessment of contaminated sites. In other words, we must have some degree of standardisation across the country about what constitutes contamination, how we go about cleaning up those sites and some uniformity right across the country.

The South Australian Waste Management Commission and the Department of Environment and Planning have jointly funded the development of a green paper on legislative options for South Australia. I am delighted to announce that I am releasing this paper today and I am very pleased to table it and provide copies to any members of the Committee who wish to have it. It just so happens that it was ready for tabling late yesterday, and I thought I would honour the Committee by doing so today. It is an important document in addressing this issue.

The Government has issued an internal circular preventing the purchase or sale of land that may be contaminated unless there is a specific clearance, so business is not proceeding as usual while this green paper is out for discussion. I have issued a circular to all Government departments that we are not to proceed with the sale of land if any contamination is suspected until a specific site has been cleared, so I think that will be good news to the honourable member.

Information on sites associated with licensed waste activities are already notifiable on the LOTS system and action is presently being taken to ensure that information on contaminated sites is also available. In other words, it is an excellent example of lands and environmental planning working together to provide the correct and appropriate information to the community and to ensure that it is as accessible as possible. I will now ask Mr Garry Stafford to specifically address the relevant points in the honourable member's question.

Mr Stafford: Would the honourable member repeat the last question please?

Mr ATKINSON: What options has the contaminated lands task force proposed to remedy contaminated land in Bowden, Brompton and Ridleyton?

Mr Stafford: The task force, which has membership from the South Australian Health Commission, the Waste Management Commission, our department, the Department of Labour, and local representative groups, has looked at remediation options for a number of sites in the areas mentioned by the honourable member. Not only has the health risk assessment and environmental risk assessment been looked at on a site-by-site basis but also the remediation options have been considered on a site-by-site basis. Without referring to those sites individually by name, the remediation options that have been recommended include on-site burial of contaminated soil with suitable capping and treatment at the side and base of the burial hole to ensure that the material will not leech or migrate in future. In some cases, it is just the removal of very slightly contaminated soil to a land fill site, and the Waste Management Commission has licensed a Cleanaway land fill site at Wingfield to receive slightly contaminated soil which complies with the criteria set down by the commission.

Whilst the site is not in any of the three areas referred to, the lead pellets in the area of the Seaford Gun Club site, which is being remediated by the Urban Lands Trust, are actually being sieved and removed from the soil. A range of options, although not that broad, has been considered by the task force for those various sites that have been brought to our attention.

Mr ATKINSON: I believe that the range of options is somewhat broader than that, as outlined to a meeting at the Bowden Brompton Community Centre some months ago. Could the broader range of options be detailed with a costing of each of the options?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Before asking the officer to respond to that, I will highlight the fact that the community needs to be made aware of the enormous costs of cleaning up contaminated land sites. On behalf of South Australia, I am attending the Planning Ministers Conference in Adelaide on Friday, and one of the items I have asked to be included on the agenda, to which I will be speaking very strongly, is the question of contaminated land. I shall be pressuring the Federal Minister (Brian Howe) for a contribution federally for a clean-up of these sites. I believe that, particularly with the smaller States, and also the larger States because their problem is so much greater, it will be an impossibility with the size of our budget to be able to clean up the range of contaminated land because it is not just contamination by a single substance but a complexity of substances that is causing this contamination. Finding what substances are there can be a quite challenging task, in the first instance, I want to make it quite clear that we are talking about multi-millions of dollars in terms of this clean-up.

Obviously, we are looking around the world at ways we can use technology that has been developed already. I am aware of a machine operating in the Scandinavian countries that cleans up the soil on site. Immediately we say to ourselves, 'We could not afford to have one of these machines.' I thought I had an original idea this week, but I did not; my officers had beaten me to the punch. It occurred to me that one thing I could suggest to my ministerial colleagues is that we could look at the joint purchase of one of these machines by the relevant States—maybe Victoria, New South Wales and ourselves, because we are in close proximity—and have this machine for a certain

period each year for a clean-up program. We must think laterally about this whole issue. We must make every dollar go as far as it can.

I do not have to remind you, Mr Chairman, given your former illustrious career, that part of our commitment is for a reurbanisation or urban consolidation program, and we cannot proceed with much of that unless we can clean up some of these sites. In asking Mr Stafford to specifically address some of the costs and techniques, it needs to be seen in the context of this whole broader question of the overall costs of looking for new technology across the world, not just here in Australia. Let us not try to reinvent the wheel, but to look creatively at how we might share those costs with other States who have the same problems.

Mr Stafford: The various other remediation options available depend on the nature of the contamination. In relation to heavy metals, as the Minister has indicated, there is on-site treatment available which takes the form of possible chemical fixation, leeching of the chemical materials from the soil and transferring them elsewhere, or just fixing the contaminated soil with a concrete mixture and placing that final product into a secure land fill. In the case of organic contaminants, a number of options are available, some of which include vacuum extraction of solvent material from soils or bioremediation of some of the organic compounds.

The options we have recommended to the Minister are for various sites that we have considered. The on-site burial treatment of soil will involve approximately 6 000 cubic metres of contaminated soil, and we anticipate the cost of that remediation action to be somewhere between \$200 000 and \$750 000 per site. With respect to the more detailed on-site treatments for both heavy metals and organic contaminants, whilst I do not have precise figures, I advise that the cost of using that technology is several orders of magnitude above that quoted for on-site burial. As the Minister has indicated, a large portion of that cost is the capital cost of installing the equipment on site. The fact is that we do not have sufficient sites with similar contaminants and similar soil conditions to enable us to spread that capital cost over a sufficiently wide range of sites. If we are able to have that problem addressed on a national basis, the cost of some of those higher technologies and, one assumes, more effective ways of dealing with this problem may well reduce.

Mr BRINDAL: I take up the Minister's earlier comment in reply to my colleague the member for Spence about the enormous cost of cleaning up contaminated land sites. The offshore dredging program last year in the vicinity of Brighton was most effective and minimised criticism by my electors in respect of their loss of amenity, and for this the Minister is to be commended. However, as the Minister will recall, a number of vociferous and persistent complaints arose in respect of rashes and the alleged deterioration in personal health that were blamed on the sand.

I believe that the appropriate department tested the sand for chemicals such as heavy metals. Unfortunately, however, my advice—which I hope is incorrect—is that it was not tested for hydrocarbons. As the sand was dredged from the vicinity of Port Stanvac, I would be interested to know whether that was the case. If the sand was not tested, why was it not? If it was so tested, will the Minister table the results and, if not, will she ensure that it is done this year if the need arises as part of this season's dredging program?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I cannot give the honourable member an answer off the top of my head as to whether the sand was tested for hydrocarbons. I will be pleased to obtain that information and, if it was tested, what levels were involved. I think the honourable member also asked

whether we would ensure that it was tested with the next dredging program. I should like to thank the honourable member for the recognition that, in terms of a whole range of listed environmental pluses, dredging is far ahead of trucking sand through the streets of Adelaide. Notwithstanding all the environmental downsides, along the paths of these trucks there are quite considerable dangers to people who have young children and to elderly citizens. I refer to trucks thundering past, sand blowing, and so on.

That does not mean that, because this is a much more effective and efficient way of doing it, we should not ensure that there are no byproducts of this new technique that could cause any kind of danger to the community. I will take great pleasure in obtaining that information for the honourable member.

Mr BRINDAL: The Minister will be aware that a pipeline runs from Port Stanvac to Birkenhead to carry the products of the refinery to storage tanks. The Minister will also be aware that part of that pipeline runs along the foreshore and that all such soil profiles that the pipeline runs through have not yet been tested for potential liquefaction in the case of seismic shock.

This matter is particularly significant, as the Minister will know, as the pipeline crosses one and possibly three seismic fault lines on the Adelaide Plain. The Moomba gas pipeline and the Port Bonython liquid pipeline have a number of safety cut-offs at regular intervals along the pipe for product shutdown in case of rupture. Can the Minister confirm that no such safeguards exist along the Port Stanvac-Birkenhead pipeline and what, if anything, her department is prepared to do about this?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That cuts across a number of portfolio areas and would concern the Natural Disasters Committee as well as my colleague the Minister of Mines and Energy, who would probably have more detailed information about all this. The pipeline was constructed under an indenture that has been in existence for a very long time, and that may be part of the problem. I am not sure that the problem is exactly as the honourable member describes, but I will be pleased to find out whether that is the case. I undertake to instigate discussions with the Minister of Mines and Energy and of Emergency Services to see what would be the implications and ramifications of an earthquake around the route of the pipeline.

I am told that there are shutdown valves along the pipeline, and it may well be that an assessment of this type of technology has been deemed to be appropriate in the past. Obviously, it would be an opportune time to have another look at the situation to see whether, in the light of current technology and current information—because we are receiving more and more information with respect to the question of seismic shock—there may be effects on a pipeline that has been in place for many years. I will be pleased to pursue that question on behalf of the honourable member.

Mr BRINDAL: I believe that a number of toxic additives which are added to the crude at Port Stanvac are both dangerous and lethal, and I am given to believe that they are trucked from Birkenhead to Port Stanvac. Is the Minister aware of this, and will she detail later, if necessary, the additives that are transported? Is the Minister satisfied that the procedures currently in place are conducive both to public health and safety and to environmental considerations? If not, what plans does the Minister's department have to deal with the situation? If the Minister is not fully conversant with the situation as it has been outlined to me, does she believe that one person in her department is enough to handle hazardous chemical management?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Obviously, this matter is not just my responsibility but mostly that of the Minister of Labour. I am aware that new and strong conditions apply to the transportation of hazardous chemicals and waste. However, this question would probably be more appropriately asked of the Minister of Labour. We can provide the information, although I am sure members would not expect me to know which toxic additives are put into chemicals at Port Stanvac, because, apart from things such as noise and air quality relating to the refinery, that does not come within my area of responsibility. I must say that I have so many areas of responsibility that I am not looking for any more.

I take this matter seriously, because almost every single area of Government has some implication for the environment. While the primary responsibility in a number of areas rests with other Ministers, it would be appropriate for me to take up that matter. I will refer it to my ministerial colleague and the appropriate department, and they may choose to answer it by way of the Estimates Committees next week, if the relevant Minister is scheduled for next week and if the honourable member wishes to raise the matter again, or we will provide the information directly to the honourable member.

We work very closely with the Department of Labour and with the Health Commission, as I am sure members would be aware. The Health Commission and the Department of Labour would be the relevant areas, and we can act as a coordinating agency in getting them to provide that information.

Mr ATKINSON: Why is dredging for sand replenishment along the metropolitan coast carried out in summer, when beach use is at its peak?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is a critical question of timing, which has been something that many of the constituents and various members living in seafront electorates have raised from time to time. Indeed, in relation to the timing of the dredging that took place, the latter part of the sand replenishment contract extended into the period when storms can be expected to occur more frequently. During that time two storms caused considerable damage to the dredging equipment, resulting in approximately two weeks delay. The dredging costs, I have to say because I think it is important that members know what we are talking about, are something like \$1 000 an hour, which is a very considerable amount and, therefore, it is in the Government's and the community's interest to reduce the downtime as much as possible.

What I am saying is that we are, in a sense, dictated to by the weather. It is important that the dredging takes place when we are not in a period of normal storm activity, because of the closing down of and, in some cases, the damage to the dredging equipment. A figure of \$1 000 an hour is a very considerable amount of money.

This is where we have to achieve the fine balance between the points raised earlier by the honourable member. It is not just a matter of doing the right thing by the environment with respect to not trucking sand along the streets of Adelaide: it is also a consideration of the amount of sand that is stirred up and, when people go swimming, it is a problem.

The other thing I think is important to recognise is that, if we were to do the dredging and the pumping in the winter when people are not swimming, not only do we run into the problem of storms with respect to damage to the equipment but also the very next day after that sand is deposited along the coast it can be swept out to sea, so we have spent an enormous amount of public money for little or no benefit at all. Unfortunately, the prime time for sand replenishment

along the coast is during the summer period when people wish to swim.

We are trying to start the dredging a little later (because, as members would be aware, our storms seem to be occurring later in the year) so that we can run a little into the winter period and accommodate some of the quite justifiable concerns that have been raised by members of the community who for many years have been swimming along our coastal area. They have been fortunate enough not to have any mishaps with sharks or anything else and they obviously feel they have a right to continue with that activity.

That concern has to be balanced against the need to protect our coastal areas, and we are attempting to do that. At this stage the other matter we have to look at is that the turbidity from the dredging discharge does not affect the seagrasses, as it is only confined to the near shore area. So, at this stage that is not a problem, but the other issue of the impact upon the people who wish to swim is a problem.

Mr ATKINSON: In relation to page 289 of the Program Estimates and the line relating to native vegetation management, how has the new native vegetation law been received by farmers, and have there been any more applications for broad acre clearance?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As members would know, we introduced the second stage of our native vegetation management and, under the Native Vegetation Act 1991, we did so in a way that I believe could be described as incredibly sensitive to the communities involved. We did not come in with a moratorium overnight, which is something that happened in other States. We negotiated with the United Farmers and Stockowners, with the rural community and, indeed, I must say, with the Opposition. Opposition members (particularly the shadow Minister) must be commended for the way in which they dealt with some of these issues in a most bipartisan way. That is not to say that, just before we enacted the legislation, there was not a small rush on the program.

However, the native vegetation management branch has received 28 applications for clearance under the new Act, only one of which is for broad acre clearance on which a partial consent has been given. The balance involved single trees, minor management clearance and brush cutting. From those figures, I think one would have to realise that, because of the consultation that had taken place prior to the enactment of this legislation, the community supported the legislation, fully understood it, and have not tried to thwart the intention of the Parliament by now rushing in with applications. Indeed, it is quite the contrary.

The figures support landholder acceptance of the cessation of broad acre clearance in South Australia and, since April, 13 applications for assistance with vegetation management by way of heritage agreement have been received. I would like to stress that the impetus for the new legislation was in fact to look at putting funds into the management of the vegetation which, over the past eight to 10 years, had been retained under the old Act to ensure the ongoing management through proper fencing, rabbit control and bushfire protection. It would seem that already the rural community is aware of this and is starting to put forward its applications.

The clearance applications and consequent financial assistance packages lodged under the now repealed Native Vegetation Management Act of 1985 continue to be considered. Members may recall that I made a commitment to consider all applications that had been properly processed before the new legislation was enacted (and the date had been agreed by all but one honourable member, but he is

not on this Committee, so he cannot speak for himself on that matter). We received some 340 of those applications before 12 February, which was the cut-off date, and some of these still have to be considered.

Top priority has been given to this task, and the completion target date for clearance applications is still 30 June 1992; in other words, the authority and the branch are working to achieve the commitment that I gave prior to the enactment of the new legislation. I remind all members that in fact we are still the only State in Australia that has legislation of the standard and quality of the first Native Vegetation Management Act. No State has even got to that point, let alone to the second Act which now virtually completely prevents and prohibits any broad scale clearance of native vegetation. I think that both sides of the Parliament can be justly proud of that record.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: At page 88 of the Auditor-General's Report, under the heading 'Native Vegetation Management Act 1985', the Auditor-General states:

The Department of Environment and Planning pays interest to the South Australian Financing Authority on funds invested by SAFA on properties purchased. Any loss on the sale of properties is borne by the department.

I understand that there is considerable concern in some country communities that the price being paid for properties by the Government is grossly in excess of market value. Is the Minister satisfied that the valuation placed on properties reflects current market value, and does she seek independent commercial valuations of properties purchased and, if not, why not?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The valuations on the properties are determined by the Valuer-General. Unfortunately, the honourable member was not present this morning when the Valuer-General was here, but there were quite a number of questions relating to the way in which the Valuer-General determines valuations not just for the sale of Government properties or for the purchase of properties but also in determining a whole range of rents, including rents on shack sites, pastoral leases and other forms of purchase determination.

