

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Wednesday 21 September 1994****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Acting Chairman:**

Mr M.K. Brindal

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson

Mr R.P. Bass

Mrs J.L. Hall

Mr S.R. Leggett

Mr J.A. Quirke

Ms L. Stevens

The Committee met at 11.2 a.m.

Police, \$261 919 000

Witness:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew, Minister for Emergency Services.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Hunt, Commissioner of Police.

Mr M. Wall, Manager, Business Service.

Mr D. Hughes, Director, Corporate Services.

Mr S. Peters, Manager, Computing and Communications.

Mr N.I. Stephenson, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr B. Smith, Manager, Administration.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and I refer members to pages 166 to 169 in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments and to pages 473 to 491 in the Program Estimates. I point out that if the Minister undertakes to supply information at a later date it must be in a form suitable for insertion in *Hansard*, and two copies must be submitted to the Clerk of the House of Assembly no later than Friday 30 September. Minister, would you like to make your opening statement?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I propose to take advantage of the opportunity indicated by you earlier, in view of the diverse nature of my portfolio, which involves five different portfolio areas. I propose at this stage to limit my opening statement to police matters. The Government is committed to giving high priority to law and order. This was emphasised in our election policy on community safety, which covered the following aspects that relate directly to the South Australian Police Department. These included:

- Increasing the number of operational police by 200 during our first term in office.
- Converting some of the functions now carried out by uniformed police to civilian operations.
- Giving regional commanders more financial and operational autonomy.
- Facilitating Safer City programs in regions through the establishment of Community Safety Councils comprising the regional police commander, civic leaders, hospital

administrators, school representatives, welfare agencies and business leaders.

- Encouraging the establishment of Youth Crime Prevention Panels in schools.
- Replacing the former STA Transit Officers with uniformed police officers or, in special circumstances, plain-clothes police officers, as an early priority.
- Emphasising that speed and red light cameras are designed to reduce accidents, not to raise revenue.
- Expanding the role of the SES as a back-up resource to the Police Force, to include rescues and searches under the direction of the police.

The Police Department has been given an allocation of \$311 million for 1994-95. This allocation includes accounting adjustments for such things as increased employer superannuation contributions, Government insurance and risk management initiatives, changed payroll tax arrangements as well as funding for functions that have been transferred to the department including transit policing and the Police Security Services Division. The budget will enable the continuing implementation of our policy commitments. Already I am pleased to report to the Committee that the following has been achieved:

- By the end of the 1994-95 financial year 135 of the proposed 200 additional operational police will have been achieved.

- A shop front policing facility was opened at Aldinga on 27 May 1994. (The Police Department is now conducting further research into community police offices and shop front policing strategies including an analysis of crime statistics and interstate and international experiences to determine the most suitable model for local purposes).

- The transit policing function has been transferred from the former STA to the direct responsibility of the Police Commissioner.

- A high visibility policy has been introduced for speed cameras. (It is worthy to note that road deaths at the end of August are down by 31 compared to the same period last year, although we freely acknowledge that any road death is one too many).

- A recent change to the department's organisational structure was accompanied by significant devolution of financial and operational responsibility to divisional commanders and branch managers.

However, in the current economic climate the Police Department, as with all other Government agencies, has to make a savings contribution toward reducing State debt. This was reinforced by the Commission of Audit report which stated that:

Police in South Australia are well resourced by Australian standards. In 1992-93 South Australia spent around \$26 million or 15 per cent above the amount assessed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission as sufficient to provide a level of service similar to the average of other States.

The Audit Commission also used the police to population ratio to indicate that the South Australian Police Department appears to be relatively well resourced. Nevertheless, the Government has kept the police contribution to State debt to a minimum of \$2 million in 1994-95 rising to \$7 million over three years. This responsible attitude by the Government reflects our commitment to law and order.

In addition to the contribution to State debt, the Police Department has inherited a shortfall carried over from last year's budget strategy. This occurred because the previous Government allowed the practice of utilising capital funds

and moneys derived from asset sales to fund recurrent expenditure. These factors, coupled with other cost increases such as the doubling of fringe benefits tax, staffing changes and the need to absorb inflation, have faced the department with a tight but manageable budgetary situation. As a consequence, the Commissioner has initiated a broad range of budget containment measures while maintaining the department's high level of policing service to the community. Measures already outlined include:

- The outsourcing of vehicle work shop activities from 1 January 1995. (The first major contract for the servicing and repairs will be let by the Police Department in the near future).

- The sale of the Novar Gardens police complex and part of the police Echunga farm property.

- The acceleration of the civilianisation of some functions within the department.

- Reductions to civilian staffing levels.

- Changes to aircraft services operations. (The future emphasis for these operations will be directed toward meeting police policing objectives).

- The reallocation of police in non-operational areas to operational roles.

- The rationalisation of accommodation utilised by the department.

- The introduction of measures to reduce housing subsidies and associated fringe benefit tax costs.

- The rationalisation and downsizing of warehousing and related functions.

- Actively pursuing sponsorship to support the continued operations of the Police Band.

In 1994-95 the police budget also provides funding for a number of new initiatives and completion of others. Some of these include: the Salisbury divisional base; the Cockburn police station; the Port Augusta police complex; the Coober Pedy police complex; the Unley subdivisional base; and continued support for a full range of crime prevention activities. In the area of neighbourhood and rural watch the Commissioner is now taking steps to eliminate over the next 18 months the massive backlog of watch areas awaiting implementation. Consequently, I am pleased to inform the Committee that, even in these tough economic times, this is a responsible police budget which will enable the Commissioner to meet operational needs and maintain the high standard of police service to the community.

Mr ATKINSON: Is it the case that recurrent expenditure for wages of those officers who were recently working as transit police is a new item in the department's budget; what money was transferred from the Police Department to the State Transport Authority for the transfer of the transit police; and why was it considered necessary to pay a transfer fee?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Some of the questions the honourable member has asked in his first question as a composite are detailed, and my officers are getting that information for me at the moment. It is important to commend this particular initiative for, on 31 January this year, Cabinet was pleased to have the opportunity to formally approve the transfer of funding and personnel to allow the former STA transit squad to commence operations as part of the new police transit division.

In early January of this year, in anticipation of that approval proceeding, training of transit officers commenced to ensure that they would receive the training necessary to undertake policing duties. The training was introduced in a staged process manner by looking at the experience those

transit officers had had in their past. In the case of the former STA transit officers who wanted to transfer to the Police Force, 19 had previously been police officers. It was therefore determined by the Commissioner that those officers would require only one month's training through a refresher course at Fort Largs Police Academy, and that training process allowed those officers to commence their duties as police officers in early February this year. Other officers were determined to need a longer period of training, so have been undergoing a six month training course. The first such course graduated recently at Fort Largs Police Academy, bringing 20 more new police officers into the system, all of whom had previously worked as STA transit officers.

In addition to that, because all officers from the STA did not indicate a willingness to transfer to the Police Department, there will be new recruits added to the force through that squad. In some cases, however, existing uniform personnel have chosen to transfer their place of work to the transit squad. As I have outlined previously to members, the success rate of the transit squad has been phenomenal.

In the case of moneys transferred, Cabinet approved that established costs of \$258 000 be provided to the Police Department in 1993-94 and the existing STA/TransAdelaide budget of \$3.481 million was added to the police budget for 1994-95 and onwards. Policing and office equipment, which was formerly used and owned by now TransAdelaide, previously STA, for the functioning of the transit police, has also been transferred to the Police Department. Office alterations, the provision of furniture necessary for the operational functioning of the area, has nearly been completed and installation of computer equipment used by the Police Force, which includes six terminals and one printer, is nearly completed and connection to the Justice Information System is awaiting final advice from Southern Systems Communications.

Mr ATKINSON: What is the total of that transfer between budgets?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I indicated to the honourable member, the existing STA TransAdelaide budget of \$3.481 million was added to the police budget for 1994-95 and onwards.

Mr ATKINSON: You then went on to read out a number of other items. What is the total in the budget of all the items that you read out that were transferred?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I do not have that complete detail in front of me at this time, but I am happy to take that part of the honourable member's question on notice and provide the answer to him in the near future.

Mr ATKINSON: I suggest to the Minister that when you throw in SACON security officers the total figure is about \$8 million. Is it correct that the recurrent expenditure for SACON security staff and the provision for superannuation are also new items in the department's budget?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It was my understanding that, in his opening question, the honourable member asked for information about the transfer of the former STA transit officers to the department. The matter of SACON security is a different question. If he seeks information on that, he need only to ask the question. Is that what the honourable member is now asking?