In regard to our purchase of properties, we depend on the valuations of the Valuer-General or his department. I will answer the question to the best of my ability. I do not believe that we do seek independent valuations. I would need to check that with the Valuer-General because, as the honourable member would know, the whole matter of the responsibility of the Valuer-General is to the Parliament in terms of the Act. Of course, I request that the Valuer-General makes certain that the values which he puts on properties we purchase ensure the best possible situation for the public of South Australia, and we are the instrument of that, as the department and the Government. We try to make our money go as far as possible in terms of purchasing properties on which the Native Vegetation Authority refuses clearance.

Certainly, if the honourable member can give an example where she believes that we have paid more for a property than is appropriate, I would be very pleased to have those matters investigated, because it is in all our interests to ensure that we pay landowners a fair amount for saying to them, 'You cannot clear any more of your native vegetation,' and we must be seen to be fair and equitable to the landholder. On the other hand, we must also be seen to be wisely spending the community's money to ensure the ongoing preservation of our native vegetation.

I am not a valuer. I imagine that it is not appropriate for me to become involved in whether a valuation is correct. I am guided by any advice the honourable member would

like to provide, and I would be happy to explore that matter with the Valuer-General.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: Following the sentence that I quoted from the Auditor-General's Report, there is a sentence which states: 'Any loss on the sale of properties is borne by the department.' Obviously, that is the test of the accuracy of market value if properties are bought by the Government and subsequently sold at a significant loss within a relatively short period of time. What losses were borne by the department in the past two years on the sale of properties purchased by it?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will answer the question generally and will provide specific information at a later date. Obviously, after we purchase properties through the Native Vegetation Management Act—which is really the only purchase about which we can talk because the new Act has altered the whole situation—and a heritage agreement is placed over land and it is resold, we will obviously resell it for a valuation less than was paid to the person from whom we purchased it. I think that is a pretty reasonable situation because you must pay the landowner what that land is worth in terms of their economic viability.

The honourable member would be aware that that is the way in which the Act was framed and, indeed, I recall that it was her political Party that insisted we have this payment. No other State in the country has a payment in the same way as we do, and I know that Victoria is certainly not proposing to follow our system because of the huge amounts of money that we have paid out. Therefore, by the nature of the former Act, in a sense we are constrained to the amount that we pay and, of course, the Valuer-General must take into account what the Act has laid down in assessing what we must pay the landowner if the Native Vegetation Authority says, 'You cannot clear this particular amount of land.'

When we subsequently come to sell that land it has a heritage agreement over it so, in a sense, in terms of its productivity to a potential buyer it will be of less value, so there must be a difference. I think that that would be clearly understood by all members of Parliament, particularly by members who were present when the original Act was debated in both Houses. I do not have in front of me the figure of what that difference is, but it is part of the commitment that I believe the South Australian public has been prepared to make to retain what little vegetation is left in South Australia. It will not be an ongoing situation, because the program has concluded. As soon as we have dealt with the applications that are in the system the money that is available through the budget process will be used for management purposes. I have been very keen to move that management program forward, and I believe that I have done that successfully because, initially, when I became the Minister the UF&S did not want to see the program come to an end for a number of years down the track.

Because of the work of officers, such as Nicholas Newland in the consultation he has had with the rural communities and the UF&S, we have managed to bring that in and that will be a huge saving to the public of South Australia at the end of the day. I take the point the honourable member has raised; I think it is a very legitimate question. I do not have that information at my fingertips, but I will provide it for the honourable member.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: In regard to the establishment of the environment protection authority, is it intended that the Commonwealth departments be subject to environment policing by the State EPA, and is it still a possibility that the national EPA might be established in Adelaide as part of the MFP if the MFP is to proceed?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I believe I have highlighted the whole concept with respect to the MFP. One of the things that we have talked about—and I understand that it has been agreed to—is that, if the national environment protection authority were established (at this point I believe it is considered that the actual authority will be seated in Canberra) the research component of the Commonwealth EPA would be located in the multifunction polis. I have welcomed that. I think that is an excellent move forward because it will mean that we will then have the potential to make a decision about the location of our environment protection agency, whether we want to locate it, say, side by side or in liaison with that research facility at the MFP.

Obviously, we will have our EPA up and running before the MFP. It may well be the decision of the subsequent Minister, if I am not still in this position, to locate the State environment protection authority in a similar location or in a cooperative sense with the research facility. The honourable member would know that this does not apply just to South Australia and to an EPA. It applies to whether Telecom can put something up in the middle of Burra.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I understand that the EPA of Victoria has some policing powers over Commonwealth agencies, and I ask the question with regard to the proposed EPA in South Australia.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would like that to happen. I am aware that in New South Wales, my colleague and counterpart Tim Moore, certainly at environment Minister's councils, continually raises some of the issues about Garden Island and other facilities with respect to what they are discharging into Sydney Harbour. He has always indicated to me that he did not have any control over the Commonwealth installations or instrumentalities in New South Wales. I am not totally familiar with the situation in Victoria. However, as I will be in Victoria on Friday, I will make it my business to find out exactly what happens. I have had meetings with Brian Robinson, who is the head of the Victorian EPA, on a number of occasions. I have not raised this issue with him, but I will pursue it now that it has been raised by the honourable member.

As members would know, our proposal is that the Crown be bound by any new legislation encompassing the wide range of issues that we want to see in the new environment protection Act, and we are prepared to treat our own departments, such as the E&WS Department, exactly the same as we would the private sector. Therefore, I want to see the same thing happen. The Director-General has just drawn my attention to the fact that this matter could well form part of the negotiations and discussions that the Premiers could have in November over the negotiations relating to the new federalism. I ask the Director-General to comment, because he has been the South Australian representative in the officer level negotiations across the Commonwealth in preparation for the Premiers' Conference in November.

Dr McPhail: Members are probably aware from recent media and parliamentary debates elsewhere that discussion has occurred on the question of the inter-governmental agreement on the environment, which will be negotiated through the special Premiers' Conference. Amongst the elements that will be incorporated in that agreement are two that will directly bear on the question that has been asked. First, there is a general agreement amongst all the State and Commonwealth Ministers—through the ANZEC Ministers, very much led by the South Australian Minister—that there should be an approach to national standards that are mandatorily applied, that will apply across Australia and be binding on each of the States. There is this agreement. In the drafting of the inter-governmental agreement, we are

now well advanced in putting the general principles relating to that in place. Once that occurs, the Commonwealth is bound by those standards in exactly the same way as every other party. We then would have the opportunity of overcoming the present constitutional issue which allows the Commonwealth to take notice of the States but not necessarily follow their requirements. Secondly, there is the whole question as to the way in which the Commonwealth would agree to abide by agreed conditions with the States and, therefore, handle some of these difficulties in relationships that have been occurring all the way from raw sewage at Garden Island in Sydney Harbour through to contaminated land on Commonwealth property. I know various comments have been made about the quality of the work being done on the inter-governmental agreement, but I am hopefully confident that we are approaching a breakthrough in these relationships.

Mr FERGUSON: On 30 August, the Minister sent out a press release, under her portfolio of Minister for Environment and Planning, about the agreement that she has reached with her colleagues on the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council to eliminate waste water discharges into the Murray River by January 1995. Given the Minister's subsequent discussions with Mr Graham Ogilvie of the Australian Newsprint Mills, is she now confident that that object will be reached in January 1995?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, I was delighted to announce to South Australian people that we had a breakthrough on two fronts: first, we have had an agreement from ANM to meet the conditions that I asked the Murray-Darling Ministerial Council to lay down in terms of the future development of a brightening plant and a de-inking/recycling plant at ANM. To take the whole issue further, I requested ANM to remove all discharge from the Murray River by the end of 1994 or the beginning of 1995. I think it is a credit to all the States, including New South Wales, that they supported me in this call to ANM.

The honourable member is correct in saying that I had a meeting on the Friday following the ministerial council decision and that Mr Graham Ogilvie agreed that they would do everything in their power to achieve that deadline. He could not give an unequivocal guarantee, because the company is prepared to spend millions of dollars to achieve this off-river discharge. However, some research work must be done. In the spirit of cooperation, I have offered any research findings that come out of the Bolivar wood lot experimental project to ANM because we need to share as much information on how we can effectively use treated effluent as productively as possible, and Mr Ogilvie has taken up my offer.

I believe that his officers have now met with the Engineering and Water Supply people who were overseeing this project at Bolivar. As well, he is negotiating with the local golf course and local growers to see whether they will grow some of the pine, which will then be used in the plant. For those interested in recycling and in the environment, as I am, not only are we going to clean up the river but also we will be able to use plantation timber that is irrigated from the effluent of the plant.

I believe that the company is very genuine about wishing to meet that deadline. It is not just saying, 'Yes, we will meet that deadline,' and then saying, 'at the end of 1994, 'We are really sorry. The technology wasn't there.' I think the fact that it has made a commitment to remove 20 per cent of the discharge by the end of this year and 50 per cent by the end of 1993 would indicate its bona fides. Obviously, it is moving to implement technology to do that. Also, it is moving to reduce in total the amount of effluent

that it is currently using in its plant. One of the advantages we have is that it is a fairly modern plant. I have had the opportunity of seeing one of their plants at Shotton, in Wales, and I can assure the honourable member that our plant here is much more sophisticated in terms of its technology.

The second thing I want to highlight is that it has given us a guarantee that it will take a minimum of 15 000 tonnes per annum of our newsprint. We now have to get our recycling program in place in terms of kerbside collection. I will be asking all members of Parliament to lobby their local councils to get those schemes in place, because the company will be taking the first shipment of paper from 1 July next year. The other piece of good news is that we are not just talking about a once-off thing. The company is also prepared to guarantee South Australia a minimum floor price for that paper. Preliminary discussions have indicated to me that that will be a price we will be very pleased with.

Mr FERGUSON: Is the Department of Environment and Planning closely involved with the planning review, especially in considering how recommendations from that review might be implemented?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The short answer is 'Yes'. I think that I highlighted this in my introductory speech. We certainly have a number of close contacts and involvement in the planning review. In a moment I will ask the Director of Planning, Mr David Ellis, who is a member of the working group for the planning review, to comment on the second part of the honourable member's question. Although the Premier has responsibility for this review—it is being run by the Premier and his department—I have to say that we are delighted with the close cooperation that my department, and in particular the Planning Division, has had in relation to consultation. I receive very regular briefings and updates from Michael Lennon, who is the Director of the planning review.

More important than this is what kind of input and feedback the Department of Planning has in terms of providing base information, help in developing policy direction and community consultation because, in the interim, we have had to continue overseeing the planning system in South Australia, and to do so to the best of our ability. I think I can say, on behalf of the Planning Division, that this has been a most useful involvement in terms of listening to the community, hearing some of the quite valid criticisms of the current system and trying, in the interim, to meet those criticisms and concerns but, at the same time, not to pre-empt or push at too quick a rate any of the outcomes of the planning review.

Mr Ellis: I think that the Minister has answered the questions. All the people in the Planning Division one way or another are working on aspects of the planning review. There has been a conscious linking of the work of the division and that of the review. Across the rest of the department, in areas such as the Mount Lofty Ranges, for example, there has also been that conscious linking of work between that planning review and the department. The Directors behind the front table and others in the department have been spending quite a considerable amount of time on the planning review work.

Mr FERGUSON: The member for Heysen has already mentioned the EPA. What has been the level of public response to the discussion paper?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: There has been quite a degree of public response already. Although I cannot indicate how every person has so far responded—perhaps one of my officers can do that—I can say that it has been very heartening to see the number of organisations and groups in the

community who have requested that I speak with them about the EPA, to talk about what we are proposing. The member for Heysen and I were present at a fairly major seminar, held recently at the Hyatt, which concerned the whole concept of an environment protection authority for South Australia and at which Brian Robinson (the person to whom I referred earlier who heads the EPA in Victoria) was a keynote speaker, as were Dr Ian McPhail and I. This seminar went all day.

The feedback I received was that it was a very useful seminar; it clearly put a number of issues on the table. Following that, Keith Conlon, who was also a participant and presenter at that seminar, raised some really interesting and important issues about the EPA on his ABC morning program. He had consultants from interstate who had involvement in the development and working of an environment protection authority to answer questions and give feed-in. I think there has been quite a considerable response generally from across the community. As I said, numbers of groups have asked me to speak or have requested information, and have done so in a very positive way. For specific information, I think we shall ask Colin Harris to respond to the honourable member's question.

Mr Harris: As the Minister indicated, the level of public interest has been quite high. The first print run of the report was 600-odd, and all copies have been distributed throughout the community. We are now into a second print run. Certainly, the level of interest continues to be there. So far we have only received a handful of submissions. It is still early days.

Mr FERGUSON: As a supplementary question, what departments and areas of Government will be included in the EPA?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: There are quite a number of areas, including the areas that we have already talked about in the Estimates Committee to date. There is air quality, noise, the Waste Management Commission, the whole concept of marine and riverine quality, water resources—a whole range of Acts of Parliament and specific divisions and departments that will need to be brought together so that we can streamline our response along the lines of some other States. We believe that we have taken the best of Western Australia and Victoria. We have refined it to the South Australian situation because we have different needs and problems. Fortunately, we do not have the magnitude of problems that Victoria and New South Wales have with respect to their environment.

It is timely that we move forward with a new Act and a new authority that can provide certainty to the community that there is a body at arms length from Government that will implement our legislation without fear or favour. That is my intention. I believe that the Opposition has supported that general direction. When we get the Bill into the Parliament we will be able to have a look at some of the specific methods of operation. I will ask Colin Harris if I have omitted any of the areas.

Mr Harris: I think the Minister has covered the main areas.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I would like to ask a question supplementary to that asked by the member for Henley Beach, regarding the planning review. What does the Minister consider to be an optimum population level for the metropolitan area before our quality of life starts to deteriorate? All residents of Adelaide are very jealous of their quality of life and there has been considerable public discussion of late about that subject, and I would like to know what the Minister believes to be an optimum population level.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I do not have a figure, and I do not believe this question should be approached by asking what is the optimum number. Surely, it is about the retention of a quality of life, and I agree with the honourable member, because I think that what he is saying is that it is a quality of life issue. Surely, we must look at such issues as whether we follow the Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane models, and just continue to expand into the rural urban fringe areas. Do we end up with a city, long after we are dead and gone, that extends from Victor Harbor to Port Pirie? I have to say that that is not my vision of Adelaide in 2020 and beyond.

I believe we have a number of ways of looking at this. One is that urban containment (and I will explain that term) must be part of any future planning for Adelaide. The implication of urban containment is that we must press ahead with re-urbanisation (which is a better term and better explains what we are about than 'urban consolidation'), which relates to the earlier question about contaminated land. We must also look seriously as a society and as a community (and I know this is not popular in some circles) at what we do about decentralisation. Do we seriously identify new areas for population growth, where we can develop new industries, focus on such areas and start to give incentives for their development? I do not suggest that we should put a line around some area on the map and move everybody there and put huge amounts of money into the area. However, already there are some areas that would lend themselves to a decentralised model.

More than any other State in the country, South Australia is a city State. Most of our population is in the metropolitan area, and I do not believe that future generations will be able to continue to do this. Neither am I saying that that in itself is the only answer. There must be a number of ways of addressing this. One is through urban containment and slowing down the growth at the urban fringe. The second is a sensitive re-urbanisation, and I believe that we have enormous opportunities in Adelaide to do that without diminishing the quality of life. I support much of what Brian Howe and Michael Lennon are saying, because they are not necessarily in contradiction. They may have a slightly different emphasis. Brian Howe is saying that we must present the community with alternative models of living. It is no good asking the community whether it likes what it has always had or whether it would like something different, unless we present the choices and alternatives.

I will press very strongly with Brian Howe on Friday for money for some of the demonstration projects he has been talking about. We have already done some, as the honourable member is aware, but we must target the low cost end of the market—the newly married, younger and, in some cases, poorer, one-person households. We must provide a range of options for those families and that section of the community and not just do what we have done at the old Rowley Park site. I think that is excellent, but it is not necessarily targeting the lower end, and low cost accommodation. I think that is the way we should be trying to get our grants from the Federal Government in terms of the Better Cities program, and I will push very hard for that.

That is one thing we must do. The second is that we must look at whether, even on the new fringe areas, we need all the quarter acre blocks. I do not think we do. We can look at model cities and the way in which we want smaller communities using such things as stormwater and wetland ponding as the central focus, as was the village green in the past. I think we have enormous opportunities in Adelaide and in South Australia to meet the objectives

of a quality of life, but not following the model of Sydney and Melbourne.

The honourable member really should not have asked me this question, because it is something I feel quite passionate about. Our population will not approach the size of those in Sydney and Melbourne, but I think it is probably begging the question to say that 1 223 641 is the optimum size, because that does not address the quality of life of those people, their choices and such issues as new and better methods of transport, how we dispose of our stormwater, what we do with our sewage effluent, how we have better and more efficient energy use and all of the issues that I am pushing to be addressed in the MFP, which will provide a model that we may well want to follow in our outer urban development in the future. We must also look at some models of decentralisation and how they have worked in other parts of the world.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Given the growing community concern regarding emission from motor vehicles, is it intended to introduce a system where car engine emissions are controlled or checked regularly to meet prescribed standards?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: My own position is that I agree with this. I had a discussion with Tim Moore when I was last in Sydney (and I am sure some members have seen discussion of this in the media), and he indicated to me that New South Wales is talking about using a sophisticated level of monitoring equipment, which will be able to determine whether a vehicle's emission is above the prescribed limits, and issuing on-the-spot fines. I believe they will not even have to stop the motor vehicle; they will be able to detect emissions similarly to the way radar guns are used. They are talking about implementing the same kind of equipment to 'zap' the cars, which is the word Tim Moore used. He is very keen on many of these issues. It shows that we are working across the States in a very bipartisan way. Perhaps we need to use that model more in South Australia.

I am told by my Director-General that Tim Moore and I are the most radical Environment Ministers in the country, and he may well be right about that. I will not pursue that. The point is that we will have to put on the public agenda that we must address seriously the question of emission control and quality, and I would be delighted to have some bipartisan support in putting this on the community's agenda, because it is not something that the South Australian community has perceived as an issue in the past in that we have not had the same air quality problems that have existed in Sydney and Melbourne.

My whole thrust is that we are about prevention; we are not about waiting for us to have the same problems as Sydney and Melbourne and throwing our hands in the air, and asking what we can do about it. We should be starting to get community discussion about prevention on the public agenda and, if preventing the problems that exist in Sydney and Melbourne means making the hard decisions, members know that I will take them every time and get out there and sell them. It would be useful for us to pursue the question, and I thank the honourable member for raising it.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: How much revenue is it expected will be raised from the introduction of the licensing system to control point source discharge?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr Stafford if we have any preliminary indicative figures. It is probably a bit early to put a quantification on that.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: There will be some idea, and the department continually delights me by being able to produce these kinds of projections and figures.

Mr Stafford: As the honourable member is probably well aware, the regulations are currently being prepared by the marine environment protection group. They recently approached the division for a complete costing associated with the administration of the proposed regulations under the Marine Environment Protection Act. Those figures are being prepared and will be forwarded to the Marine Environment Protection Committee so it can ascertain what the licence fees are likely to be. At this stage we have not really quantified that.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: When we do quantify them, the figures will be public knowledge and we will make them available. It is a matter of getting all the steps in place in the proper order.

Mr Stafford: We are looking at making that system completely cost recoverable. The licence fees will reflect the administration and overheads associated with it.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: One thing we have made very clear is that we want a cost recovery approach. We are not imagining that the costs will be absolutely enormous, so the imposition on the various discharges will not be such that we will be driving people out of business. That is not the intention. The intention is to have a sensible system of licensing, monitoring and control which complies with the requirements of the Act but which at the same time encourages businesses to undertake the proper treatment on site, so that there is an incentive for businesses to move to new technologies to ensure that what they are discharging into the marine environment will not be detrimental to the environment but will have a neutral effect. There must be that balance of encouragement incentive whilst not making it too severe so that it causes such an impost to organisations that they cannot continue with the legitimate business that they are carrying on.

Mr De LAINE: Referring to page 288 under 'Flora, fauna and park management', with respect to the Nullarbor world heritage project, does South Australia have the Commonwealth committee's support for nominating the Nullarbor for world heritage listing?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The Nullarbor world heritage project is a joint exercise between the Commonwealth, South Australian and Western Australian Governments. It is the first time in this country that we have looked at getting together all the facts, figures and areas in a joint submission for world heritage. I am very hopeful that we will receive the Commonwealth Government's support. We certainly have the Western Australian Government's support.

We have not actually moved formally to submit the nomination to the World Heritage Committee, but we certainly are working very hard with our departmental counterparts in Western Australia. Much work must be done by the two States and the Commonwealth before we can move officially to put forward our nomination for world heritage. In this report, I refer, for example, to matters such as the boundaries of the areas and a very clear analysis of what is contained within this area that we are nominating for world heritage.

We are also looking at—and Mr Leaver will correct me if I am wrong—the marine park as part of the world heritage listing. I do not have to remind members of the exciting things that take place within that marine park, such as the mating and breeding of the Southern right whales. This is quite fantastic for anyone who has had the privilege of seeing these whales in the Bight. It is something about which we can stand up on a world stage and say, 'Please come

and look at this world heritage area.' Also, there are the cave systems and the arid wilderness areas which are so vitally important and unique to this part of the world.

It is my hope that we will have the support of that committee. It is just a little early to tell yet, because we have not moved forward with our official nomination. We are doing an enormous amount of work behind the scenes with the Western Australian and Commonwealth officers.

Mr Leaver: The question was directed towards the Commonwealth's enthusiasm for the project. Federal Ministers, both previous and existing, have indicated their strong Commonwealth support for the proposal. The area seems to qualify under a number of criteria for world heritage listing, when only one of the criteria is all that is necessary. Hopefully that nomination will go forward in the near future.

Mr De LAINE: Referring to page 296 of the Program Estimates and dealing with the Coast Protection Board, how much money has been allocated in the budget for coastal protection maintenance programs, and on which locations is the money to be used?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We have a total figure of what we are proposing to allocate; it is included in the Program Estimates. The coastal protection program brought forward from last year to this year was \$1.517 million and, because we had the dredge in the vicinity and were able to maximise its use in terms of value, we spent \$2.542 million. We are only proposing to spend \$431 000 this year, but that has to be seen in the context of maximising the dredging and pumping when we had the equipment off the coast. I cannot give the honourable member a breakdown of exactly where the \$431 000 is to be spent. We will obtain that information and provide it for the honourable member if he requires it.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 299, and the heading 'Noise control', The Minister, as well as other members here, would be familiar with complaints by residents in relation to noisy parties and loud music, etc.; certainly this occurs quite a lot in the western suburbs. Does the Government intend to introduce amendments to the Noise Control Act to provide additional powers to the police to take action to protect the community at large?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The short answer is 'Yes, we do,' but I would like to provide the honourable member with a fuller answer than that. A green paper discussing the proposed amendments to the Noise Control Act has been prepared. These amendments will alter the method used to determine the maximum permissible noise level; allow local government to control the noise from domestic premises; provide an appeal system; allow for consideration of environmental noise aspects of the development proposals that are put forward—and that is vitally important (and I am sure that the member for Spence would be really interested in this); the introduction of expiation fees and charges for services; and also allow for the adoption of a policy that controls specific environmental noise issues.

Obviously, it will be a very sensitive and contentious issue, because we must allow people to enjoy themselves. It is all about the quality of life, as the member for Heysen said. People have the right to have a party now and again, to go to a concert and to do the normal things that human beings living in society do. However, that and such things as noisy parties and noisy motor vehicles must be balanced against the individual consideration of the elderly, of people who are ill, of people with young families and things like that.

We are trying to strike that sensitive balance. I do not believe that any community will ever get it absolutely right, because some people have a very low tolerance of noise

while others have a very high tolerance. Those of us who have survived having teenage children probably have a much higher tolerance of noise than those who have not had the joy and excitement of raising teenagers. I guess that, in many cases, parents are more tolerant than, say, the very elderly who have forgotten what it is like.

A green paper has been prepared, and we will be canvassing those issues very widely with the community. I look forward to the input of members of both Houses of Parliament on behalf of their constituents to try to strike that sensitive balance between the two issues that I have highlighted.

Mr De LAINE: As a supplementary question, I can appreciate what the Minister says. I agree that no-one could deny people the right to have a party and to make a lot of noise now and again. Is it possible to incorporate in the legislation some sort of limit for a person having a party a couple of times a year as against, say, other people such as we have in our electorate who have parties every night of the week?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: One of the proposals that will be canvassed in the community under the green paper process is to allow local government to control noise from domestic premises. It will be very difficult to ask local government to tell people that they can have only three parties a year. Someone might choose to have them three nights in a row. It seems to me that this whole thing will work only if there is commonsense and a sense of community spirit.

You live in a neighbourhood and you care for your community. It is probably part of the whole Neighbourhood Watch ethos: you look out for your neighbour; you care about your neighbour's children; people have safe houses; and you ensure that when neighbours go away you look after their houses. It gets back to that general feeling about caring for people. That might not sound highly scientific or legalistic, but there are problems such as barking dogs that will be solved only with some degree of community mediation, liaison and spirit.

I should prefer to see a mediation system based on consultation, rather than legislation saying that people can have only two parties a year, with the local government authority having to rush around with lists seeing who has three barking dogs or who has had two parties and is having a third! That creates more problems than it solves. I should like to come at this in a cooperative spirit rather than taking a legislative, punitive approach. I might be proven wrong at the end of the day, but we will try it this way first.

Mr De LAINE: I agree with the Minister, but many people are very uncooperative.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I do not know what you do about that: we cannot legislate to make people cooperative.

Mr BRINDAL: The Minister will be aware that a green paper produced by our colleagues in the Federal Parliament claimed that for every one metre rise in the seawater level, 13 kilometres on average is lost in land from the coast. As a South Australian, she will also be aware that when this State was established the coastal wetlands existed from Port Misery right through to Glenelg and up to Thebarton. What encouragement has the Minister or her department given or will give by way of seeding grants or other means towards either modelling or postgraduate studies by universities or by the CSIRO to investigate the possible consequences on the Adelaide coastal plain of such rises in the sea level?

If the modelling suggests that we will have trouble with some of our urban land areas, is it the Minister's intention to beef up the powers and authorities of the Coast Protection Board to take appropriate measures against what could be a potentially disastrous situation?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: This issue relates to the whole concept of greenhouse. One way of attacking the problem is to attack the production and emission of greenhouse gases, and we are doing that. There are two threads to the answer to this question: one is that the honourable member would be aware that I established a mean sea level committee that is overseeing much of the work, the measurement, the thrust and direction of the way in which we can monitor what is happening so that we can extrapolate hard data about what happens if we do nothing, what happens if we reduce greenhouse gases, etc.

Also, we are tapping into research that is being undertaken around the world as well as in other parts of Australia. Under our capital works program, we are putting \$50 000 into coastal flooding studies this year, and that relates specifically to the honourable member's question. It is an enormously important issue with implications for planning, for future development of our coastal areas and for the approval of types of development.

We have welcomed the Resource Assessment Commission's proposed coastal reference that it will be looking at following the New South Wales agreement to have a national approach to a proper assessment of coastal management around the country. We are part of that, and I have offered the services of one of the officers from the department to work with the Resource Assessment Commission, as that commission has many more resources than we have.

The Premier has written to the Prime Minister asking, in a very nice way, whether the whole research can be moved forward, because that ties in with the report from our Federal colleagues on this question of the degradation of the coastal zone. However, it does have implications, not just for the kind of development that should proceed but also for the issues raised by the honourable member. He is quite right: there has been total destruction of the sea dunes in many areas, and we really do not have a first line of defence in terms of the rise in sea level.

While the honourable member used the figures of a one metre rise to 13 kilometres, if we talk about one millimetre the figure is 130 metres. When you get down to those small amounts, you realise how vitally important it is to have this two pronged attack: first, to reduce greenhouse gases and to reduce the effect of the sea level rise and, secondly, to ensure that all the modelling and monitoring is in place.

Mr BRINDAL: I refer to 'Flora, fauna and park management' on page 288 of the Program Estimates. First, I am aware that myxomatosis has been a solution to the rabbit problem in coastal wetlands and vicinities near water bodies. I think that the mosquito travels incredibly short distances—only about 100 metres or something like that. The Minister has spoken on radio about the Spanish flea, but I am also informed that that insect requires a certain moisture content in the air, so it is not likely to prove suitable for our very delicate arid lands.

Has the Minister considered these factors and is the Minister or her department prepared to provide any moneys for research by our principal research universities or CSIRO into a biological control specifically for animals such as rabbits that proliferate in our very arid zones? Secondly, has any biological research been undertaken on feral goats which cause so much trouble in the Flinders Ranges? That part of the question relates also to foxes. I do not know if such a program would work with cats, which also cause many problems, because cat owners would raise their concerns, but does the Minister or her department have a proposal in respect of feral cats?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: What an amazing question it is, but I welcome it. It is a good question which really goes

to the heart of one of the most significant environmental issues we face in South Australia. There are a number of programs for rabbits. The honourable member is correct in his analysis of the Spanish flea, which at the moment is in quarantine, because we cannot afford to introduce yet another solution which, at the end of the day, poses more problems than it in fact solves. The very promising viral haemorrhagic disease is in national quarantine for the pre-release testing.

I have had an opportunity to look first-hand at the enormous damage caused by feral pests. One of the most exciting programs and the way we will be able to proceed in the future to control rabbits in the arid lands involves work by the CSIRO on a genetic engineering program on fertility control and myxoma virulence. This program is continuing.

I was privileged at the last ANZEC Ministers conference to be present at a briefing which CSIRO organised and, as the member for Heysen would be aware, I have indicated that I will invite CSIRO to provide a briefing, to which I will invite those interested members of the community and, indeed, the Opposition, as well as any Government members. I understand the person who will do that is Dr Tyndal-Briscoe. As soon as I have the dates of that seminar briefing, which will probably only be an hour or something like that, I will invite the honourable member and all members of Parliament, because again I think this is an issue where we are as one in terms of the need for eradication of pests like the rabbit.

As far as I am aware, the research on the way in which we might proceed to control rabbits in the future is progressing. By the very nature of the need to hasten slowly, it will take a while and it may well be two years before we can see the introduction of the first programs. It could be longer than that, but I am very hopeful it will be within a two-year framework. Again, when we have that briefing, we will be able to look at some question and answer sessions and get that information clearly discussed in the community.

We must proceed with the fox eradication program in parallel, if you like, with rabbits, because again that is vitally important. I will not go into the whole area of foxes, because I am very happy for the department to provide that information to the honourable member on a personal level.

Goats are also an issue. I cannot give the honourable member a date, but I have organised what I am calling a seminar on goats, which will be held in the Flinders Ranges. I am sure the Opposition will be delighted to attend and I will invite the honourable member to that seminar. Goats remain an enormous problem inside the dog fence and I suppose that members therefore realise that dingoes prey upon the goats and that in itself creates an issue that we might have to address down the track.

I do not want to pre-empt the seminar because we will invite all the private leaseholders in the Flinders Ranges and the Gammon Ranges as well as all the relevant departments. We will obtain all the latest information about how to eradicate goats. We must have programs that rely on a thorough mustering and shooting of goats at this time, because there is no point in doing it in one part of the park or one part of the leased land. Goats move very quickly to another area and that has been the experience in the past.