Mr ATKINSON: Yes; I am asking whether that is correct.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: While my officers are getting the information necessary to reply to the honourable member's multi-pronged detailed opening question, it is

worth noting the advantages that have been provided to Government through the inclusion of the former SACON Security Services under the auspices of the Police Department. It now means that, with the transfer of the STA personnel as well as of the SACON security division, the safety and security needs of South Australians are provided for under the one Minister and, in this case, also under the one Police Department.

Mr Hughes: The honourable member made reference to the inclusion of superannuation payments, State Transit Authority payments and the Police Security Services Division in this year's budget. In his opening statement, the Minister acknowledged that there were amounts in relation to superannuation and the State Transit Authority in this year's budget. The figures for the Police Security Services Division are shown on page 476 of the Program Estimates, and that budget was transferred into the police lines last year, so we would not acknowledge that that is an additional amount for this year. Page 476 indicates that an expenditure of \$4.396 million by the Police Security Services Division is expected for this year.

Mr ATKINSON: If the increased expenditure for wages and on-costs for transit police and the funding of superannuation are deducted from the budget for police, would the Minister not say that there has been a cut to the police budget on recurrent expenditure this year of about \$2 million? In other words, less money has been provided for operational policing. If the Minister regards that question as being a bit too multi-pronged I would be delighted if the Police Commissioner answered it.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I remind the member for Spence that the Minister determines who will answer the questions, not the member for Spence.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am happy to answer that question. It would seem that the honourable member is using the same sort of advice as that which he used for his question in another place yesterday. Had the honourable member been listening to my opening address, he would have noted that I indicated quite clearly that a budget savings contribution of \$2 million was made by the Police Department for this financial year, increasing to \$7 million over the next three years. As I indicated, each Government agency is expected to contribute toward the debt that was created by the former Government of which the honourable member was a part. If the honourable member does not like the fact that agencies are having to contribute toward the debt that his Government created, perhaps he should have been a little more vocal in the Party room at the time.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I hope, for the sake of all members, that we are not engaging in a Party political debate here: we are seeking answers to questions on the Estimates.

Mr ATKINSON: Thank you for that advice, Mr Acting Chairman. Government Ministers have suggested that 700 Public Service jobs will go if there is a 1 per cent increase in wages in the public sector. If there is a 1 per cent increase in wages for police officers, how many more operational police officers will South Australia lose?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: To a considerable extent, the honourable member's question is hypothetical. However, it is worth pointing out some of the initiatives that can be introduced to increase the number of operational police, while at the same time making savings in the areas of Government operation. I have highlighted before to the Parliament the results that will occur within the department through the freeing up of police personnel from areas that are currently

not operational. A good example is the Novar Gardens police mechanical workshop, within which there are presently 21 uniformed police.

Those 21 police officers are working as carpenters, mechanics, guards and truck drivers, all with police training but not undertaking operational policing duties; 18 of those 21 officers will be freed up by 1 January 1995 through the Government's initiative to ensure that the mechanical workshop operations, and associated operations at the Novar Gardens site, are tendered out to the private sector. That is just one example of where greater operational policing presence can be delivered. If the honourable member would like more examples, I am happy to keep quoting them to the Committee. But in so far as the effect of any wage rise on the budget is concerned, at this stage there has not been a wage rise and so the question, to a significant extent, is hypothetical.

Mr ATKINSON: I have a supplementary question. We read in this morning's paper that there will be a significant wage claim across the whole of the labour force in South Australia. Has the Minister made provision for wage increases for police and, if he has made provision, what is it?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I repeat: the success or otherwise of any wage claim at this stage is hypothetical, and should any wage claim be proceeded with and be approved the Government will have to ensure that its budget commitment is considered accordingly.

Mr ATKINSON: With respect, other Ministers have said that if there is an increase in wages in their sector it will lead to the loss of jobs in their sector. The Health Minister has said it in respect of nurses. What does the Minister say in respect of police?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Again, the question is hypothetical because the process has not occurred. However, a number of areas of saving are being examined by the department at this time. Many of those areas of saving will be put into place throughout this financial year. If an increase is given to officers that will be weighed against those areas of saving. In so far as any provision of moneys for a wage increase is concerned, there is not, at this time, any allocation. However, savings to recurrent expenditure are expected at varying stages throughout the financial year. So, the question is not one of simply asking, 'If a particular event occurs, what particular up-front cash contingency has been made?'

Mr BASS: On page 490 of the Program Estimates reference is made to the driving of unroadworthy vehicles. Are unroadworthy vehicles becoming an increasing cause of vehicular accidents and, if so, what action is being taken to correct this situation?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes; this is a particularly important question in light of the number of accidents that occur in our State. The incidence of unroadworthy vehicles being involved in road crashes is a cause of considerable concern. An inspection of vehicles to determine roadworthiness is part of normal uniform patrol duties by police and is carried out throughout the State. In addition, the Commissioner has considered necessary introducing from time to time special policing objectives specifically to direct police resources towards concentrating on the condition of vehicles. Between 1 July 1993 and 30 June 1994, as part of the 1993-94 statewide traffic plan, a special policing objective was conducted against unroadworthy vehicles. Through that, highway patrol inspected a total of 8 134 vehicles, resulting in 885 of those vehicles being issued with defect notices. During the forthcoming year, in line with objectives to reduce

the road toll, specific policing objectives will again be conducted and directed at both light and heavy vehicles. As one of its initiatives the highway patrol has continued to conduct roadworthiness campaigns targeting heavy motor vehicles on a statewide basis. These campaigns have also been undertaken in conjunction with the New South Wales and Victorian Police Forces. The vehicle inspection section advises that the police issue about 8 000 defect notices on defective vehicles each year.

Mr BASS: I refer again to page 482. The program papers refer to the continuation of pro-active programs to deal with illicit drugs. Is the Minister able to provide more information on this in relation to drugs in schools?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The South Australian Police Drug Force actively monitors reports of drug dealing and usage in South Australian schools, both private and State. While any drug usage or dealing in schools is of paramount concern, any allegation must be viewed in relation to known facts and evidence to support the allegation. Where there have been drug incidents associated with schools, prompt and appropriate action has been taken by the Police Force. There has been an increase in school staff requesting lectures from the Police Drug Task Force. The Officer in Charge and Inspector of Operations of the Drug Task Force and members of the Drug Link Group, together with representatives of the Education and Health Departments, facilitate and reinforce police and Education Department policies, procedures and curriculum advice in respect to drug abuse. This is an ongoing process which fosters professional relationships and which allows the drugs in school situations to be monitored by the education and police departments and acted upon.

Members of the Drug Task Force and police generally across the State are continually invited to attend private and State schools to speak to students, staff, parents and friends on the subject of drug awareness. During 1993-94, Drug Task Force members presented 66 different drug-related lectures to various community groups, including schools. These lectures were provided to school children, teacher-parent groups and school counsellors. Currently, discussions are occurring between the Education, Health and Police Departments to develop an information resource package, which will be the subject of a funding submission to the national campaign against drug abuse.

Mr BASS: I refer again to page 482 of the program papers. One of the objectives of the crime detection and investigation services program is to discourage the instances of crime activity. I have noted in recent newspaper articles and it has been mentioned in Parliament that the Commissioner of Police has a special operation in progress named Operation Pendulum. Will the Minister provide the Committee with a summary of the results achieved with this operation so far?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is a particularly important question and the member for Florey as both a former police officer and also former Secretary to the Police Association is well aware through that experience of the complaints received over a substantial period of time by police that they are responding to incidents without the resources to actually follow up things like theft of property, and that has been of considerable frustration to members of the force for some time. The commissioner has recognised that frustration and under this Government has been able to divert the resources to a police initiative, Operation Pendulum, which commenced on 1 August this year and which will conclude at this stage on 31 October.

The taskforce for this operation is staffed by 90 selected operational police officers who are concentrating on apprehending offenders for the recovery of stolen property and identifying more appropriate policing strategies for the future. The taskforce is being divided into three groups, those being north of the River Torrens, south of the River Torrens and the central city area. Each group is headed by a police inspector and in addition to operational personnel has in-built staffing for administration and intelligence analysis. The operation is achieving considerable success in terms of offenders charged and property recovered. Of pleasing note is the fact that Neighbourhood Watch has a role in this operation and it has the role of encouraging their members and the public in general to pass information directly on to Pendulum Taskforce members concerning any suspicious and criminal activities and, to facilitate this, dedicated telephone information lines have been allocated.