Very recently I had the opportunity to visit the Gammon and Flinders Ranges with the department and to look at the problem first-hand. It is an enormous problem. This seminar will probably be at the end of January or early February, because we want to ensure that the private leaseholders will be present and, indeed, will have an input. We will not talk at them; we will listen to some of their suggested solutions. I have already invited Dr Reg Sprigg to be

one of the participants and present a paper and he has agreed to do that. I will be happy to have representation from the Opposition at that seminar.

I will not go into detail about cats. Feral cats are an enormous problem to our small native mammals, birds and habitat. I am having some ongoing negotiations with members of the Opposition who have responsibility for this area. I believe that we have a joint position in terms of philosophical approach with respect to the ongoing management, control and eradication of feral cats. I suppose that those discussions will bear fruit in the fullness of time. I cannot really say more than that at this stage, but at this point we are not looking at viral eradication of feral cats.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: I refer to page 295 in the Program Estimates. First, what is the official Government definition of 'sustainable economic development'? Secondly, what is the Government's program for implementing a sustainable development strategy for South Australia? Thirdly, what are the three specific purpose environmental audits to be conducted this year?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I think there might well be three questions in that. I would have to say off the top of my head that we would subscribe to the definition of sustainable, ecological and economic development which Gro Brandtland clearly identified in a publication *Our Common Future*; in other words, we must use the resources that we have here today so that we do not prevent future generations from being able to make decisions about those resources which relate to their quality of life at that time. In other words, we must take into account non-renewable resources in terms of the decisions we make. While I cannot quote the definition off the top of my head (for which I apologise, but it is getting late into the proceedings), I think the honourable member would be as aware as I am of the definition.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, that is the decision that we have adopted. Indeed, it was adopted at the discussions where I represented the ANZEC Ministers in terms of the environment conferences in Bergen and Bangkok. At Bergen I had the privilege to meet Madame Gro Brandtland, and I spoke to her about that. We have not formally adopted that definition, but it is certainly a definition that guides me as the Minister responsible for environment and planning and, indeed, my department. That is not to say that every decision that is taken at every level of Government may necessarily reflect that definition, but it is the guiding principle under which we operate.

We have had a preliminary document called 'Environment South Australia, a Strategy for a Sustainable Future', which was prepared in February this year and was considered by the Natural Resources and Infrastructure Committee of Cabinet. Cabinet considered that the proposal needed to be further developed via wider consultation and that it should also cover a fuller range of existing sustainability initiatives by the Government. A proposal is currently being prepared regarding the preparation of the strategy, because it seems to me that having a definition is but the first step. We must then develop a strategy by which we can implement the principles contained in that definition, and this strategy is therefore being prepared. In particular, it will provide for far greater input from the community and other agencies.

We are also vitally involved in the Commonwealth's ecologically sustainable development process, which has already prepared draft strategies covering nine industry sectors including agriculture, fisheries, forestry, manufacturing, mining, transport, tourism, energy production and energy

use. Further reports will be prepared in those areas, on a number of intersectoral issues and on the greenhouse issue, and I am sure that will please the member for Hayward.

The Hon. JENNIFER CASHMORE: What are the three specific purpose environmental audits to be conducted this year?

Mr Harris: The approach we are taking to the environmental audit work this year will be focused in two main ways. We will prepare a reference handbook on environmental legislation which will be disseminated widely to industry and which will function as a ready reference guide for industry to self-audit and check its own activities against those of the statutes.

The second approach will be a series of workshops where we will target different industry sectors. They are the two main areas on which we will concentrate. We will look further at specific purpose environmental audits, but these notes were prepared some little time ago, and we are still in the process of refining our thinking on the environmental audit process. As I have indicated, the main target for this year will be the two that I have mentioned, but we have not written off the specific purpose environmental audits. We will look at it further down the track.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to page 110 of Estimates of Payments Financial Paper No. 3, Conservation Policy and Program Development, line grants to various organisations. Which organisations will receive the \$126 100 proposed to be granted, and on what will the money be spent?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That is my own line and we will find the exact amounts. It includes organisations such as KESAB, which has been in operation for 25 years, the Conservation Council, and a number of other environmentally oriented groups. Some of them are very small grants. We provide money to the Murray Valley League; the Australian and New Zealand Environmental Council, of which I am a very vocal member; the Australian Conservation Foundation; and last year I provided money to a Youth Environmental Conference, which was very important in involving young people in determining issues that they think are important with respect to the environment.

The levels of some of these grants that I give under this line vary from year to year. I try to keep a small amount of flexibility so that, if something like a Youth Environment Conference is being organised in South Australia, I can make some money available to assist in its organisation and publicity. But, generally speaking, the main organisations are environmental groups and groups such as KESAB.

Mr ATKINSON: As a supplementary question, what would be the largest grants under that?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I think that KESAB would be the largest grant. The Conservation Council receives about \$60 000, but the figure is probably a bit higher than that this year; KESAB received \$150 000; the Conservation Council \$60 000; and the Australian Conservation Foundation about \$47 000.

Mr ATKINSON: The line to which I was referring is the proposed expenditure of \$126 100. Is there another line for grants? Is that the total over a number of years?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: For clarification, my miscellaneous line is broken up under a number of programs: the conservation policy and program development; flora, fauna and park management; pollution management, which is the grant to KESAB; I actually give some grants to various planning bodies; the National Building Code; the National Trust of South Australia under State Heritage Conservation; and I give a grant of a very significant amount to the Adelaide Zoo and to the zoo at Monarto. If there is any

further information in terms of amounts, I am happy to provide it to the honourable member.

Mr FERGUSON: I wish to raise the issue of muzzling of the American pit bull terriers. On 19 June, long before the latest incident in Sydney, the Minister announced that she favoured the muzzling of pit bull terriers, and that she favoured the fact that they should be on a leash when in public. Did any adverse comment follow that public statement about this particular activity, and has there been any further comment following the attack recently perpetrated in Sydney by a pit bull terrier?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: In answer to the first part of the question, no, I would have to say that it is quite the opposite. I have even received accolades from the editorial in the *News* about what I think people perceived to be a sensible and commonsense approach to handling this issue. I did not rush into making the decision to announce to the community that I would be looking at amending the Dog Control Act with respect to American pit bull terriers, to have them on a leash at all times in public, to have them muzzled and, indeed, to move to a desexing program for them.

I clearly separated out the American pit bull terrier from other breeds of dogs that have been described as vicious. I took advice from the Dog Advisory Committee—and there is wide representation on that committee from the Canine Association (in the person of Mr Bob Lott) and the Australian Veterinary Association, and a number of other relevant organisations and bodies. The policy I announced was one based on the advice of that committee. Subsequently, I have not received—there may have been one letter to the department—any adverse comment about those decisions. I do not think I even received correspondence from owners of American pit bull terriers.

The second part of the question relates to the response since the tragic death of the young baby in Sydney. The response has been a fairly reasoned discussion in the media. Keith Conlon set up a panel and discussed the matter—indeed, I was one of the people who spoke briefly on that. I think we must move forward in terms of ensuring that we minimise injuries from dog attacks, particularly to young children. We must move forward with a program of community education. It will not be just a matter of rushing in with wholesale legislation because, at the end of the day, most of the attacks occur within the family home. How does one legislate for people to have proper management and control of animals within their own homes?

I do not think it is appropriate to ban breeds of dogs because of a small percentage of dogs. That is not to say that I am not sensitive to and aware of the issues relating to the whole question of attacks, particularly on babies and small children. I am aware that a number of issues are being canvassed about whether we should look at the question of cross-breeding of dogs. I am not sure how one would achieve that; the breeding of dogs seems to be a normal process that takes place in the streets and back gardens of the city of Adelaide, and I am not sure how a Minister would intervene in that process, but that is one issue that has been raised. Looking at better forms of registration and how many dogs people can own are issues being considered by some councils. At the end of the day, we must mount programs on education. To that extent, pet week will be the first week in October. I am informed that we will be highlighting responsible ownership.

It is also a fact that, while some people say that the pure breeds are fine and that it is only cross-breeds that are responsible for attacks, other people are saying that there is evidence that that is not entirely the case, that there is

evidence which shows that even pure breeds are responsible for some of the attacks on young children, babies and, indeed, people walking down the street. This issue is like that of noise; we must have better education programs within the community. We must ensure somehow through cooperation within the community that there is more responsible pet ownership as well as proceeding with amending the Dog Control Act with respect to this breed of dog.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Prior to the last election, the Minister promised a comprehensive review of the national parks and their management. That review was to have involved the conservation movement, and I think some assurance was given to the Conservation Council that it would be involved. Does the Reserves Advisory Committee have the responsibility for that review and, if so, what resources are being provided to enable the committee to adequately consult on this vitally important issue? Once again, I note that amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act will be introduced. I remind the Minister that, in answer to a similar question this time last year, it was indicated that the legislation to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act would be introduced either towards the end of last year or at the beginning of this year.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, I have asked the Reserves Advisory Committee to be the vehicle by which the consultation process will take place. The development of policy and the development of, say, an assessment of a national park system is being undertaken. A special meeting convened by the Reserves Advisory Committee will be held with the full Conservation Council, and I understand that will be in October, next month. Already, the consultative process is certainly under way, and the Reserves Advisory Committee is taking responsibly and seriously the request that I have made to it. I will ask the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service to comment in relation to actual resources.

Mr Stafford: I also attend those meetings of the Reserves Advisory Committee, and I have that special meeting noted in my diary. It has not asked for extra resources, although the membership of the Reserves Advisory Committee has been increased with two excellent appointees who are making major contributions to this area. If they ask for extra resources as a result of those discussions with the conservation movement, we will have to see what we can provide under the current climate. The work is considered very important. It does tie in with the second part of the question, which is the amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act, and in that same context we are asking the Reserves Advisory Committee to look at the proposed amendments and to initiate a consultation process to make sure that the opportunity provided by amending the Act results in the best possible series of amendments at this point.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The amendments will be aimed at building a closer relationship between the consultative committees of the national parks and the park management and staff. We want to bring the responsibilities, input and consultation more closely together. I believe that that is something that will be welcomed by the community.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Page 299 of the Program Estimates under '1991-92 Specific Targets/Objectives' states:

Continue to promote the establishment of a high temperature waste incinerator complex.

How much emphasis is the Minister placing on the work that is being carried out by the CSIRO for the development of the plascon technology? There is general concern in the community about the transportation of toxic waste across various parts of the State. I suggest that the significant work

that is being carried out by the CSIRO needs to be considered, rather than just pressing ahead with the idea of establishing one high temperature waste incinerator.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We are not proposing to put our hand up to have a high temperature incinerator for the destruction of intractable waste in South Australia. However, the Australian and New Zealand Environment Ministers, through the council, have I think some responsibility for looking at and being part of the decision-making process, because it seems to me that it should not just be left to the two major population States of Victoria and New South Wales, where most of the intractable waste is located.

I fully concur with the point the honourable member has made. There is concern in the community about the transportation to any one site. I was actually brave and courageous enough, at a meeting with the chief executives of the environment departments who met here in Adelaide, to suggest that maybe we should be looking at a facility that could be taken from place to place, and that the incineration could take place where the wastes are actually stored, making sure, of course, that every environmental consideration is met and that there would be no discharges into the environment that would cause any problem within cities. It seemed to me that that was a proposal worth pursuing, because I share the view of the honourable member about the dangers of moving these highly toxic substances around the country to one focal point. I do not think that my point of view has prevailed. I have to say that; I am only one Minister on a council consisting of Ministers from right around the country.

I think it is important to recognise and consider the proposals of the CSIRO with respect to the destruction of this waste, whatever these proposals might be, because the CSIRO is at the forefront of the new technology and looking at ways in which we can destroy the waste. Having said that, I do not think we can sustain a position where we say, 'That is fine. We will put it on a ship and send it somewhere else and let someone else get rid of it.' I think that that is a highly immoral situation. It is my understanding that the United Kingdom, to which we send this intractable waste, will get to a stage where it will refuse to accept it. So, we have to find a solution within our own shores to dispose of our own intractable waste. I would ask Mr Stafford whether there is anything I should add.

Mr Stafford: The Minister has covered all the points that have been raised.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I ask the Minister to take the following questions on notice. How many parks and reserves in South Australia now have authorised management plans? How many management plans are being prepared at this stage? What parks have not yet had management plans prepared for them? How many officers within the department have the responsibility of preparing those plans?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: There has been a massive increase in the number of management plans that have been prepared for the many parks in South Australia. I would be very happy to provide the detailed information, given the short time we have left. I think the honourable member will be quite pleased, indeed he may even be delighted, with the number of management plans that are either in place or are being prepared.

Mr FERGUSON: On 4 July the Minister announced a grant for an environmental centre on the LeFevre Peninsula. Has that offer been taken up? If it has not, would the Minister be prepared to look at Henley Beach for an environmental centre? Many people would be very keen to provide the information, as has been suggested in the press release the Minister sent out.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The details are now being worked out by environmental groups on the LeFevre Peninsula. I am sure that the honourable member's offer will precipitate very fast action by those groups.

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

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

Works and Services—Minister of Water Resources,
Miscellaneous, \$3 256 000
Minister of Water Resources, Miscellaneous, \$784 000
Works and Services—Engineering and Water Supply
Department, \$5 600 000

Chairman:

The Hon. T.H. Hemmings

Members:

The Hon. P.B. Arnold
Mr M.J. Atkinson
Mr M.K. Brindal
Mr M.R. De Laine
Mr. D.M. Ferguson
The Hon. D.C. Wotton

Witness:

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

Departmental Advisers:

Mr E. Phipps, Chief Executive, Engineering and Water Supply Department.

Mr P.G. Cooper, Director, Operations.

Mr N.A. Killmier, Chief Operating Officer.

Mr P.A. Norman, Director, Technical Services.

Mr E.G. Haberfeld, Acting Director, Business and Information Services.

Mr R.E. Mander, Capital Accountant.

Mr G.W. Drilling, Operating Accountant.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would like to take this opportunity to advise the Committee of some of the major areas affecting the 1991-92 budget of the Engineering and Water Supply Department. As outlined in previous years, the longer-term objective of the E&WS's business plan was to become fully self-financing and thus have a nil draw on the State's Consolidated Account. That objective will be achieved within the proposed budget for 1991-92, which provides for a total contribution by the E&WS to the Consolidated Account of \$11.6 million. This compares with a net draw on the Consolidated Account during 1990-91 of \$24.1 million.

This means that in fact there will be a turnaround in the impact on the Consolidated Account of some \$35.7 million. With regard to the recently introduced new system of residential water rating, it is intended that this will be cost neutral and proposals for increased revenue during 1991-92 are the result of CPI adjustments to both rates and fees and charges and the growth in the number of customers served. The turnaround will therefore be achieved in the main by a combination of reduced expenditure levels in real terms in all areas of the E&WS Department's activities; that is, operations, maintenance, administration and the construction of capital works and some revenue growth.

Whilst the proposed expenditure reductions are significant, I am confident that they can be achieved through increased efficiency whilst maintaining a high level of cus-

tomers service and providing continued effective management of the State's resources. As a first step towards improved efficiency, the E&WS Department has commenced a reorganisation aimed at addressing the major objectives of efficient service delivery, good commercial performance and meeting the needs of the customers.

The E&WS will continue to accelerate its effort to give protection to inland water resources and the marine environment through the environmental enhancement program funded by the sewerage levy. I have reported in full to Parliament on the achievements of the first year of this program.

The highlights for 1991-92 include: Glenelg-Port Adelaide-Bolivar land disposal sludge main; the Murray Bridge sewage treatment works effluent disposal; the construction of the Port Lincoln sewage works; and the nutrient removal at the metropolitan sewage treatment works. For 1991-92 the E&WS will spend \$89.3 million in total on capital works, including \$8 million on the environmental enhancement program.

Other significant features of the total capital works program include \$7.8 million to continue the program to rehabilitate the metropolitan sewage treatment works; \$1.5 million for new water supply and sewerage infrastructure for the Seaford development; \$4 million for commencement of construction of the Myponga water filtration plant and \$2.5 million to complete the Happy Valley water filtration plant and ancillary works; \$10.9 million for ongoing information technology projects to upgrade and replace inflexible, outdated and inefficient systems; \$2.3 million to complete the Torrens River works package between OG Road, Klemzig and Green Drive, Paradise and the outer eastern sector of Athelstone and Highbury; and \$6.1 million as South Australia's share of the capital works constructed on behalf of the Murray-Darling Basin commission.

This gives a very brief outline of the major activities of the E&WS Department this financial year, the details of which are provided in the budget papers. I believe that the E&WS Department's program is a very responsible one given the funding available and will provide the State with effective management and improvement of its water supply, sewerage and irrigation facilities and at the same time provide a continued high level of service to its customers. I now have pleasure in presenting the estimates of receipts and payments for the Engineering and Water Supply Department to the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw members' attention to Standing Order 273 (3), given that we are considering all three lines, and I declare the proposed payments open for examination.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The financial statements and the Minister in her opening statement have referred to the contribution of \$11.6 million to this year's budget. Is this the first time that such a contribution has been made by the E&WS Department? Further, why is this \$11.6 million not going towards paying off the costs associated with infrastructure, recognising the vast sums being paid in interest on borrowings, for example, rather than going into general revenue? If my calculations are correct, it is anticipated that some \$128 million will be required to cover the interest on borrowings for this financial year.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The answer to the honourable member's question is that, yes, it is the first year that the E&WS Department will make a contribution to the Consolidated Account. It is interesting to note that, in much of the discussion about the water rate issue, much of the propaganda put around was that we are supposed to be using the water rates to increase the Government's revenue.

I want to make clear from the outset that that is not the case. Indeed, we are looking at operating a much more efficient, effective, and streamlined organisation, and I have clearly identified from where the money is coming and that the new system is revenue neutral. That is what it is designed to be and I believe that that is what it will achieve.

I refer to the second part of the honourable member's question. The honourable member, having been a Cabinet Minister earlier in his career, would be aware of the decisions which Cabinet makes as a whole with respect to all budgetary decisions. We do not just have a budget designed for one agency or one department. In the past, members opposite have certainly cried out for an increase in police, teachers, hospitals, facilities, and other areas. In the discussions and decision-making with respect to the budget process, it was determined that the Engineering and Water Supply Department would aim to achieve a contribution of \$11.6 million to the budget. We had already organised a consultancy to look at the structure of the department in terms of meeting our dual objectives of a customer service and the very important management of our natural resources and, in particular, water.

I believe that we are working cooperatively, from the Minister through to those answering telephones in the department and those working to implement the services that we provide, to achieve this target. It is a realistic target and it is important to achieve it. Certainly it is one of the areas I will be looking at very closely in the future in terms of retiring some of the debt and reducing our interest payments. At the end of the day, it is important that we recognise that every department forms part of a governmental team and that in some years some departments need to make contributions to the budget and other departments are the recipients of some of those contributions. I will ask the Chief Operating Officer, Mr Neil Killmier, to specifically provide the Committee with some of those figures.

Mr Killmier: The breakdown of the \$11.6 million may be of interest to members of the Committee. The revenue of the department budgeted for 1991-92 is \$364.9 million, with expenditure estimated at \$356.1 million, giving a profit of \$8.8 million. Capital expenditure is estimated to be \$89.3 million, and we estimate a repayment of the capital. In other words, the capital expenditure will be self-financing to the extent that we will be in a position to repay some \$2.8 million.

So, the impact of the Engineering and Water Supply Department on the State budget is a positive \$11.6 million, which compares very favourably with the budgeted result last year of \$24.1 million. The actual result did better than the budgeted figure. Last year's budget was for a \$30.9 million contribution from Treasury to the department, and that is turned around to a \$11.6 million contribution by the department to Consolidated Account.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: As a supplementary question, can the Minister provide details, on notice, relating to interest on borrowings in both the metropolitan and country water and sewerage programs?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Has the funding detailed in the Estimates of Payments to cover the cost of depreciation of fixed assets actually been set aside for the purpose of covering the cost of replacing such assets? If so, in which fund is that money being held?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is my understanding that the money set aside in terms of replacement of assets is actually being used to do just that—to actually replace assets. We are allowing for a depreciation cost. It is actually being used

in terms of the replacement of assets. I will ask the Chief Operating Officer if he wants to add anything.

Mr Killmier: I had reason last night to examine the Broken Hill Pty Ltd Company's annual report, and it is standard procedure, as I understand it, for private companies to use depreciation provisions to finance the provision of new assets, rather than just set aside a large sum of cash in anticipation of a replacement in many years time. In the case of water supply and sewerage, where the lives of assets are very long, there would not be a good case to put aside money for 100 years, I would suggest, in anticipation of future expenditure. Whereas the department some years ago relied on a sinking fund arrangement, we are now making full provision for depreciation.

Part of the earlier question was how much money is provided for depreciation. In the Auditor-General's Report at page 78, the provisions for depreciation are identified by business undertaking. In the case of metropolitan water, it is of the order of \$17 million; country water, \$18 million; metropolitan sewerage, \$10.7 million; country sewerage, \$1.6 million; and irrigation, \$1.3 million. The total depreciation included in the financial accounts for 1990-91 for all the business undertakings came to approximately \$49 million.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: With respect to the previous supplementary question, I refer the honourable member to page 78 of the 1990-91 Auditor-General's Report. There is clearly listed the interest payments for each of the categories to which the honourable member has referred. Also, I refer him to page 115 and subsequent pages of the Estimates of Payments 1991-92, and again the interest on borrowings under each of the programs is very clearly stated. That will save the time and expense of the Committee.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Supplementary to that, are the assets being replaced at the rate of decline? I understand that not very long ago concern was expressed that that was not the case. Is the Minister suggesting that that situation has now turned around?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will refer that question to Mr Peter Cooper in terms of the actual rate of replacement. I am aware of the general principle of the matter and the direction it is taking.

Mr Cooper: The Engineering and Water Supply Department did prepare an internal report and subsequently reported to the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee on the rate of capital expenditure that would be required over future years, in the long term, to replace assets. That report indicated that we had to spend considerable sums in the next five, 10 or 15 years. However, since that time, we have established a special unit in the department to look at asset lives, and all our work is indicating that we should be able to get a considerably extended life out of many of our assets than is used in the accounting calculations at present, particularly in relation to pipes underground.

We have done much investigation work, statistical work and examinations and, when we apply those longer lives to our assets, we find a much reduced demand in the near future of capital funds. In fact, we have worked into our capital works program over the next five years—we have done this for the past two or three years—all the key assets and critical elements that we believe need to be replaced to prevent a major failure or breakdown of service. We have been able to inject those into our five year capital works program.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: The answer to this question may need to be taken on notice, but will the Minister provide details regarding the actual cost to the E&WS Department of paying out its old loans at the common

public sector interest rate rather than at the actual rate that applied to funds when borrowed?

Mr Killmier: We will need to take that on notice, but I do not believe that Treasury recorded individual loans against the E&WS Department, even under the old arrangements. Unlike ETSA, which I believe had its own records, we were always part of the overall Treasury arrangements. SAFA, of course, has been operating for a number of years, but I do not believe that particular loans were ever identified as being allocated to the E&WS Department. I can go back only 38 years!

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That is probably quite an adequate period of recollection, as I am sure the honourable member would agree.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: While recognising that the establishment of the environment protection authority is still in the discussion stage, what does the Minister see as being the implication of setting up such an authority as far as the E&WS Department is concerned, particularly as it relates to the department's responsibility under the Water Resources Act? Also, how does she see the future role of the Water Resources Council as being part of the establishment of the environment protection authority?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We have released a discussion paper that canvasses a number of issues, looking at the way in which we can better manage and ensure the protection and enhancement of the environment. In so doing, we have made very clear that all Government agencies and departments will be treated in the same way, without fear or favour, as will any private company. In terms of the complementing of the new Environment Protection Act and the Water Resources Act, I will be trying to ensure that there is no contradiction and that no areas fall between the two Acts.

Not only must the department be seen to be complying with the same standards and requirements as the private sector, but we must actually be doing that. It will require some functions that are currently carried out by the department being transferred across to the environment protection authority. That will be done with proper consultation.

There has already been some degree of consultation, as this green paper has been considered by the Natural Resources Management Standing Committee, which has representation from a wide range of Government departments, not only from the E&WS Department but from the Department of Fisheries and a range of agencies that have some quite legitimate interests in and input into the establishment of an EPA and the passage of an Environment Protection Act. It is important that a department that has to set water quality standards under its own Act should have those standards monitored by an independent agency. The E&WS Department has absolutely no problems with that requirement.

With respect to the role and function of the Water Resources Council, I had a meeting this week with the Chair of the council, and these are some of the issues at which we must look. Not only do we have a Water Resources Council but we have a number of other councils which operate in South Australia and which give advice to the Minister in various portfolio areas.

I have indicated that we will establish a natural resources council. In the fullness of time, it may be that, instead of having this plethora of councils, particularly in rural areas where the same people are having to travel to meetings across very large distances, in some cases, there might be a gradual working together of some of these councils to establish some form of natural resources advisory council.

At this stage, it is a matter of talking to the members of councils and of advisory committees to see what the community itself feels is appropriate. I as Minister am not coming in and disbanding any council, saying 'This is what you will have.' It might be that the Water Resources Council continues in a role very similar to that which it has now. It is a little early to be definitive about any future directions for the environmental protection council, because we will establish an environment protection authority and will look again at the EPA's role and function.

We would need to look at the future role of a natural resources council and how that will interrelate with the Water Resources Council and the advisory committees. What about such committees as the Land Care Committees and the Soil Conservation Boards? We also have the Pastoral Board, a number of advisory boards and a number of boards that make decisions in South Australia.

The time is approaching when we as a community will need to sit down and look at the function of all these committees and boards to see whether they can be brought closer together in order to maximise the talents and commitment of people in rural areas, in particular, and that we do not expect people to travel huge distances several times a month to give us advice as part of the decision-making process when they could travel once a month and be part of a specialist subcommittee of an overall committee.

I have a very open mind on this. I would be seeking the advice of the various committees that give me advice and support, in many cases, but I do not have a definitive position at this stage.

Mr FERGUSON: In relation to the \$13 million sludge pipeline that was announced on 8 September, will the Minister guarantee that the operation will commence by the end of 1993? I note that she has allocated \$3.2 million for the 1991-92 budget. Will the Minister detail what that budget will actually do and how far we will proceed with the project?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Barring some horrendous natural disasters over which no-one in this Parliament or outside has control, it is my intention as well as that of the Government and of the department to ensure that sludge is removed from the gulf by the end of 1993. To meet that commitment, the department has done an enormous amount of work behind the scenes, implementing the route for the pipeline and looking at the kind of technology that is needed to ensure that there are no environmental downsides so that we are not creating problems at Bolivar by ameliorating the problems in the marine environment.

We have been able to give commitments in regard to those environmental situations. I am aware of the preliminary planning and of the fact that this project has passed through the Public Works Standing Committee, and some members of this Committee may have better recall than I have. In order to get the information on the record, I will ask one of my officers to elaborate on the question of what the \$3.2 million will achieve for us in terms of meeting that objective.

Mr Killmier: As the Minister has said, we are very close to obtaining Cabinet approval for this project.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: May I just interpose and say that Cabinet approved this project on Monday.

Mr Killmier: With the concurrence of the Public Works Committee, we did jump the gun to some extent and went out and obtained approval to call tenders for pipes. Now that Cabinet has approved the project, we are in a position where we can let the pipe contract. Delivery of those pipes will be within the next month or two, so construction can commence virtually forthwith. Mr Norman may be able to

give us more detail of what work will be completed this financial year.

Mr Norman: The project consists of a 37 kilometre length of 200 millimetre pipe to convey digested sludge from the Glenelg sewage treatment works and then along a northerly line to the Port Adelaide sewage treatment works before heading through the streets of various suburbs including Queenstown, Rosewater, Ottoway, and Wingfield to Dry Creek and then heading in a northerly direction to the Bolivar treatment works. That pipe will be buried along that 37 kilometre long route.

Other works associated with the project are some pumping facilities at each of those treatment works in order to transfer the sludge which is presently disposed of four kilometres offshore into the marine environment. The work to be done during this financial year, valued at \$3.2 million, will commence a sizeable proportion of that construction work both in the purchase and the laying of the pipes along that route commencing at the Glenelg sewage treatment works. The completion of the project is scheduled for the end of 1993.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The total cost of that project is \$13 million and we are taking the advice and direction of the Public Works Standing Committee in that there will be thorough and adequate consultation with the communities along the route of the pipeline so that people will have advance notice of any disruption to streets, footpaths or whatever, particularly within the electorates of members opposite. I note the presence of the member for Albert Park in the gallery and, if the pipeline affects his electorate, that will also be the case for his constituents.

I noted that the Public Works Standing Committee requested that information be made available. I have already had a meeting with members of the Henley and Grange council and informed them they will be given the information as soon as it is to hand.

Mr FERGUSON: I understand that, at the Port Adelaide pumping works, salt and other difficulties arising from problems associated with being close to the sea caused the pipes to corrode. Has there been any improvement in the technology associated with these pipes that have been installed as opposed to the pipes that were installed in 1936?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The short answer to that is 'Yes', but I think the Committee wants something more technical than my assurance, so I will ask Mr Norman if he would very briefly like to explain the difference in the pipes.

Mr Norman: The pipes that were laid in the early years in the Port Adelaide and coastal areas probably suffered significant corrosion. They were concrete sewers that have corroded very badly. Technology has come a long way since those days. The pipe proposed for this project is plastic PVC that will withstand quite adequately corrosive elements on the outside as well as perhaps on the inside of the pipe, and its life will be 80 years or more.

Mr FERGUSON: In the Minister's press release she stated that the commitment to improve the marine environment would help reduce the rate of the dying off of seagrasses. Does the Minister have an estimate as to the recovery of the seagrasses once we have stopped pumping sludge into the gulf?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Before I ask for any technical answer, I would say it is true that the removal of sludge from the marine environment will help to slow down the degradation of the seagrasses, but I think it is important to make it clear to the Committee, and anyone who chooses to read *Hansard*, that sludge is but one element in terms

of the degradation of seagrasses and the marine environment generally.

There are two other significant factors. Of course, one is the treated effluent because, as members would know, the effluent still contains high levels of nutrients, that is, phosphorus and nitrogen. We have also made a commitment that we will move, when we have removed the sludge from the gulf, to look at the way in which we can remove nutrients, but particularly the nutrient nitrogen, which has the most impact in terms of the seagrasses.

The other thing that must be recognised, and I know that members probably do recognise this, is that, even if the E&WS were able by some miracle to do this tomorrow, there is still the impact of stormwater run-off. It is the most contributing factor, on my reading of the research (and I say 'my reading of the research', because I do not pretend to be an expert on this). This diffuse source discharge into the marine environment has the most significant effect on that environment and, in particular, on seagrasses.

Because we can quantify at the end of a pipe how much of the seagrass has died back or has actually been removed in one way or another, we tend to concentrate on that problem and see it as the only effect on the seagrasses, but in fact it is the diffuse sources that are causing the greatest problem and it is the next major issue that we as a community must tackle head on. We will have to take hard decisions if we are serious about cleaning up the marine environment.

I would not want anyone to gain the impression that, by just taking the sludge out and perhaps removing nitrogen, we have solved the whole problem, because I do not think that would be an honest appraisal of the whole situation. Having said that, I will ask Mr Norman whether we have done any preliminary modelling, or if there are any preliminary figures on just what will be the effect of the removal of sludge at this stage.