During the course of the operation, general police patrols and general traffic patrols have been maintained at their normal levels and have not been affected by the diversion of 90 police officers into this taskforce. In the six weeks that have elapsed from 1 August 1994 to 11 September 1994, members of the Pendulum Taskforce have arrested or reported 576 persons for 1 372 serious offences. These offences range from robbery with violence, demanding money by menace, breaking offences, receiving stolen property, false pretences and larceny, to the execution of a variety of warrants. Stolen property valued at about \$380 000 has been recovered to date. The value of property involved in the 1 372 charges laid against offenders has exceeded \$1 million. I am sure that members of the Committee would agree that that is an enormous achievement for those officers in such a short period of time.

Raw data in respect of reported crime indicates an across the board drop in the target offences of break-ins and robberies. This is supported by a significant drop in offences actually reported to police at the Royal Adelaide Show, which was also attended by Taskforce Pendulum members, both uniformed and plain-clothed. Reported robbery figures dropped from 21 in 1993 to less than 10 this year. The increased police presence involving Taskforce Pendulum uses specifically designed strategies and tactics resulting in a clear-up rate of all serious offences reported to the police at the showgrounds. This provided a safer than normal environment for family groups to enjoy activities within the showgrounds. Mr Chairman, I have been particularly pleased to receive in my office telephone calls and letters from the public who were pleased at that increased policing presence, and indicated for the first time for many years that they and their families felt safe in all parts of the showgrounds.

Although indicators show that reported offences are decreasing, while apprehensions are increasing, the results would be even more significant if offenders could remember all of their crimes. Two offenders arrested recently could only be charged with 30 housebreaking offences involving property valued at over \$110 000. They admitted having committed up to 200 house break-ins over a four month period, involving property valued at approximately \$250 000, but could not remember where the houses were or the details of all of those offences.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The member for Florey has indicated that he wants to ask a supplementary question, but before he does so can I point out to the member for Spence that the Estimates Committee as a Committee of the House exists for the prime purpose of allowing the Opposition to

question Government Ministers and ministerial advisers on the budget estimates. The Chair is, of course, tolerant when people are absent from the Chamber, but the Standing Orders in respect of a quorum are quite clear, and I would point out to the member for Spence that, if Government members were not present in the Chamber in the proportion that his members are not present in the Chamber at the moment, this Committee would already have lapsed for want of a quorum. I suggest to the member for Spence that, if we are going to continue this in the timetable set, there is some encumbrance on the Opposition to provide members in this Committee and to give some deference to people like the Police Commissioner who as a Crown Officer is here as a guest and as a special privilege to us, and therefore I suggest to the honourable member that more of his members may be present in the Chamber.

Mr ATKINSON: In explanation, the Speaker lured the member for Playford from the Chamber.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: We cannot be responsible for other people's actions: I merely make a suggestion to the member for Spence.

Mr BASS: As the Minister said, being an ex-police officer and involved in some of these operations, I am amazed at the figures that the Minister has just related to the Estimates Committee, and I think it would be in order that this Committee congratulate the members involved in Operation Pendulum and to request that the Commissioner of Police take that congratulation back to those members. It really is a fine effort by what I consider to be some of the best police officers in Australia.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I think the Commissioner of Police would like the opportunity to respond to that gesture by the honourable member.

Mr Hunt: I thank Mr Bass for his comments, and I would like to report, because you have been so kind to say the things that you have, that last Friday I visited the whole team of Operation Pendulum, who were doing a mid-term briefing, so to speak, at the Police Academy. I visited them there and addressed the whole group, including the commanders and expressed my deep and earnest appreciation for the work being done by them. So if you would take that as an implementation of your request, I know that that would achieve it; but I will also pass on to them your comments in this Committee.

Mr QUIRKE: I want to talk about citizens sinning, Minister, and in particular those motorists who drive down the road and have their photographs taken and who see the signs after the camera, which say, 'I hope you smiled, because you have been photographed if you were sinning.' From what you said last year, and from a number of addresses in the Parliament, I understood that the sign was going to be before the camera, not after it. Can the Minister tell us what happened to that?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am pleased to advise the honourable member that indeed we have done both. It has been indicated on a number of occasions that two forms of signs would be put in place: those signs after the camera as a final warning to motorists that they have passed a speed camera, to get them to slow down, if in the first instance they did not see the now up-front vehicle and camera. Also at this time signs have been put in place on a number of black spot roads indicating that police surveillance of those roads actively occurs through both red light and speed cameras.

Mr QUIRKE: Minister, did you not tell us last year repeatedly after taking over the shadow portfolio in this area

that you were going to put signs before the camera. In fact I even remember media reports about that right on the eve of the election. Now you are telling us, if I have got this right, that the car is the sign. Is that right or not?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Again I repeat: there are fixed signs that remain in place along black spot roads indicating cameras on those roads. If the honourable member would like to be advised later of those locations I can take that part of his question on notice and give him a list of those roads. It is important to take this opportunity to point out exactly what has occurred with speed camera operation in this State. We went from a situation where under the previous Government police officers were often accused by the public, rightly or wrongly, of hiding behind bushes, placing cameras at a bottom of hills, or putting cameras in locations where they ought not to have been. The RAA, a reputable body in this State, lobbied long and hard, and quite rightly so, for an up-front strategy to be put in place for speed cameras. The Government has ensured that that up-front policing strategy was put in place and it involves this: the placement along a number of designated black spot roads permanent signs indicating police activity along those roads, to apprehend speeding motorists. Those signs have recently started to go up. That initiative did not occur at the same time as the other initiative because road transport approval process is necessary for the placement of such signs.

Secondly, vehicles have been placed out in the open so that they can be easily seen by the public. Thirdly, signs have been placed after the vehicle if people still have not seen those other two earlier warnings to slow down. The fact is that the figures indicate that people are slowing down, and what has occurred is that the revenue collection has dropped accordingly. I have said publicly time and again that the Police Department is not perturbed by the drop in revenue collection from speeding fines. What the department is aiming to do is to ensure that road accidents are reduced. To date, as I indicated in my opening statement, road accident deaths are well down on last year, but we are still not happy with that because any death on the road is one death too many.

We now have an up-front policing strategy: one which works well, which is consistent with approaches taken in other jurisdictions and which is entirely consistent with the approach that was taken by the Government, of signs both before cameras and after. If the honourable member is suggesting that people need more warning, perhaps he would like to volunteer to stand with a flashing light at speed camera locations in his electorate. I would welcome that if it helps reduce road deaths. We need to reduce road deaths, and that is the prime aim of this move.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: There are few better than the member for Playford at making his point in here, but he well knows that he should do it through the Chair.

Mr QUIRKE: I have a further supplementary, because I want to have this issue tied down. I have asked you twice now, Minister, and I ask you a third time: you told the House—and I can go and pull out all the *Hansard* volumes if you want—that you wanted to ensure that members of the public knew before they reached a speed camera that they would risk a fine for speeding. You can go on about black spots and signs up on different roads, and you can offer to take me out there and show them to me, that is fine; but as I understand it, there is a number of cameras operating out there at this very moment where the police officer pulls the car up, goes a couple of hundred yards farther down the road

and puts out a sign that says 'You have gone through the speed camera', but there is no sign placed before the car.

You are saying that the car itself, which is a well known vehicle—it is a Camry, like half a million others out there on the road—is sufficient sign of what you had in mind in Parliament last year. I quite clearly remember your running this campaign before, obviously, either the Treasurer or the Police Department got hold of you on this issue, and you said that the sign was going to be before the camera. Out there it is a bit of a joke, the fact that the sign is after the camera. Let us get this cleared up.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I ask the member for Playford: is he telling the Minister what he thinks or is he asking him?

Mr QUIRKE: I am asking him, Mr Chairman, and I do not think I need a lot of help in the exercise. I need an answer.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I do not know how I can be plainer. I will repeat it, and I will go very slowly for the honourable member. He might also find it interesting to note that I get complaints from the public about making the speed cameras so visible and obvious. It is worth the honourable member's taking that on board, too. The honourable member indicated that the car is well known and everyone sees it. Exactly: it is now up front, visible, obvious. Along designated black spot roads there are being put in place, some are already in place, signs indicating police activity along those roads, to encourage people to slow down. So, if they have not seen the sign, the vehicle, or the camera there is a sign afterwards as well, as a further measure.