Mr Norman: Associated with the current discharges of sludge from the Port Adelaide and Glenelg treatment works four kilometres offshore, there are quite distinct patches of degradation associated with the end points of those two discharges. Whilst we have not done specific research to look at the rate or the likelihood of regrowth that might occur in those degraded areas, the expectation is that, given time, that will occur.

The area of degradation is quite significant if one looks at the area in absolute terms. However, if one looks at it in percentage terms of the available seagrass meadows off the metropolitan coastline, the percentage is quite small. It is quite reasonable to expect that regrowth will occur once the effect of the sludge discharge at those two locations is removed. As the Minister has quite rightly pointed out, the process of degradation has been caused principally by the nutrients associated with those discharges and by the very high turbidity associated with them which prevents light getting to those seagrass meadows. With the removal of the nutrients and the turbid flow, restoration will certainly proceed. However, the timeframe is uncertain.

Mr FERGUSON: As a supplementary question regarding the organic fertiliser, I assume that we will get much more sludge used for organic fertiliser than we are getting at the moment. Will it go through a private company for marketing, or will the department market the product?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: First, the company, Top Australia, now has the contract to use that fertiliser and, indeed, we would intend to continue that. However, as I have made clear in the past, we are not 100 per cent certain that we will be able to use all of the sludge for fertiliser, so it may

be required to be disposed of in a land-based disposal burying type procedure.

As I understand it, we are looking with the Department of Environment and Planning at land-based sources that would be appropriate. It is quite obvious that we would not want to dispose of it somewhere which would cause a further environmental problem. We are spending a lot of money on solving one problem, and we will not be in the business of creating a further problem for ourselves. We will certainly use the maximum amount of sludge that we can for fertiliser, and the remainder will be disposed of on land. Perhaps Mr Norman can add something to that.

Mr Norman: The concept of disposal of sludge has been exceptionally valuable to the community of South Australia in being able to dispose of it by blending it into organic fertilisers over the years, so that the sludge from the Bolivar works has been disposed of annually in that way. With the augmentation of the volume of sludge at Bolivar with the soon to be transported volumes from Glenelg and Port Adelaide, that outlet may not be sufficient to cater for that full capacity. As the Minister indicated, we are looking at other options, one of which may indeed kill two birds with one stone environmentally: the rehabilitation of the Brukunga mine site. Although the mine is a long distance from Bolivar, it may well be in the community's interests to transport some of the sludge over that long distance to help solve that environmental problem which still exists.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Can the Minister provide details relating to the applications that have been made under the Water Resources Act to pump effluent into the waterways, which is a result of amendments made to that Act last year? Can the Minister provide details in relation to the ongoing need to pump that effluent into the waterways? The Minister would be very much aware of the concern expressed about this practice by both State and local government agencies, and I would like to be brought up to date on this issue.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I thank the honourable member for his question. Since July 1990 when the new Act came into force, a total of 28 licences have been issued to various industries throughout South Australia. Most of those licences were issued to major point source or water pollution discharges such as piggeries, wineries, quarries, etc. A further 14 applications for sewage treatment works and septic tank effluent drainage scheme discharges to water courses inside the water protection areas are currently being processed. These applications were advertised in May 1991, one month prior to the expiry date of temporary authorisation through the regulations.

The sewage treatment works licence applications, which are currently being processed, are located at Angaston, Gumeracha, Hahndorf, Millicent, Murray Bridge, Myponga and Naracoorte. The septic tank effluent drainage schemes licence applications, which are currently being processed, are located at Birdwood, Lyndoch, Meadows, Mount Pleasant, Nuriootpa, Tanunda and Williamstown.

I think it is important to note that we have seen discussion in the media, much of which was generated in response to the advertising of the sewage treatment works and septic tank effluent drainage scheme applications. This created an impression that these were new discharges of treated sewage, and that it was proposed that we would now have these new discharges. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. It was a matter of ensuring that all discharges complied with the new Act. The South Australian Water Resources Council is reviewing the licence conditions for these discharges, and I understand a submission will be brought to me some time later this month recommending

the issue of licences for these operations in accordance with these conditions. In other words, the conditions that were laid down in the Water Resources Act will be met, and they will be set and assessed by the Water Resources Council and referred to me for implementation.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Does that information provide details regarding the Government and local government agencies that have sought an application? I am not interested in, nor will I be able to obtain information on, the private facilities that have applied for licences. Does the information provided by the Minister give detail relating to all State and local government agencies?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The information that I have read out relates to the E&WS Department and local government. Quite obviously, the private applications are just as important because the creek, stream or lake will not differentiate between whether the discharges come from a private or public source.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I was interested to see the payment to be made to continue the works along the Torrens River linear park area. I commend my colleague, the member for Chaffey, on an excellent initiative. While I am pleased to see that funding will continue, I am more concerned about the actual quality of the water that is running in the river rather than just the division of the linear park. Is the Minister or are her officers able to indicate the role the E&WS is playing to improve the quality of the Torrens River water both at the stream and within the lake in the city of Adelaide?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: This is another environmental issue that has gained complete bipartisan support. I, too, would like to acknowledge what was a very exciting initiative that was implemented by one of the former Ministers, the member for Chaffey. I am pleased to have the carriage of implementing and finishing off what will be the longest linear park of any capital city in this country.

The very nature of the establishment of the linear park will, by itself, have a significant impact on improving the quality of water in the Torrens River. Many of the problems of water quality have resulted from the degraded banks and have been because that there are no wetlands to filter out the stormwater that comes into the area. Of course, the member for Chaffey would well recall that one of the fundamental reasons for establishing the linear park was the flood mitigation concept which was vitally important and which is still one of the important considerations. The fact that it will enhance the environment aesthetically is another important aspect.

However, neither of those can be done without improving the quality of the water. As part of the completion of the Torrens linear park, the E&WS is currently involved in and has undertaken concept designs of a multiple purpose demonstration wetland on a tributary feeding into one of the areas. The department is overseeing the design of this wetland on the Torrens River at the Athelstone/Highbury area as part of the linear park and, of course, as I said, the flood mitigation scheme to reduce the impact of stormwater on the pollution levels downstream.

I do not think it is a matter of looking at the latest engineering technology; it is a matter of using the experience, which will soon become a practical reality, of the Onkaparinga estuary, whereby the best solution was the simplest and most environmentally sound solution of using natural ponding and wetlands to filter out such matters as nutrients, bacteria, heavy metals and other pollutants. The very nature of establishing a linear park will, in itself, help to improve the quality of the water.

I think the second part of the answer to that question is vitally important, because it is also about community education. We cannot expect the E&WS, for example, to police the whole of the Torrens River to ensure that people do not throw their rubbish into the river. As the honourable member would know, when the Adelaide City Council cleans the Torrens River, it finds such things as car tyres, domestic rubbish, car bodies and all kinds of unmentionables. Surely, that is not the role and function of the E&WS; that is a community responsibility.

I have said consistently about not only the Torrens River but also the Sturt Creek and every other waterway that we must work constructively and cooperatively with local government but, most importantly we must work with the community itself. So, while the Engineering and Water Supply Department is putting its money on the table, coordinating and working with local councils to complete the Torrens River linear park and, by the very nature of that project, cleaning up the quality of the water, the project has to be a tripartite agreement between the community, all the local councils along the river and, indeed, the Government through the agency of the E&WS.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Can the Minister provide the total cost to the State of water filtration so far, including the proposed water filtration plant at Myponga?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is in the ballpark of \$200 million. We can provide the breakdown of those figures. In fact, I think I probably have given them to the Parliament from time to time but we can provide an update, including Myponga. As I mentioned in my introductory statement, we are moving to finish the last stage of Happy Valley, then we will move into Myponga. It is my fervent hope that we can then move on to finish a filtration plant at Swan Reach, with which I am sure the Barossa residents will be delighted. Of course, that again must be a Cabinet decision and will be subject to a budgetary allocation. Certainly, I think every Minister for Water Resources in South Australia would like to see the completion of those major filtration plants, followed by the filtration plants for the Murray River towns.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: I would hope that one day it might include water for the Hills. It seems as though people in the Hills will be the only ones who will be left out.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: As the Chief Operating Officer has told me on a number of occasions, he is not on E&WS water himself: he is on water that he has to collect in large tanks. I am sure that he would probably share the honourable member's desire. As the honourable member well knows, it is a matter of economics; we must service the largest population areas first. In terms of the cost of providing that filtered water—and the honourable member would know that the pipeline comes through—we would have to pump it back up from the Happy Valley plant.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We could spend all night on this, but we will not. Certainly, we would like to provide filtered water to the whole of South Australia. At the end of the day it is a matter of cost. As the honourable member knows, we have the poorest quality raw water in our catchment area, and that is why I am taking decisions about the Mount Lofty Ranges review and the supplementary development plan. Whether or not we have our reservoirs full at the end of every winter, we still have to pump from the Murray, and the honourable member knows the quality that we get at this end of the river. I think we do a pretty magnificent job in providing the quality of water we do. I do not take credit for that; I am prepared to give the credit to our forebears who had the foresight to implement some of the policies of which we are now seeing the benefits.

Mr Killmier: We have done some preliminary work on future possibilities for water filtration after Swan Reach. Essentially, the areas that will not be served by filtered water at that stage are the Murray River towns (the major Murray River town is Murray Bridge) and also some areas in the Hills—Mount Barker, Crafers, Stirling, Aldgate, Nairne and places like that. While there have been no decisions taken, and in fact the Minister has not had a detailed submission put to her at this stage, clearly the size of the task has been looked at and the water quality in the various areas has been assessed. In the end, the priorities will probably determine themselves in that, essentially, it will be about being able to maintain an appropriate bacteriological quality of water to those people who are not in a filtered area. Perhaps Mr Norman could give a more detailed answer to that.

Mr Norman: The department is investigating the possibilities, taking on board the fact that we are not blessed with good raw water quality in this State. We are now down to the scale of systems that are relatively small compared with the plants that we have already commissioned and those that we have on our books to commission in the form of the Myponga and Swan Reach water filtration plants. We have been attacking the larger scale systems first, and where the public health interests are perhaps greatest. We are now able to turn our attention to these smaller scale systems. As has just been reported, information is being prepared in the department to address those various systems by looking at water quality in the systems and preparing cost estimates for treating those supplies. The department will be providing advice to the Government so that we, as a community, can be prepared to provide treatment for those communities as and when funds might become available.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 61 of the capital works program, which refers to the Port Adelaide Sewage Treatment Works. I note that \$1.028 million has been allocated this financial year for that plant. Will current equipment be replaced or upgraded? If so, which equipment, and what are the costing details?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask Mr Cooper to give a brief answer, and any other information we will be happy to provide later to the honourable member and the member for Albert Park.

Mr Cooper: I can give a detailed run-down later. The short answer is that part of it is for upgrading equipment. Some of it will be an initial investigation into the replacement of the engines at the Port Adelaide Treatment Works which have given us phenomenal service by world standards. We are replacing, upgrading and improving the telemetry and control systems; we are repairing the roofs of two digesters; and we are upgrading other machinery and equipment. So, a significant amount of that \$1 million is for upgrading and improvement. The honourable member can rest assured that the equipment will be maintained in good condition.

I also point out that currently we have a consultancy looking at the Port Adelaide Treatment Works with a view to significant upgrading, if necessary, to meet any new environmental discharge conditions that might be placed on the works. That consultancy is well advanced and at present it is looking at developing a possibility of building a pilot plant in the works to see what would be the best way of modifying the processes at the existing plant to raise the levels of quality of that effluent.

Mr De LAINE: With the announcement that a detailed feasibility study will be undertaken for MFP Adelaide, is the E&WS Department doing any investigation into the

provision of water supply, sewerage services and stormwater management for the Gillman MFP site?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Yes, a considerable amount of work is being done. My departments—both Environment and Planning and, in respect of this question in particular, E&WS—are aware of a number of areas. One of the positive benefits of the proposed MFP is that there is a major thrust to provide a new community that is as environmentally up to date as is possible in terms of using the latest technology for things like water treatment, the treatment of stormwater run-off and the treatment of sewage and effluent, and to be able to reuse that water on three levels: black water, grey water and potable water.

There is a proposal to look at implementing such a progressive scheme of water use and reuse. As well, there are a whole range of other initiatives that would look at much better management for straight out stormwater run-off, and there are a number of other areas such as the creation of wetlands, having small villages or communities linked with ribbons of green, or wildlife linear parks, so that we can maximise the whole regeneration of that area through not only cleaning up the existing site and better use of our natural resources but also enhancing the environment by a greening process whereby a tree and planting exercise would be undertaken. We will look at ways in which transport in such an area would be conducted.

The concepts with which we have all grown up will certainly not be used in the development of the MFP. We would minimise energy usage, such that all houses would need to have the five-star energy rating, even down to things like not being able to have air-conditioning unless it was using the evaporative models. I do not purport to be an expert on the MFP. I am involved only to the extent that my departments have had direct input into the processes, but it is an exciting opportunity for us to look at new ways of providing water and new ways of using the water that we have provided, new ways of dealing with stormwater run-off and a much more environmentally conscious use of that water and of all forms of non-renewable energy resources and non-renewable resources.

Mr De LAINE: We are all familiar with the odour problems that emanate from the Bolivar sewage treatment works, which my colleague, the member for Playford, constantly talks about. What progress is the department making in reducing the odour problems at the Bolivar treatment works?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I have been giving attention to this for some time. Following an increase in the number of complaints from the public residing in some of the new developments that spread towards the Bolivar sewage treatment works, the department proceeded in the first instance with an oxygen injection and chlorine injection trial program. The aim of the trials is to reduce the sulphide. We are all aware of the rotten eggs gas—the hydrogen sulphide—which is a significant part of the odour problem, and the need to reduce the amount of hydrogen sulphide released from the Bolivar works.

Unfortunately, the odours cannot be eliminated under all conditions at all times because of the sulphide content of the incoming sewage. The content fluctuates widely. Whilst one can have an oxygen injection scheme—and we have that—followed by a chlorine injection scheme, we would need some enormously sophisticated monitoring system whereby one could monitor somehow upstream the levels of the sulphides and then adjust doses quickly, and a computer technology for that would be expensive.

We are on the leading edge of some of this technology because there are no programs in the country that do this. We have had to move forward with a bit of trial and error.

We had some problems in the beginning when the inmates of Yatala decided to literally stuff up the system by putting bedding and all kinds of other clothing and rags down the system. That caused this experimental oxygen injection plant to stop almost dead in its tracks.

We have overcome that. We now have screening processes to remove any obstacles that people put, legally or illegally, down the sewers. The chemical dosing facilities cost approximately \$750 000 to install and about \$1 million per annum to run. So, we are not talking about a cheap solution to solve the odour problem. To assess the effectiveness of the two installations, the department and I have established what we lovingly refer to as the 'odour panel'. This is a panel of community and Government representatives who monitor the odours from the plant. In addition, 35 local residents give reliable and regular data about any odours they smell. I have to say that these people's noses have become attuned to distinguishing between different kinds of odours, I am led to believe, so we now have quite an expert odour panel.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: How do you determine that it is reliable?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: That is a very good question. I guess we would have to ask members of the panel. The chemical treatment has drastically and dramatically reduced odours in the primary treatment area. With this area being substantially controlled, it has, however, highlighted continuing odour from the secondary treatment. That is important. We have controlled the primary area and it is now the secondary area that is the problem, and that is the plant biological filters. These odours do not appear to be significantly reduced by the lower sulphide levels in the incoming sewage. In other words, because of the work we have done we have been able to identify the various aspects of the problem. We have solved one aspect, but we have not solved the second part at this stage.