Those things have resulted—and the honourable member must acknowledge this—in people slowing down at those locations: exactly what was intended. The honourable member made an off the cuff remark about Treasury's getting into my ear. I draw the honourable member's attention to the budget papers, which highlight that we are expecting a considerable drop in revenue from speed cameras. In fact, I can tell the honourable member, to make it easier for him, that in 1993-94 149 378 infringement notices were expiated. That resulted in payment in fines of \$14 859 871. For 1994-95 it is expected that 72 673 infringement notices will be expiated, returning \$7 356 712. That is a considerable drop in revenue to the Government, because, I repeat, it is not the revenue that is the main target.

If we reduce the number of road accidents we reduce the number of people being admitted to hospital, so, obviously, there are offsets to the health system as well. That is where it stands, and it is all up front and pretty obvious.

Mr QUIRKE: Did you make a commitment in Parliament that you would put the mobile sign before the camera as it is now after the camera? Did you or did you not?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I have answered that question.

Mr QUIRKE: You have not.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Both members on the Opposition side know it is within the Minister's purview to answer questions as he sees fit.

Mr QUIRKE: We will deal with that in the full Parliament. The next question is: how many of these cameras do you now have? How many of the night-time operating cameras do you now operate out there vis-a-vis this time last year? How many other various speed monitoring devices are the police using, and have those numbers significantly decreased over the past 12 months?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The number of cameras operating at any one time was increased by the previous

Labor Government from six to nine, and that number has remained stable under this Government. As at July 1992 there were six cameras operating, and as of 10 August 1992 there were nine. Those nine cameras continue in operation as the cameras on the road today.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: For the clarification of the Chair, does that include hand held devices or is that only the static cameras?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I can also advise the honourable member that as at 30 June this year the department had 35 slant beam, K band radar pieces of equipment; 10 Muni-quip hand held radar; 25 Falcon hand held radar; and 10 HAWK mobile radar. While there are nine speed cameras in operation, three are retained as backup. They are the AWA Fairey speed cameras. We have two Electrotectors and 42 Digitectors.

Mr QUIRKE: I actually asked for a breakdown, and I am quite happy to have the question taken on notice, of the number of devices that were in place 12 months ago vis-a-vis those in place today. I also asked, and I will take it as a supplementary here because I do not think it will be too much trouble—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is the Minister prepared to take the rest of that question on notice?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am advised that there is a belief that there has been no increase in that equipment, but I am happy to take that back to the department to confirm that for the honourable member.

Mr QUIRKE: I would like you to have a close look at what I actually said in the *Hansard*, because I asked you whether there had been a corresponding decrease in certain other radar related activities in particular. But I am happy for that to go on notice. What about night-time operating cameras? I understood that there was one such device, but I had the pleasure the other night of seeing three of them on the one road. How many of these nine devices are set up for night-time operations?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am amazed that these cameras that are not up front are being seen so easily by the honourable member—particularly as he has seen three on one road. We do not have that information available. The belief is that their activity has not increased beyond that of the previous Government. I am happy to take that on board again and talk to the police to verify that.

Mr QUIRKE: There has been a degree of media speculation about a crackdown on brothels in South Australia and on prostitution in general. There was a media report in one newspaper a short while ago about some girls out on the street—I presume they were female prostitutes—because of certain police raiding activities on these premises. What particular activities are going on in that area, or is this just a media beat up?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Police Commissioner has indicated that he will answer that question.

Mr Hunt: It is well known that we have been targeting the question of prostitution in this State and have formed a group known as Operation Patriot which is a dedicated group trying to curb the activities not only of prostitution but also illegal gaming and serious contraventions of the licensing laws of the State. However, what has received the most publicity through various lobby groups has been that dealing with prostitution. One of the reasons why there is such an operation is that prostitution is a misunderstood situation within the community at large. It is perceived as purely a social problem and it usually centres around emotive issues

such as people having a need or requirement to earn a living, and also states questions of people's rights to be able to earn a living in the way in which they do.

However, the laws of this State indicate that prostitution under the circumstances prescribed by the law is an offence. It has been known to the police for a long period of time that prostitution is not a simple matter. There are connections at a national and a State level, and indeed internationally, with organised crime with paedophilia, child prostitution and a number of other kindred offences which are of concern to various Governments.

There have been a number of assessments made on the question of prostitution both in South Australia and at the national level over the past 12 months or so. It is in conformity with the law of this State and also the understanding of the wider implications of the question of prostitution that Operation Patriot exists in South Australia. The honourable member has indicated a concern recently stated that these initiatives would drive prostitution to the streets. I suppose only a fair warning might emanate from that, but prostitution, whether it is on the streets or elsewhere, is an offence. I understand obviously from the prostitution lobby that it is one of the initiatives that it has to gain publicity in order to state a case as and when the question of prostitution might again be examined by this Parliament.

Mrs HALL: I refer to page 490 of the Program Estimates where the 1994-95 specific objectives show that the Police Department is to continue to encourage community awareness of road safety. It seems to me that with the prevalence of younger drivers involved in car crashes this message needs to be directed to young drivers in particular. What specific programs exist which are directed to young drivers?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I share the concern of the member for Coles over the tragedy of accidents through young drivers on our roads as I am sure all members would. The traffic safety section conducts a Youth Driver Education Program (YDEP) consisting of two sessions of two hours duration highlighting attitudes, road collision causes, defensive driving techniques, and alcohol and driving. Every high school, college, and area school in the State is included in the program. The program enjoys the approval of school principals and the support of the State Government. Six members are employed full time in the YDEP. SGIC comprehensive third party sponsors the program by paying the cost of salaries of four of those members, the cost of six vehicles, and a range of lecturing aids.

The objective of the program is to reduce the number of young drivers involved in road crashes. Its main strategies are to create awareness of the causes of road collisions, the consequences of drinking and driving, and the laws pertaining to driving and their enforcement. The benefits of the program are twofold: the widespread promotion of safe driver attitudes amongst young drivers; and improved communication between specialist traffic police and young road users.

Under YDEP 15 080 students involving years 11 and 12 were included in the program during the 1993-94 financial year. In addition, student volunteers at schools are trained in the safe and efficient management of marked cross walks and school pedestrian crossing. 10 231 students involved in 201 separate groups were trained during the financial year 1993-94.

The traffic safety section provides children's road safety education and cycle safety school and community groups at the safety school. Last year I am pleased to advise that 248 groups involving 8 184 students received instruction under

this program. Road safety awareness presentations are given to various groups representing a wide cross-section of our community. They include junior primary and primary schools, service clubs, business and church groups, defence force personnel and Government and semi-government authorities. Last year, including both adults and children, 27 555 persons involving 401 separate groups attended lectures conducted by the South Australian Police Traffic Safety Section. The driver awareness programs will continue during 1994-95 again with the support of SGIC comprehensive third party sponsorship.

Mrs HALL: I refer to page 490 of the Program Estimates which again relates to road safety awareness programs. The specific objective for 1994-95 is to encourage community awareness programs as they relate to road safety. Sometime ago adult offenders were asked to attend lectures as part of their remedial program. Does this initiative still operate?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The traffic safety section conducts a driver safety awareness program for members of the public involved in minor road collisions. These people are invited to attend these lectures by the prosecution services of the South Australian Police Department. In 1993-94, 16 lectures were presented to a total of 1 053 offenders and friends who attended the lectures. All lecture sessions during the past financial year were conducted in Adelaide. The objectives of this particular program are: to define driver attitude and recall the attributes of safer driver; explain the four most prevalent occurring collisions on our roads and highlight the excuses; illustrate relevant information about alcohol and drug related driving offences; define and discuss Give Way and other sections of the Road Traffic Act; and identify reaction time and its use to a driver.

The benefits of the program have demonstrated to have created a correct and positive attitude toward being a safe driver, and to improve communication between specialist traffic police and general road users. These sessions will continue twice monthly throughout 1994-95. Sponsorship for the program is again provided by SGIC, which includes the cost of any overtime incurred by Police Department personnel in presenting the lectures.