I have my own views and I do not know whether they necessarily accord with those of the department. In fact, from my inspection of this biological plant filter system, it seems to me that we are pumping gases up through the sludge we are treating and therefore it is going into the atmosphere. I have asked the department to look into a reverse process to pump the air down through the sludge to aerate it, rather than the other way. I am calling on my schoolgirl physics and chemistry here, but that seems to make a lot of sense to me, if we are to try to control the way in which the odours are disseminated through the community. However, I am not an engineer and I do not pretend to be one. I am sure Mr Cooper is dying to tell me why I cannot do that; never mind, it will have to be a good answer.

The trial to investigate the collection of odorous air from one of the 12 biological filters will commence this month, so we might see a significant improvement in terms of the odour problem in the future, once we have the results of these trials. I was being a little humorous there, I hope. Seriously, however, I think it is important that we address this issue. We are doing everything possible and spending a lot of money. I will ask Mr Cooper to enlarge on that answer, from his long engineering perspective.

Mr Cooper: The Minister has very comprehensively dealt with the sulphide topic, and I can support her by adding that the continuous measuring of sulphides in the field and the registering of levels is an extremely difficult chemical activity with known technologies. We are working with the people in our laboratory, who are world leaders in many of their activities, to achieve this. I believe that we are making

minor modifications and I think that we will be able to cover the majority, if not all of the sulphides.

It is interesting that we are going back into our system, trying to chase out the big sulphide producers who are discharging into the system, and they happen to be tanneries. In fact, the biggest tannery of all is currently installing very expensive treatment to bring those sulphides back to the acceptable levels that have been established for a long time in the discharge to the sewerage system. We believe that going out into the system and reducing the sulphide inputs will go a long way toward helping us in that area.

With regard to biological filters, in addition to what the Minister has said, last week we engaged a consultant to come up with a conceptual design for covering the 12 biological filters, exhausting that air, taking it away and treating it. That will give us an order of cost to assess whether we should continue with that type of approach. In addition, we are experimenting with one filter, as the Minister mentioned, dragging the air down through the filter and deodorising that gas, rather than letting it go through the filter the other way. So we have two or three fingers in the pie, as it were, in attending to the bio-filters, and it is a matter of finding out what the costs will be.

Finally, we have four major consultants with internationally associated bodies in Australia tendering at present for a total review of the Bolivar Sewage Treatment Works, along with the Glenelg and Christies Beach sewage treatment works. These are major reviews of the whole process, a little bit like I described for the Port Adelaide works earlier, although Port Adelaide is more advanced. One of the modules of their investigation into Bolivar will be to totally assess from an independent point of view everything that we have done at Bolivar as far as odour controls are concerned.

Mr HAMILTON: I thank the Committee for the opportunity to raise a question with the Minister. Whilst members might initially think that my question has some levity attached to it, I can assure them that it is a very serious question. Will the Minister advise what actions the department is taking to stop unlawful access into the Port Adelaide Sewage Treatment Works. The mind boggles somewhat as to why people might want to be on the premises of the Port Adelaide Sewage Treatment Works unlawfully. However, the complaints I have received from residents are serious. The residents in Lakeview Crescent and Mariners Court, West Lakes, have complained to me that burglars are using the Port Adelaide Sewage Treatment Works grounds as an access point to enter the backyards and premises of adjoining properties. This has caused considerable anger and distress amongst many residents in that area.

It has been requested that I raise this matter with the Minister in this Committee to see what actions will be taken: (a) to secure the perimeter of the Port Adelaide Sewage Treatment Works; (b) to find out why the gates are so open for anyone to be able to walk into the premises; and (c) to ascertain what security arrangements, if any, are currently in train or proposed to be taken, particularly in terms of erecting barbed wire around the top of the fence to prevent unlawful access into the premises and thereby eliminating the opportunity for this unsavoury element to harass my constituents.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The reason that we do not have high levels of security at our sewage treatment plants is that in the past we have not had a problem with people wanting to break into them. Quite obviously I will not go into the reasons for that. However, I am aware of the seriousness of the issue for the member for Albert Park's constituents, where people are using this as a way of getting in and out

of residences and causing a great deal of heartache and upset. I ask Mr Cooper to outline whether he has already addressed this issue or whether he is in the process of doing so and to say what action he would recommend to try to solve this problem.

Mr Cooper: It is disappointing that this has happened. This is a plant that a lot of people do not want next door to them and we have been at great pains to try to do everything to have excellent relations with our neighbours. One of the actions that we took was to plant a virtual forest of trees down at Port Adelaide Sewage Treatment Works. That has drawn a great deal of admiring comment from many people but now, unfortunately, it has provided a shield for unscrupulous people to come into the works and to back up to the fence and load things over.

It is very disappointing to us. Obviously through the day we do have the gates open. For minimisation of costs, we do not have people on the gates; we run a trust situation, and it has worked very well to date. This is the first time anything like this has ever happened, to my knowledge. Clearly, I cannot give all the details. When we have reviewed the whole situation, I will be able to do so.

At our water filtration plants, especially those being manned at night, we have very comprehensive protection beam systems, backed up with other systems, that are beamed automatically to people on duty, and they will come in, call the police or whatever. We will have to look at that sort of thing along with, as the honourable member says, perhaps barbed wire, and certainly the control of the gates. I am very disappointed at what has happened. It was operating very well on trust. A number of people use it as a small base for those who maintain pipes out in the district. The treatment works people have a little entrance. We have left it open, and people have come and gone throughout the day. I understand that the honourable member is referring to a daytime job, if I can use that terminology. That is extremely disappointing, and I will forward details in due course of what we will have to do.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Through the honourable member, the department can offer to liaise with his constituents in terms of what they would see as the solution, and perhaps he may wish to convene a meeting with a senior officer of the department to look at addressing this problem.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: As to the earlier discussion about the sludge pipeline and taking the sludge across to Bolivar for land based disposal, having disposed of the sludge, the effluent remains that is still going out into the gulf. What is the chemical makeup of that effluent? What heavy metals are still contained in it? What effect is that having not on the grasses but on the marine life? It has been said before that flathead fish are very territorial and are a good indicator of heavy metal contamination. What work has been done as to the level of heavy metal contamination of marine life and what chemicals are still contained within the effluent once the sludge is removed?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I am aware of the problems and solutions with respect to nutrients but, in terms of heavy metals, it is probably a question that Peter Norman can address in more detail than I can, and I ask him to comment.

Mr Norman: We have four effluent discharges into the marine environment along the metropolitan coastline from the Bolivar, Port Adelaide, Glenelg and Christies Beach sewage treatment works. I cannot quote the concentrations of the various heavy metals—and there is a number of them—but suffice to say the concentration of heavy metals in the source sewage is certainly reduced significantly through the treatment facility in each of those plants down to levels

sufficiently low as to have not caused concern to Department of Fisheries research officers, who monitor the effects on the marine environment, or to the Department of Environment and Planning.

However, it is fair to say that under the provisions of the new Marine Environment Protection Act, which was brought into operation last year, each of these discharges will be licensed, and no doubt contained in the conditions of those licences will be conditions relating to heavy metals. Certainly, the department is conscious of the concern which may well prevail but which is not yet evident suggesting that there should be concern. If that should be the case, with contaminants like heavy metals that are cumulative in the environment, it is important to minimise the level of those toxic elements in discharges into the environment. We are focusing back on trade waste discharges into our sewerage systems in order to minimise discharges that do reach the environment.

I advise that industry itself is looking to more environmentally friendly manufacturing methods and metal finishing methods in order to minimise the use of these elements that have such devastating effects if they are present in too high a concentration.

The short answer is that we understand that our discharges are not a cause for either environmental or public health concern at the moment but, because of the cumulative nature of these elements, it is in the community's interest that we, not only through the E&WS Department but industry at large—and it is working towards this end—minimise the use of such elements.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: That is the critical thing, that heavy metals are cumulative and are present for a long time as they do not dissipate in any way but remain. Whether they can be controlled at the industrial source or not, if they are continuing to be discharged, and the level of discharge is important—

Mr BRINDAL interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: With the sludge going to onshore disposal it eliminates part of it but some will be carried in the effluent. Flowing on from that, if heavy metals are contained in the effluent going out into the gulf, how far down the track is the department in disposing of that effluent onshore in the form of woodlotting in order to eliminate offshore disposal altogether?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: There are two aspects to the question. First, through the implementation of our trade waste policy it will provide great incentive for discharges of heavy metals to look at removing those heavy metals at source or on site.

Secondly, with the implementation of the environment protection authority, it will have the responsibility of setting standards in line with national standards, with which all members would agree. We have to look at the environment not just off the coast of South Australia. An EPA would be responsible for establishing what levels of discharge should or should not be going into the marine environment and we will be licensing, as Mr Norman said, our discharges from our plants.

The discharge to land of effluent is an issue in which I have long been interested. Members might recall that before the last election it became a bit of a political football, and there was a suggestion by the Opposition that all effluent should be disposed of on land. At this point, we cannot do that. What would we do in the winter with these huge quantities of treated effluent in a suburb such as Glenelg, for example? The costs involved in disposing of that effluent on land are enormous, and the practicalities insurmountable.

We are looking at a combination of solutions, such as woodlotting at Bolivar, and I am currently negotiating with a number of potential users of Bolivar effluent, because it is not of such a high level of salinity that it cannot be used for crops, etc. The honourable member might be aware that the Northern Adelaide Plains Water Resources Committee has for some time expressed concern about the draw down on its underground aquifer, and about the aquifer not recharging at the rate at which we believe it should. We are continually depleting that resource; therefore, it might be appropriate in the future to consider using some of that effluent to recharge that underground aquifer and replacing what is drawn up from that resource. We hope that in the near future we will be able to use all the effluent from Bolivar for our woodlotting, and we are working on a pilot project with the Woods and Forests Department, the Department of Industry, Trade and Technology, the Department of Environment and Planning and the Engineering and Water Supply Department—as well as considering a replacement for some of the water. We are working towards a situation in which we can stop discharging the Bolivar water into the marine environment, because of its lower level of salinity.

In regard to Port Adelaide, because of the high levels of salinity in that effluent, it is not suitable for agricultural purposes or for watering parks and gardens. I might be on shaky ground here, but it seems to me that the salinity levels are so high that we must be very careful. We would probably need to consider continuing to discharge that effluent into the marine environment—and this is going long beyond our time in this place, I imagine—and consider trying to ensure the removal of heavy metals at source, or we might need to look at some replacement of the Port Adelaide treatment plant. We have canvassed that in the discussion we have had tonight about having consultants look at the sorts of new technology we would need to bring into play at Port Adelaide.

Glenelg, again, is a kind of housing lot sewage treatment plant. Already we provide some of the effluent to the Glenelg council and to some of the parks and gardens around Glenelg. I have held discussions with the member for Henley Beach and with the Henley and Grange council, but the amount that some of these councils require is so small that the cost of getting it to them would be prohibitive. If they want to pay for that, we would be happy to do it.

As well as that, we are planning a new plant in the Aldinga area, and would be considering a probable complete land based disposal of both the effluent and the sludge. There are some quite exciting proposals, which are as broad as one's imagination. We could look at the whole area of Aldinga scrub and at ensuring that we do not degrade that scrub by using the water ineffectively. We could use wetlands to provide a needed buffer zone around the Aldinga scrub. There are many more possibilities, because the area is not so highly developed.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I think the Glenelg plant will pose some quite interesting challenges but, at the end of the day, particularly in the winter months when we have had rain like that in the past, say, two to three weeks, we will still have to dispose of some effluent into the marine environment. It will be a matter of looking at the technology as it is developed to see if we cannot remove the nutrients and the heavy metals that remain after all the other processes have been put in place.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: The Minister referred to the high salinity level of the sewage coming from the Port Adelaide area. If I remember correctly, that is largely as a result of ground water intrusion into the sewers which, in

turn, would indicate the poor condition of those sewers. If the sewers are in such poor condition, what is being done to upgrade them, because it is having and will have an impact in the future on Bolivar and disposal?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It will not have an impact on Bolivar; it will have an impact on Port Adelaide. In the best of all possible worlds, as I am sure the honourable member would acknowledge having been a Minister of Water Resources, I would like nothing better than to say that I will replace the Port Adelaide treatment plant.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: It is nothing to do with the plant; it is the sewers.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: In some ways it is something to do with the plant because of the age of the plant.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: Who is answering this question? If we had the resources, of course one would like to be able to replace all that infrastructure in terms of the sewerage pipes going to Port Adelaide, but it is a matter of balancing priorities, of meeting a huge range of community demands and, at the end of the day, of where we will allocate the resources. Having said that, I will ask Mr Cooper to address the specific areas of the honourable member's question.

Mr Cooper: I would like to correct one point. The sewerage pipes in the Port Adelaide drainage area are not in a condition where they are about to collapse or anything like that. A good deal of concrete sewers were laid in the early days and some of those have been in service for 60 or more years. We have the odd collapse and we are replacing those.

However, the salinity of the sewage reaching Port Adelaide is not due to holes in pipes but, rather, the joints in the sewerage pipe system. They are in no better or worse condition than the joints at Glenelg, the older parts of Bolivar's catchment, or anywhere around the world, so there is an intrusion problem throughout the world that lets ground water in, if it exists. It just so happens that at Port Adelaide the ground water is sea water. It is therefore very saline, so there is a mixture. In the early days in Port Adelaide, the sewer flows were so low and they laid the big pipes in anticipation that perhaps Port Adelaide would be the jewel of the city.

Mr De LAINE interjecting:

Mr Cooper: I apologise. In doing so, joints had to be left open to allow ground water purposely to leak into the system to flush the sewage and to maintain the flow. Every year for many years now we have been grouting joints in bad areas. With more modern technology, when we relay sections we finally have a jointing system which I think is reasonably secure against ground water and that is the form of PVC pipes. Quite frankly, in my opinion, it is a balance. If it is so valuable to get that Port Adelaide water down to useable levels, that has to be balanced against the huge costs of replacing a system which I believe could probably stay in place for decades to come, provided the infiltration is accepted, which we are coping with from a volume point of view.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: I refer to the run-off in the reservoirs in the Hills. What is happening in relation to nitrate levels? Is the nitrate level of the run-off from the Adelaide Hills into the reservoirs continuing to rise, has it plateaued or is it falling as a result of the extension of sewers in the Adelaide Hills towns?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will ask one of my officers to answer.

Mr Norman: The nitrates and the other important nutrient phosphorus in run-off in the Adelaide Hills watersheds is certainly at such a level as to be of concern from the viewpoint that the levels in the stored water bodies of our

major metropolitan reservoirs produce frequent algal blooms. Despite planning and management controls to address this issue, in the form of addressing both point sources of those contaminants as well as the diffuse sources, certainly the levels of these nutrients at least are being held at bay, but it is not yet evident that we have reversed the effect.

The Hon. P.B. ARNOLD: Is the level rising?

Mr Norman: I will not say that it is rising, but the levels are certainly of the same order as they have been now for some years. Therefore, it is important that the level of effort to manage our catchments in a continuing and intensive manner continues. In that regard the department is looking at its own discharges into the waterways of the catchments and we are either removing those discharges from the catchments or removing the nutrients in the discharges in order at least to make a contribution towards holding the levels of those nutrients. Other activities in the watersheds contribute to nutrients, including urban and agricultural development. All activities in the watersheds collectively contribute to this problem.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It is important that we recognise that it is the multiplicity of uses as well as other things; for example, there are something like 50 000 horses in the Adelaide Hills. We have all these other uses, and that is why we have to move forward and take some hard decisions with respect to the kinds of development and uses that will exist in the Adelaide Hills. That is why the Mount Lofty Ranges review has the importance placed upon it by me as Minister for Water Resources and Minister for Environment and Planning.