Mrs HALL: I refer to page 485 of the Program Estimates and to the several programs aimed at improving community relations. I understand that the department continues to operate a series of activities for young people under its blue light programs. The main aim of these activities is to provide a drug, alcohol and trouble free environment for young people. What are the details of the department's blue light activities?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The blue light activities consist of youth camps and discos. There is a link between alcohol, drugs, boredom and juvenile crime. Members from all sides of Parliament have on many occasions agonised over that particular link and talked about it in the House. The blue light youth program is a positive step towards actually reducing those effects and contributing in some way to reducing the incidence of juvenile crime. Blue light youth camps are held at the police training reserve at Echunga, Woodhouse at Piccadilly, Karingal at Naracoorte and aboard the *One and All* sail training ship. The camps afford the opportunity for young people to become actively involved with police, to develop a trust of police officers and to reduce the incidence of juvenile crime.

The objective of blue light youth camps is to make use of activities as a means of developing personal attributes, such as self esteem, confidence and responsibility amongst our

youth. Activities include lectures from police officers and other professionals on subjects such as job interview presentation, preparing resumes and the role of adolescents in our community. Police officers and youth workers supervise the camps.

Blue light discos are organised by off duty police officers with the assistance of their families, local service clubs, St John officers and other concerned community volunteers who see a need to provide young people of our community with entertainment at a venue free from drugs, alcohol and violence. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to those volunteers in our community, in particular those police officers who are prepared to give of their time while off duty to this important supervision.

During 1993-94 a total of 96 blue light discos were held, attended by 19 500 young people. The discos extended from Marla in the north of our State to Mount Gambier in the South-East. In the same year, 19 youth camps were conducted, with 330 youths attending. A number of new initiatives have been developed during the year, including drop-in centres at Leigh Creek, Penola and Kingston. All these to date have proved extremely popular and successful amongst our young people. It is anticipated that during the forthcoming year all camps with police involvement will be coordinated through the blue light office.

It is important to note also that sponsorship funding has been provided for these activities, in particular through Foundation SA, the Drug and Alcohol Services Council and Coca-Cola Bottlers Adelaide. From 1993-94 the department has provided an annual funding of \$10 000 for the program in addition to the staff costs it is meeting. The Attorney-General's Crime Fund has provided \$162 000 for this initiative since 1989-90. There is about \$25 000 remaining in that account at this time. One police officer—a sergeant—is employed full time in this activity. All other police involved are volunteers, a commendable effort on their part.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I am sure all members, not only on this committee but also in the House join you in congratulating the people who do valuable work such as that within our community.

Ms STEVENS: For my first couple of questions, I refer to page 485 of the Program Estimates and the Neighbourhood Watch program. In my electorate in Elizabeth—and I am sure this is widespread—I have been incredibly impressed with the work that has been done in this area. Is the Neighbourhood Watch scheme to be the subject of cuts in funding in real terms in the coming financial year and, if so, why?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The honourable member unfortunately was not here for my opening address. I am happy to advise the honourable member that there will be no cuts. The Commissioner is presently working on a strategy to actually increase the take up rate of programs for Neighbourhood Watch because in the past there have been significant delays in starting those new programs.

Ms STEVENS: Have there been any studies or evaluations as to the effectiveness in this State of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme since the Minister came into office? If so, what are the results of any such studies or evaluations?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: An evaluation is under way at present that has not yet been completed. As that is yet to come to me as Minister, the Commissioner has indicated that he is prepared to provide preliminary information to the Committee concerning that evaluation.

Mr Hunt: In the nature of these kinds of ventures, it is necessary to have a fairly lengthy period of time upon which

to be able to measure. There is no formal result at this stage, although we are in the process of having a look with other jurisdictions in the country about evaluating schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch. One of the things we can say positively is that the involvement of the community has to a very large degree increased in relation to crime prevention and reporting of these matters. In fact, there are some 460 (and I stand corrected if that is slightly out) Neighbourhood Watch areas operating at the moment, together with approximately 700 households in each area. That covers a big area of the State, so many people are involved.

Because we have been talking to and working with the Neighbourhood Watch organisations about property crime, such as motor vehicles and house break-ins and thefts therefrom, there has for the third year in a row been a diminution in those kinds of offences. Because of those figures and also because of the working together or community involvement of Neighbourhood Watch—and indeed, Neighbourhood Watch plays a very hefty part in Operation Pendulum, which was explained just a moment ago—there is more than an intuitive feeling of the value that Neighbourhood Watch brings to the community at large. We look forward to some final results and we feel very confident about that. Public confidence is reflected by the 13 000 plus volunteer workers who are now participating in the scheme. It is very heartening to see and hear of people who want to lend themselves to sponsorship of those programs.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is also worth adding that at this time there are approximately 250 watch programs on the waiting list, 210 of those being Neighbourhood Watch and 40 being Rural Watch. That waiting list is a changing list obviously as new programs are continually added to the list and others are taken up.

Ms STEVENS: I now ask about the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which is referred to on page 487 of the Program Estimates. What changes or programs have actually been implemented to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission since the Minister took up the Emergency Services portfolio?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The honourable member would recall that my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs also recently tabled in the Parliament a report on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody across all Government agencies that were affected by the commission's findings. Members would be aware that the findings were extensive and that 339 recommendations were included in the final report covering a wide range of issues to counter the disproportionate level of Aboriginal custody deaths. The recommendations covered police personnel management policies and practices, sentencing practices, treatment of intoxicated persons, conditions and procedures at police lockups, conditions and procedures at prisons, medical issues, post death investigations, and police operating policies and procedures.

Some 59 of the recommendations have a direct bearing on the Police Department's operation and cell facilities. In conjunction with the Government's commitment to the implementation of all of the recommendations, the department has put together a series of strategies to pursue the practical details of the implementation. The central themes of these include changes to police training and education programs, covering a range of operating procedures; first aid training and attention practices; the appointment of a senior commissioned police officer to liaise with relevant agencies

and coordinate action on those recommendations; the extension of the Aboriginal Police Aid Scheme to three additional remote locations and to several urban areas, notably Port Augusta, Salisbury and Elizabeth; a prioritised program for upgrading of cells to improve standards to acceptable levels; the recruitment of 15 additional police officers per year for three years to allow for more rigorous surveillance arrangements; and the continuation of major building work programs to ensure high quality detention facilities at all major 24-hour police station locations.

In addition, officers from the Police Department contributed to the formulation of the Australian standard for custodial practice and facility design in response to recommendation 332 of the royal commission's final report. This is a particularly important question, and I know that the honourable member is as concerned about this as I and other members of the Committee are, so I take this opportunity to talk about the deaths that have occurred in custody in South Australia between the period 1980 to 30 June 1994. There were nine Aboriginal deaths in police custody and four in corrections custody, making a total of 13; there were 15 non-Aboriginal deaths in police custody and 36 in corrections custody, making a total of 51, making a total of 64 overall.

The recommendations of the Muirhead royal commission therefore go even further than dealing with just Aboriginal deaths in custody: they deal with all deaths in custody. I am sure members would agree that we would rather see no deaths occur at all in custody, and for that reason a cell design provision has been ensured, both within the Police Department and in relation to the new cells presently being constructed in the Correctional Services Department.

To date, I can give to the Committee details of the total cost of construction at locations where new cell accommodation facilities have been constructed or are about to be constructed, either under the previous Government or under this Government. Those include facilities at Ceduna, where the total cost has been \$3 506 000; Port Adelaide, \$16 357 000; Kadina, \$1 862 000; Whyalla, \$1 569 000; Berri, \$904 000; Port Pirie, \$1 885 000; the City Watch House, which involved a relocation as well, \$4 679 000; Christies Beach, \$2 103 000; Elizabeth, which also included the court complex, \$16 490 000; Goolwa, \$404 000; Coober Pedy, \$2 475 000; and Port Augusta, \$5 400 000. From the 1994-95 budget, it is proposed that either construction will be continued or new cell accommodation facilities will be provided at Elizabeth, including those in the courts complex, at a further cost of \$40 000; at Port Augusta for a cost of \$3 614 000; and at Coober Pedy for a cost \$1 758 000, making a total of \$5 412 000 for this financial year.

In addition, the Commissioner advises that building works are also to be undertaken at the Holden Hill cells, where adjustments are being made to the grill bars, which are of concern, and those works are to be undertaken at an estimated cost of \$250 000.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to page 481 of the Program Estimates. How many police officers are presently on stress leave and what are the reasons cited for the stress suffered by these police officers?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I would need to take the question on notice so far as it relates to how many police officers are on stress leave as at today. However, I can advise the Committee that 30 stress claims were lodged in 1993-94 as against a department employee number of 4 447. In view of the nature of the very difficult and challenging role of police officers, it is a very encouraging figure, but of course

there is still 30 too many there. I am happy also to take the question on notice in relation to the reasons for those claims.

In relation to the situation where an officer is under stress or is in a situation where stress could ensue, the department has a number of provisions in place. Police training and counselling services are provided through welfare, chaplaincy and psychology branches, and an occupational health nurse, and they cooperate in the development and delivery of programs designed to increase the awareness of members about stress and its impact on health and work performance. These pro-active measures cover all recruits to the Police Force and also some in-service training courses. These areas also provide voluntary, confidential counselling services.

The department also has a Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, and the rehabilitation section of the department assesses, establishes and coordinates appropriate rehabilitation programs at a very early stage for any employee suffering work related stress. The Rehabilitation Advisory Committee comprises a Chairman, who is the officer in charge of the Human Resources Command, Support Branch; the Senior Police Welfare Officer; the Chief Police Psychologist; the Police Medical Officer; the Rehabilitation Coordinator; the Occupational Health Nurse; and the Human Resource Management Branch Liaison Officer. They meet monthly on a structured basis to assist in the management, treatment and rehabilitation of employees suffering severe stress reactions.

Officers suffering from other long-term health problems sometimes can also have stress or psychological components to their condition, and this committee operates in confidence and works towards the resolution of an individual's particular situation through rehabilitation, alternative placement or what other measures are deemed appropriate.

Because of the very nature of police tasks, they can result also in a situation where an officer suffers post trauma, and for that reason the department also has post trauma intervention procedures which have been fully implemented and which are aimed at providing immediate assistance to officers who have been involved in a major stressful incident in the line of duty. These procedures provide for officers to be debriefed by departmental psychologists and, where necessary, to undertake follow-up counselling.

Such procedures are utilised across emergency service agencies, and I am sure that members would appreciate that, as an example, the bombing of the NCA headquarters was particularly stressful for emergency service personnel, not only because of the nature of the incident but also because some of them—particularly police officers—identified so closely with the incident, as it was one of their own who fell as victim to that dreadful incident. So, the department continues to monitor this area through its operations.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I point out to the member for Elizabeth that stress is in itself a cause. I respectfully suggest that she speak to the Minister privately, because when the Minister replies, although we are protected by privilege, I would not like the answer to identify any particular person.

Mr LEGGETT: An objective on page 488 of the Program Estimates is to continue to develop training programs for State Emergency Service operations. What are the details of these training programs as they apply to both State Emergency Service personnel and other counter-disaster personnel, both at State and divisional level?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is worth acknowledging at the outset that the State Emergency Service, of course, is another organisation that relies considerably on community volunteers who are prepared to not only dedicate their

personal time but also, on many occasions, to take some element of personal risk in assisting those in our community who require assistance as a result of an emergency or disaster. Service training is ongoing and it is to a standard laid down in the various SES manuals of training. A Training Advisory Committee, comprising both permanent and volunteer officers, has been established to advise the Director of the service on all training matters.

At the State level, the SES is considered by Emergency Management Australia to be its window into the State and, on all counter and disaster training matters, liaison between the service and the Australian Emergency Management Institute is ongoing. The SES is the coordinating authority for all counter-disaster training and counter-disaster exercises in this State. This was approved by the State Disaster Committee, and a position of State Counter-Disaster Training Officer was created. This officer, whose salary is subsidised from the Emergency Management Australia body, through the Department of Defence, is actively engaged in the coordination and provision of counter-disaster training in South Australia.

A counter-disaster training and exercise committee has been established as a subcommittee to the State disaster group with the Director, SES, as Chairman, the training officer as executive officer, and representation from each of the 14 functional services. The role of the subcommittee is to plan, advise and oversee all counter-disaster training activities within the State. As Committee members would appreciate, these training activities for counter-disaster are a vital part of the program to ensure that, should such an exercise be needed, our officers are fully trained and briefed on what action needs to be taken.

The services engaged in the provision of specialist training for operators, instructors and leaders in disaster rescue include vehicle accident rescue, vertical rescue, land search, storm damage, catering and communications. A training program and instruction techniques for local personnel are being undertaken at this time throughout the State, and the training of SES local controllers is ongoing. An introduction to data management courses is being conducted for personnel from all emergency services. Training costs are met from the general operating budget of the SES and no charges are made for training for non-SES agencies.

The 1994-95 budget estimates include provision for the payment of student accommodation and catering fees for State-run courses. Emergency Management Australia funds counter-disaster training courses conducted within the State. During 1993-94 two such courses were conducted at the Police Academy at Fort Largs, with 82 persons receiving instruction. The Australian Emergency Management Institute provided one instructor and other instructors were provided from the SES. Two other such courses will again be conducted in the 1994-95 financial year.

Mr LEGGETT: My next question is in reference to program papers, page 489, and relates to STAR Division training. Could the Minister provide more details of the training programs conducted by the STAR Division and whether this training is limited to courses run by the Police Department itself?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The STAR Division of the Police Department is another group that undergoes considerable training and continually updates its skills so that when it is required it is prepared. Members would recall a recent armed siege situation in the Barossa Valley area, where STAR Division police were able to ensure that all people at

that site were ultimately removed without loss of life. That occurred at a time when one officer had been shot at the start of the incident and was requiring emergency treatment.

The level-headed approach taken by those officers is a fitting demonstration of their training, which ensures that no panic occurs during a state of emergency. All members of the STAR Division receive intensive training by members of the STAR Division training group. The training covers search and rescue training, special weapons training and specialist training, for example, air crew, diving and marksman observer training. A dedicated command and control course is programmed for all STAR Division supervisors. This ensures a professional approach to the committee at hand as well as complimenting the nationally run Standing Advisory Committee Protection Against Violence (SACPAV) courses of the same nature. A key component of training is the control of weapons related incidents and high risk arrests. Unfortunately, both of those areas have required STAR Division skills over recent times.

Mr LEGGETT: Program papers on page 479 show a reduction in the executive, professional, technical, administrative and clerical support staff levels. Is the Minister able to advise how many staff reductions across the department have been achieved by separation packages, and, furthermore, is the Minister able to comment on whether any separation packages have been offered to police officers?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Mr Acting Chairman, with your indulgence, there was one further matter I needed to cover on the STAR Division question from the honourable member. Members of STAR Division also attend external training courses as well as those arranged by police. During the 1993-94 financial year, two members attended the National Police Search and Rescue Mission Coordinators' Course: one as a student and one as a member of the directing staff. Attendance of two members will again occur this financial year. In 1995 and 1996 the course will be hosted in South Australia.

The honourable member also asked a question concerning voluntary or targeted separation packages. The scheme, as members are aware, commenced in 1992-93 under the previous Government, continued to operate through to the following financial year, and has been extended by this Government to 23 December 1994. As in the previous year, the package consists of a minimum eight weeks' pay plus three weeks' pay for each year of completed service, with a maximum payment of 104 weeks' pay. To date, a total of 76 separation packages have been offered to Police Department staff; 51 of those packages had been accepted as at 26 August 1994.

None of these packages has been offered to police officers. As members are aware, there is a need to maintain police operational numbers and also increase operational policing numbers. Packages accepted include staff from the transport store, transport workshops, exhibit property area, administration branch, property branch, supply branch, central store, Thebarton Barracks (in both the cafeteria and operational services areas), station clerks, Strategic Development Branch, the Academy cafeteria, and the computing communications area.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to Program Estimates, Program Sector, Police Services. The Minister has pledged publicly that there would be 100 extra police put on patrols. Does this figure represent transit police changing uniform to become sworn police, and Novar Gardens mechanics, drivers and

carpenters going on patrols, or is the Minister pledging to recruit 100 additional sworn police in 1994?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I take the opportunity to remind the honourable member that the community safety policy, announced by the Liberal Party prior to the December 1993 election, stated quite clearly:

A Liberal Government will increase the number of operational police by 200.

We also indicated that that would occur during our first term of office. At this stage, 200 additional operational police positions have already been proposed to be achieved by a number of strategies. I remind the honourable member that it was always indicated that the additional police would be achieved through a variety of programs, including new recruits and redeployees.