I look forward to the support of honourable members, particularly those on this Committee, because we cannot guarantee to halt and reverse that trend in terms of nutrients going into our reservoirs if we do not take some very hard and long-term decisions about the kind of planning, development and permitted uses that we have in the Hills. It will not be easy to balance, but we will have to take those decisions or put at risk the water for the whole of the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Mr BRINDAL: I take further the Minister's point about discharge of effluent into the gulf and the impossibility of getting rid of it all. Does the Minister agree with the equation that it would be most desirable to at least get back to the levels of discharge of water into the gulf that existed prior to settlement; in other words, not get rid of it but get back to the levels that applied when we had less interference with the ecology? If that is so, has the Minister considered in the case of Glenelg installing a more extensive reticulation system?

I believe that the SAJC was interested in that proposal, but the cost of running a pipeline from the existing system along Morphett Road was too high. I believe that an alternative exists, which is to run a pipe up the Sturt Creek right-of-way. That would be much cheaper and it would save groundwater that is being seriously depleted. Has the Minister considered that proposal and does she agree with the proposition that I put forward that to get down to about the same level of total volume as was discharged prior to settlement would be a good equation?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: There are a couple of issues involved. First, we are putting out through our stormwater run-off almost the equivalent in terms of volumetric measurement of the amount of water that we actually use. I think it is slightly less than the total used in Adelaide. That has given me reason for concern for some time, and that is why the department commissioned an independent scoping study on the way in which we can better manage, control and reuse stormwater run-off. That would address the very

issues raised by the honourable member. We need to look at how to feed that water back, filtering and cleansing it as it goes through wetlands, swales and ponding basins, particularly in the major run-off areas, such as the Sturt Creek, the Torrens River and other run-off areas. Once I have the report I will make it public, because for anything to move forward it will need the support of the community and the Opposition.

We must look at this matter quite seriously. If we could recharge the underground aquifers and use those as great reservoirs to draw that water up, that would lessen our dependency on the catchment areas in the Mount Lofty Ranges and on pumping from the Murray River. Perhaps this would mean that we would not have to duplicate the pipeline. I am not talking about the present population in the next five years; I am talking about the community in South Australia at some time in the future.

Apart from the issue of what this is doing to the marine environment, we have to somehow better filter out all those substances before that water, even if it is in a fairly pure state, goes out. There is also the waste of that resource going into a saline environment where it cannot be used. I totally agree with the honourable member. I and officers of my department have been working very hard to ensure that we look at a whole range of exciting possibilities and potential uses for that water.

With respect to the specific question of the SAJC, this matter was raised with me personally by members of the SAJC, who felt it was an interesting thing to do, but they do not want to take the water all year round, so we have the problem of what to do with it in the winter months when they do not need it. The unit cost of providing the water was such that we could not say to the community, 'I am sorry, community, you have to pay for this.' The SAJC would have found the cost too high.

I will ask one of my officers to comment on the alternative proposal, but wherever we can make available this form of reticulated grey water to the community, we will be delighted to do so. We charge a very small amount of the normal price for water because the department is committed to using that water in the most profitable way from the point of view of the community, not necessarily from the department's position. The proposal to water the Morphettville Racecourse I understand would have taken possibly less than 2 per cent of that water, so it really is not a solution in terms of the total amount of water that we would have to dispose of. I think that the alternative proposal of installing a pipe up the Sturt Creek right-of-way would be too expensive.

Mr Cooper: The Minister is quite right. The SAJC found that, after the department had looked at the concept of running a pipeline along that route to deliver effluent from the Glenelg treatment works to the racecourse, the cost per kilolitre of water provided was more expensive than the current source, which is groundwater. I might add that the department is considering a further alternative at the moment. It is based on the concept of stormwater use—an issue that is becoming quite topical.

As part of our process of looking at metropolitan Adelaide-wide possibilities for different approaches to stormwater use the consultants we have engaged to do this work have identified a possibility in regard to the Morphettville Racecourse. It may well be possible—it is certainly technically possible—to contemplate the use of diverted stormwater to the racecourse area for storage in a wetland concept for irrigation of the course as well as enhancement of the quality of that water that might flow downstream to the marine environment. That opportunity has been identified.

Mr BRINDAL: Of course, if the Minister made ground-water a bit more expensive, that might be a greater incentive.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I will then be accused of imposing a tax on something else, such as on racecourses. It is worth exploring the suggestion of using a rather large wetland type ponding situation at the Morphettville Racecourse. However, at the end of the day, if it is not considered appropriate, we have lost nothing. I take the honourable member's point that that would at least prevent the draw down on the underground water, which is part of the problem. It would be a much more efficient and effective use of the water and it would lessen the pressure on the underground aquifer.

Mr BRINDAL: The Minister's department is to be commended for the filtration program. The difference was amazing when it was introduced in my electorate. The Minister would be aware that a lot of work has recently been done in respect of aluminium ions dissolved in water. I know that the Minister has been corresponding with a number of people on this matter. How is the Minister monitoring the situation? Is there an indication that another flocculation agent would be more suitable?

Are there any real fears from an Alzheimer's disease point of view, which is an old issue? What work, if any, has been done—and I cannot find much information about this through the Parliamentary Library—about the possible deleterious effects of dissolved aluminium ions in the water when it comes to the marine environment? It strikes me that, because of that, more and more dissolved aluminium is being discharged into the gulf. This is a comparatively new phenomena which, for our water quality, is priceless.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The role of aluminium as a causative factor in the development of Alzheimer's disease is still an area of debate. I believe there has been a number of articles both for and against. In January 1989 researchers in the United Kingdom published in the *Lancet* results of a survey to determine whether a geographical relation existed between Alzheimer's disease and aluminium in drinking water. The risk of Alzheimer's disease was found to be 1.5 times higher in districts where the mean aluminium concentration exceeded 0.11 mg/L than in districts where concentrations were less than 0.01 mg/L.

However, the authors also suggested caution in interpretations of the research as unknown alternative causes may well have been operating. In other words, there may have been other factors that were not held constant in that research program. The article also faced criticism in the succeeding edition of the journal when doubts were expressed in letters to the editor as to the epidemiological validity of the study. So, it is not a cut and dried situation.

Further research into the mechanism for accumulation of aluminium in the brain has been undertaken. This has shown that people with Alzheimer's disease and Downs syndrome have a defective form of the protein transferrin. This protein normally binds aluminium in the blood and prevents it from entering the brain. In people with this defect, less aluminium is bound and hence more is available to enter the brain and result in the neurotoxic changes seen in Alzheimer's disease. The exact nature of the functional defect of transferrin remains unclear and studies are being undertaken to elucidate it further. That really does not tell us a lot more than we know.

An internal report prepared by the South Australian Health Commission in November last year concluded that the role of aluminium in Alzheimer's disease was still unclear. However, the matter is the subject of ongoing review and research. Although the link with aluminium is becoming better under-

stood, the level of aluminium which results in problems for people with the defective transferrin has not yet been determined. Nevertheless, there is a need for increased awareness of the possible health effects of aluminium. This should include and highlight possible sources of aluminium.

I will give the honourable member a couple of examples. Ingestion of aluminium can occur from a variety of sources: Levels suggested by the Water Research Centre in the United Kingdom indicate that air has something like 20 micrograms per day, water has 290 micrograms per day and in fact food has something like 7 000 micrograms per day. So, people can ingest more aluminium by eating—and I think the example was a cheese sandwich and having a cup of coffee—than by drinking a normal amount of water per day.

It is obvious from the values that I have just quoted that there needs to be more study into the relative contribution and effect of aluminium from these sources. Aluminium sulphate (alum) is widely used, as the honourable member indicated, as a primary coagulant in water treatment and is used in all water treatment plants in South Australia. While most aluminium is removed with the waste sludge, a small amount remains dissolved in the filtered water and it is important that its concentration be kept low to avoid post flocculation of insoluble aluminium hydroxide in the distribution system. We could be here all night on this. I will provide the honourable member with a personal briefing on this, if he wishes to pursue it. The simple answer is that there is no actual hard research and evidence to suggest that we should change our methodology and our processes.

Mr BRINDAL: I could find no reference in the budget Estimates to the important ponding project that will be undertaken off Sturt Creek. The Minister has partially answered the question by talking about the racecourse. Has the Minister any plans in the near future for ponding parts of Sturt Creek? I hope she has.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The answer is 'Yes' and 'No'. Obviously, there are plans but, until I have had presented to me this scoping study with a range of funding and management options, it would be a little ridiculous to start talking about individual ponds appearing across metropolitan Adelaide. It has to be addressed as a metropolitan issue, and resolved in terms of an authority, I believe, that will be responsible for the proper management and control of stormwater run-off. There are a whole range of issues. It has to be done on a catchment-wide basis.

I am aware that the Marion council is very keen to work with the Government to address this issue with respect to the Sturt Creek. However, we are also having ongoing negotiations and discussions with the LGA to ensure that it is a complete across-the-board local government response. The upstream councils must contribute to the eventual solution. We cannot just make the coastal councils and some of the fairly environmentally sensitive councils, like Marion and others, contribute and the rest of the councils just get the water as quickly as possible out of their area into someone else's area. It has to be a catchment-wide solution, which is what we are working towards. The first pilot project might well involve Sturt Creek and the Patawalonga and working closely with the Glenelg and Marion councils and the upstream councils.

Mr BRINDAL interjecting:

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I would be delighted to accommodate the honourable member's suggestion.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Will the Minister provide an update regarding salinity problems in the Upper South-East of South Australia? I do not at this time of the night want to go into much detail and explanation, but I am certainly

aware of the recommendations and the possible alternatives that have come out of the report. There is in the community at large, and particularly in the South-East, a requirement that some action be taken. I refer particularly to the possibility of putting a drain into the Coorong. There is a concern on the part of some Upper South-East landowners that such a proposal, apart from the problems of the cost, is being opposed by some sections of the Government. For example, there is a concern that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is opposed to the drain going through part of the park and entering into the Coorong. Can the Minister provide an update, and say when we can expect some action to be taken in regard to that matter?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The problem is of particular concern. I have had an opportunity to look at the question of dry land salinity and its causes in the Upper South-East. A regional local government group representing the affected council areas feels very strongly that action needs to be taken urgently to prevent the rapid degradation of the excellent agricultural land. Everyone would agree with that. Certainly, the Minister of Agriculture and I are working closely together on this matter. The Natural Resources and Management Standing Committee and the working party support this view, and so do I, as Minister of Water Resources, Environment and Planning and Lands.

However, the economics of proceeding with the drainage schemes to solve the problem are, to put it mildly, a bit doubtful. We are having cost benefit analyses done on that in terms of spending huge amounts of money on a drainage system. I have asked officers of my various departments to look at other solutions where we may be able to have a drainage system that is not quite so expensive, but it depends on the depth of drains needed to effect a proper solution. Further work needs to be done on that to determine how severe the problem is and the cost of all the alternatives.

We cannot go out to the community because the community has indicated, as have some of the local members (who are members of the Opposition), that they are prepared to look at cost sharing to address the issue. We have to look at the impact on the environment, particularly of cutting a drain through the Coorong. That work is proceeding. Work is also being done by the Murray Darling Commission. We have to feed that into the decision-making processes to get the right decisions, which the community will support and contribute towards.

A number of conceptual schemes have been put to the community for discussion through the Bakers Range/Marcollat Watercourse report—Drylands Salinity Impacts and Related Groundwater and Surface Water Management in the Counties of Cardwell and MacDonald. The department is developing a program to identify more fully the economic and environmental aspects of the possible solutions. An economist in the Department of Environment and Planning is working with the officers of the E&WS Department and the Department of Agriculture, as well as with the local communities and councils.

This information can be used as a basis for community consultation, following which we will have to take very hard long-term decisions to address this issue. I am aware of the serious nature of the problem, but the solutions must be right for both short and long term. It has to involve the input of a range of Government departments, local landowners and users, and local government.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Can the Minister give any timetable at all?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: At the moment we are at the stage of feeding all the information in and I am pushing as hard as I can for a timetable for the actual starting of the

work. It is hard to give a timetable until we have agreement by all parties on the solution. I must say that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is supportive of the solution. It would like to see a drain skirting the edge of the national park, as I am sure the honourable member, as shadow Minister for the environment, would like to see also.

Another solution would certainly be the preferred option rather than cutting a drain right through a national park. It is not that the department is in any way opposing the solutions, but it is suggesting that we look sensitively at a possible path for such a drain, if that is considered the way to proceed. Once we have some time frame, I will be very happy to provide both the local members and indeed the shadow Minister with that information.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Fairly recently there was an article in the media suggesting that householders could now pay \$60 to have the E&WS Department test their tap water for contamination. I am wondering whether this service has been used extensively. Can we have some indication of the use of this service? It is also indicated in that release that the department would pay for the testing if the results showed any significant faecal coliform contamination. Has the department been required to pay for testing due to significant contamination?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I can answer the first part of the question myself. Yes, we are now offering this service to people. We believe that it is important that we do offer them such a service. We did not want every single water user in Adelaide wanting the service and we felt that if there was some recovery of costs for providing it people would use the service in a responsible way. I can tell the honourable member that fewer than a handful of people have availed themselves of it, but indeed some people have done so. A number of samples have been taken. The honourable member asked in particular whether, as part of the testing service that we are now offering, there has been a situation where we have found that water was contaminated in some way and whether therefore the person requesting the test has not had to pay. The answer is no.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: Will the Minister say where the water for the MFP is to come from?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: I referred to this in my previous answer. I invite Mr Cooper to further respond.

Mr Cooper: As was alluded to earlier in discussion this evening, the concept of water supplies for the MFP is such that it has the potential to be quite innovative, drawing sources not only from the mains water supply but also from roof run-off and stormwater as well as possibly sewage effluent. So, the visionary opportunities of recycling both stormwater and sewage effluent will be explored to the full.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: The intention is that we not use the existing system. I did go into great detail in one of my previous answers and it is all there.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: We went into detail in relation to the reuse of water, but I am wondering about reticulated water supplies.

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: It could well be a closed system, whereby we would use stormwater fed into a treatment plant and reused water would also be fed in. There would be a pool of water and then maybe a couple of reticulated systems, by which means we would use black water, grey water, and potable water, and once those had been used they would be fed back into the system and, essentially, we would end up with a closed system. We would use ponding and wetlands as well as collection of water through a sewerage system, and perhaps a secondary system, for use on gardens, lawns, parklands, football fields and whatever. It is really an exciting concept. There is not the intention at

this stage to maintain the normal system of provision of water through the mains that we have in place now. That is where I think we have the exciting potential to develop better ways of managing and using our precious resources.

The Hon. D.C. WOTTON: So we can have black water, grey water, white water and brown water in the Hills?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: No, we may not. Let us not trivialise this. It is fairly exciting stuff. There is the potential for the most effective and efficient use of water and the reuse of that water. That is something we should be taking seriously.

Mr BRINDAL: What the Minister said about the possibility of reusing that water is excellent, but has the Minister thought about considering another site other than the Gillman site for the MFP?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: For water?

Mr BRINDAL: For the same experiment. The MFP site is adjacent to the Bolivar sewage work. If it is cheap to get rid of sewage in one area, it should be cheap in that area. I am not knocking the idea—it is a wonderful idea. If we are to be committed to the site of MFP Adelaide rather than just MFP Gillman, would it not be cheaper at Gillman to stick the sewage into Bolivar and perhaps somewhere

else do what the Minister is suggesting, which I think is an excellent idea and could be exported to the world if we could get it to work?

The Hon. S.M. Lenehan: We are looking at the research undertaken as part of the MFP and collecting the research from around the world. The idea is to apply that to new developments. We are starting that in some of our re-urbanisation projects, using ponding and wetlands and reusing stormwater. We are starting to do that in a small way. That would be an excellent way to proceed, and that is our intention. It has opened up a whole new way of thinking about water—how we use it, store it, reuse it, treat it and conserve it. All this will be part of ongoing research and development in the whole area, both from the department and the private sector.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.1 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 19 September at 11 a.m.