The positions have been identified as follows: there will be 72 positions as a result of transfer of transit police from the STA, now TransAdelaide (as all of those 72 transfers may not occur, those numbers will need to be made up, balanced against new recruits); the redeployment of 99 police officers (and I will come back to that shortly); 18 redeployed from the workshop closure; and 11 others from efficiency measures introduced in the department over the next few years. The 99 police officers to be redeployed include a figure which, to be quite frank, absolutely staggered me on coming to office: we had 67 police operating the speed cameras, of which the member for Playford is so fond. Those 67 police are intended to be deployed gradually back to operational duties, and their duties will then be performed by personnel from the Police Security Services division. Five police have already been deployed from duties at Government House, and their duties are now undertaken by Police Security Services division members, there are two police from police headquarters, and police will also be deployed from Parliament House, pending the agreement of the Speaker. An approach was recently made to him over this matter.

It is worth noting the benefits that can be achieved through such redeployment. Her Excellency has been pleased to advise me on two separate occasions that she has been delighted by the manner in which the Police Security Services division officers who are working at Government House are undertaking their duties. She has indicated that they are very enthusiastic about their duties and she believes that it has been a very good move for Government House, because as Governor she has also been able to assist the police in deploying operational personnel. Those five positions allowed the deployment of four police to the new Aldinga police station. If that deployment had not occurred, that police station could not have been opened at this time, so already there are has been a direct policing benefit. The fifth position went back to patrol duties in the Hindley Street station and therefore covers the surrounding city areas. To date, 42 of the transit police positions have occurred here, and the honourable member would be aware from my comments earlier that these personnel have had to undergo training at Fort Largs Police Academy, which is not without cost. By the end of this current financial year, 135 of those 200 positions ought to be in place. The additional costs associated with this initiative through training are being taken into account through a variety of savings, which I have already identified within the department.

Mr ATKINSON: Minister, since you were sworn as a Minister, how many new police have been sworn in in this State?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I have indicated to the honourable member, and the Commissioner will provide me with the rest of the figures, the two figures I have in front of me indicate that 42 officers have been sworn in from the transit police move—

Mr ATKINSON: From the transit police.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The honourable member interjects 'from the transit police'. I think it is worth detailing to the Committee the response of police officers to that initiative. One senior officer in the department said to me, 'Minister, this is unbelievable: your Government has achieved in six weeks what the previous Government could not achieve in six years.' He said that for six years he bore the frustration of talk upon talk of transferring STA personnel to the Police Department and getting it under way and was continually embroiled in a Government bun fight. The Commissioner has been prepared to take on that task for all that time. It did not occur. We had incident upon incident on public transport that went unreported because the public gave up in frustration and started walking away from public transport. I can certainly detail to the honourable member the result of those police personnel already on public transport. They have already been able to conduct an enormous number of reports and arrests which did not occur before. I am pleased, therefore, to advise that, with those numbers from the transit police included, there have been four graduation courses at the academy since I became Minister; those have resulted in a total of 78 graduates, with a further course to graduate shortly. A further 112 new recruits have been taken into the training courses at the academy since I became Minister.

Mr ATKINSON: This is supplementary to the same line of questioning. I am trying to work out what is the net gain in sworn officers. The Minister says that he is trying to bring 78 transit police over into the Police Force; he has brought over 42 of them so far and he may not bring them all over. He has redeployed some police who are already police officers from Government House, from the speed camera operations and from the Novar Gardens workshops, but they were already sworn police officers, so I would not have thought they counted as extra police for the purposes of his election promise. Most people would not regard changing the transit police from TransAdelaide to the Police Department as fulfilling the election promise. So, we then come down to some new graduates. Is the Minister saying that 78 new graduates have been sworn as police officers since the election, and will he subtract from that the number of police who have left under separation packages or retired and tell us what is the balance?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The honourable member is being deliberately mischievous, because he knows full well that no police officers have left under separation packages, because none of them has had the opportunity to take a separation package. He knows that full well, so let us dispense with that immediately. If the honourable member wishes to be embarrassed by the ineptitude that was shown by the previous Government because of its unwillingness to investigate outsourcing options, I am prepared to go ahead and reveal exactly what we found. I have already revealed that, at the Novar Gardens police mechanical workshop for example, there are 21 uniformed police officers who when we came into office were performing non-core policing functions.

I have already revealed that we were absolutely staggered to find that 67 police officers were deployed to monitor speed

cameras and other equipment, and that work can be taken on by other than police officers. We had five officers at Government House undertaking security duties that can be undertaken by non-police officers. There are myriad others. In fact, it is fair to say that far more personnel who are sworn police officers are involved in non-police activities than the now Government had anticipated when in Opposition. As a consequence, it means that we are able to deliver our 200 operational police without recruiting 200 people. If that is what the honourable member is after, I am happy to volunteer that. We always indicated in Opposition that we knew it was possible to deliver 200 officers without recruiting 200 people and that there would be a mixture. A mixture is what has occurred. In so far as the TransAdelaide, as it is now (the former STA), transfer is concerned, 72 positions were transferred to the department.

It followed that 72 people would not necessarily have been transferred over. Some of those were new recruits. The bulk were existing ex-STA staff. In order for those officers to become sworn police officers they must be trained, at Fort Largs Police Academy, just as though they had been new recruits, with some consideration taken into account in the case of one group with past service, and such consideration is now available for recruits outside the STA, anyway. Also, some consideration was taken into account for those who had been STA transit officers. However, they have to pass their course at the academy. If they do not make the grade they do not become police officers. They are new police.

I can advise the member that in total as at 14 September 1994, 50 positions in the Police Transit Division were sworn police officers, broken down as follows: eight police positions that were already in existence when the transfer occurred. There are always eight people of the 80 who were police officers. They came back. They have not been included in that figure. There were 72 transit officers in the process of being trained; 19 of those graduated from the academy in February 1994 and 20 in August 1994; a further 10 are at the academy at the moment; and the remaining 20 positions are being recruited through the normal police recruitment cadet training program. There is a mixture there. I am sure the honourable member would advocate that if we have the opportunity to put trained personnel into operational positions and therefore deliver a more expedient result we should take that opportunity. To be quite frank, when I was in Opposition I did not expect to be in a position at the end of this financial year to achieve 135 additional operational resources. Because of the manner in which those resources are being deployed we will be able to fulfil our commitment at a faster rate than we expected.

I also take the opportunity to annul one other misnomer that has crept into this, and that is the effectiveness of the Police Transit Division. It is worth noting that the STA Transit Squad was achieving a report and arrest rate significantly lower than the present level. That does not mean to say that there has been an increase in incidents on public transport; in fact quite the contrary. What it actually means is that their arrest rate has been for more successful. I advised the House on a previous occasion that in its early days the Transit Police, as distinct from the STA Transit Squad, were achieving in the vicinity of 200 arrests and reports a month, compared to a much lower figures, an average of below 30 under the previous operation. The honourable member has many constituents who use public transport. I would hope that he welcomes those changes as do I.

Mr ATKINSON: Minister, I cannot find any allocation in the budget papers for an Asian crime unit. Can you tell us which Australian police forces have Asian crime units and why South Australia does not make establishing an Asian crime unit a priority for this financial year?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am happy to have the Police Commissioner answer that question. It is an area in which he is well briefed.

Mr Hunt: It is well known that we share the view of the member concerning any form of crime and whether or not it takes on a new form, and I think by way of introduction I would be able to say that this question is a very active one amongst Commissioners of Police throughout the whole of the country and, indeed, dependent upon where this activity is being conducted, there are varying degrees of activity in response to or in prevention of any kind of criminality. Naturally enough, we keep in touch with these situations through a variety of agencies, such as the National Crime Authority, various other police forces, the national intelligence organisations, and others. Indeed, the South Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence is responsible for the collection, collation and analysis of information and dissemination of intelligence pertaining to Asian organised crime in South Australia. The BCI also disseminates relevant information to the Canberra based Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence (ABCI), pursuant to national projects.

A number of areas of criminality are under consideration throughout the whole of the country, and we might refer to what is popularly known in the media as Chinese triads. Although there has been no activity in South Australia, there can be directly attributed to Chinese organised crime groups, such as triads, an increasing awareness of massage parlours which have been or which are presently controlled and staffed by Chinese prostitutes. Again, I made reference to that matter earlier. There has also been the discovery of counterfeit credit cards, which originate from Asia. We also keep under consideration the Japanese Boryokudan, also known as the Yukasa, but there are no Japanese gang members or infiltrators known to be operating in organised crime areas in South Australia.

A question which popularly arises is the question of Vietnamese gangs. Vietnamese gangs continue to be involved in criminal activity in South Australia, such as the crime of extortion. There has been an increase in involvement with the heroin trade both as traders and users, and as a consequence there is an increase in the theft of property and use of violence towards members of the Vietnamese community, not all that different I might say from the situation which pervades with drug use and abuse and criminality to support those habits in the wider community of South Australia. Gang members are most prominent in various areas of this State over which we have some surveillance.

In anticipation of attempts by organised crime figures to either infiltrate or emigrate to Australia from other parts of Asia, there is a close liaison maintained through the police forces of Australia and the Australian Federal Police, who have police officers acting in our interests in those areas. Consideration is also being given to the employment of an ethnic Asian intelligence analyst and, indeed, yesterday morning I attended at the Echunga Police Training Reserve and opened a course, which is the first of its kind to be conducted in Australia for the development of a multi-disciplinary approach to the question of crime intelligence analysis, as it is known.

Indeed, we have in train an opportunity to discuss with the University of South Australia the question of developing core competencies for crime analysts, and these initiatives are firsts in South Australia. I shall be meeting with my colleagues tomorrow and the next day in Sydney, deliberately discussing some of these and related matters, and I will be putting them before them for their involvement and contribution to such projects as I have just discussed. We feel that, generally, through the finger that we have on the pulse of these matters both in South Australia and around the country, we are well advised of the activities of any Asian crime operatives who might or might not be wanting to set up shop in South Australia.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Just for the clarification of the Committee, did the Commissioner say that there is a problem with Chinese crime or is he anticipating a problem with Chinese crime in this State?

Mr Hunt: No, there is not at this stage, although I qualified that by saying that there is an increasing awareness of the utilisation of Chinese people in massage parlours, which are controlled and/or staffed by Chinese women engaged in prostitution.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister has suggested publicly that a user pays principle would be adopted in relation to some police services. For which services will members of the public be expected to pay for police intervention or assistance? Will that include a \$90 charge for the third and subsequent police attendance at household false alarms? What is the revenue expected from the alarm charge in a full year?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The department has undertaken a review of a number of areas of its activity, to look at whether those areas can be undertaken in different ways and also to determine whether those activities are appropriate to be undertaken by the Police Department in the first place. In June 1994 the Commissioner referred to me a review of policing. Included within that review, which was some couple of hundred pages, was a brief mention of the charging system that was highlighted on the front page of this morning's *Advertiser* and in some other media. At this stage it is one of a number of proposals that are being examined. No final decision has been made by the Government. While the proposal has some merit, it is acknowledged that there are also some arguments against it, and I see it as the Government's role to balance those arguments and to ensure that whatever changes are introduced are introduced for the benefit of the community.

It is also worth knowing that, for a number of years, the department has been charging for a range of services it provides. These include: wide load escorts; repeated attendance at false alarms at business premises, which are charged for at this time; time spent by police members when being interviewed by solicitors and for provision of police reports; and burglary and accident related reports and police clearance certificates. The user pays proposal relative to charging for police services at sporting, entertainment and other events was investigated in May 1994 as part of the Commission of Audit report, which reported as follows:

Proposals to introduce user pay charges for police services at sporting, entertainment and other special events have been considered on a number of occasions between 1987 and 1991 and not proceeded with. There is already a number of precedents for introducing user charges. New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have user pays schemes. The consideration of the user pays scheme in South Australia needs to have regard to the ability of the organisation to pay and the cost of administering the scheme.

The Audit Commission has recommended that the Government should give consideration to the introduction of user charges for police services at sporting, entertainment and other special events.

In view of those recommendations by the Audit Commission, consideration is being given and, again, I acknowledge that there are disadvantages with introducing such charges and no decision has yet been made by the Government to introduce such.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister suggested that there will be private sponsorship of the police greys. What form will such sponsorship take? What favours will sponsors receive for their contributions and how much sponsorship for police greys does the Minister expect to receive in the present financial year?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I do not recall highlighting sponsorship of the police greys although I certainly have of the police band. It is fair to say that there is a number of areas of potential sponsorship within the Government. At this time the Metropolitan Fire Service has called for interested parties to sponsor its fire prevention activities, and to date we have been overwhelmed with the response. The police band is the first likely area of the Police Department to be looked at for sponsorship and, in view of the fact that we would not like to give sponsors an indication as to how high or low they may need to come in with a sponsorship amount, I would rather not speculate on that at this stage. I am happy to acknowledge the sponsors that the department presently has.

I outlined earlier the sponsorship for the Blue Light program. We also have the Kids, Cops and Crows program, sponsored by the South Australian Gas Company and the Adelaide Football Club, which includes the new rock band developed from within the police band. The South Australian Gas Company provides its own resources to support the Mobile Watch program. Neighbourhood Watch and Rural Watch are presently sponsored by the Electricity Trust of South Australia. Police Crime Line is sponsored by the Lions Club through funding for installation and maintenance of the telephone service. For this program and other crime prevention initiatives, Radio 5AD provides free advertising coverage of a broad range of activities, which we estimate is worth approximately \$100 000 per annum.

Our Stop Auto Theft program is sponsored by RAA Insurance and Today's Easy Listening 5AD, 102.3 FM (which, of course, has now changed as a call sign) and the Crime Prevention Unit of the Attorney-General's Department. The Youth Driver Education program sponsorship I outlined earlier. Safety Beat is sponsored by Safety Beat Incorporated and includes coverage of the Police Deputies Club. The Security Advice Unit has Home Assist Community Care providing two station sedans for use by the unit. And Mitsubishi provides one sedan to carry equipment and display material used for several of the above activities.

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

Mr BASS: Page 49 of the Program Estimates relates to reviews of occupational health and safety policies and practices. What has the Police Department specifically done to address the important question of occupational health and safety?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Again, particularly through his latter role prior to entering Parliament, the member for Florey, having been the Police Association Secretary, is mindful of the importance of the approach to occupational health and safety. The department's management approach

to occupational health and safety is based on a code of general principles and the requirements of the Occupational Health And Safety Act and its associated regulations. The management of the department recognises its inherent accountability for the work environment, and the new police general order, known internally in the department as GO-8540, has been circulated to encompass all occupational health and safety policies and procedures. The general order will in the near future be issued as a special purpose manual throughout the department.

A Senior Sergeant occupies the position in the Police Department of occupational health and safety coordinator, and a registered nurse was appointed as occupational health nurse in 1990. Each divisional commander or their equivalent is accountable for health and safety issues within his or her area of responsibility. The department has had in operation for many years occupational health and safety committees. Committee membership facilitates an employer/employee consultation and ensures representation of employees in every command. The committee's internal link to the occupational health and safety coordinating committee is at a strategic management level in the department.

A continuous education and training program is undertaken with an occupational health and safety coordinator, with the occupational health nurse making presentations at training programs, courses and conferences. Training has been given to facilitate a nominated first aid provider in all required workplaces.

Of particular concern in today's environment within police work is the risk of infection through hepatitis B virus. The inoculation of employees against the hepatitis B virus has continued, with approximately 4 600 members having either completed or commenced a series of inoculations. Regular monitoring of employees located in weapons training, operational safety and ballistics in the form of blood lead levels, respiratory function and hearing levels is also undertaken by the Police Department.

Mr BASS: In the support services area on the Program Estimates at page 491 there is reference to the development of the new accommodation and property strategic plan. What has prompted the preparation of this plan and is the department taking a new approach to its accommodation needs?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The department's future building requirements are extensive, and emphasis has been given by the department to provide the Government with a comprehensive understanding of our requirements. During 1986-87 under the previous Government a major review of the department's building and accommodation requirements was undertaken and detailed reports were provided to that Government covering all known requirements in all areas of the State over a 10 year period. At that time, under the previous Government, it also was the case that the new community policing objectives that have now been put in place did not exist. That is highlighted through the opening of the Aldinga community police station.

As a consequence of these changes, with the changing Government and associated policy change direction, the department is again assessing future building needs to meet its requirements. As part of the program the following factors are being taken into account: reports from SACON on the condition of the buildings; the comparison of existing accommodation to functional and space accommodation models; inclusion of health welfare safety and security requirements; the condition and standard of cells in the general detention areas (particularly in view of the recom-

mendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody); and to ensure that the quality of police accommodation is conducive to the delivery of efficient and effective police services.

In the past seven years \$92 million was spent on new and upgraded accommodation. Part of that amount I detailed earlier in response to an honourable member's question on the actions taken to meet the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Under the previous Government, an additional \$28 million was provided to purchase and fit out the premises of the new police headquarters building. It was said by the Liberal Party in Opposition that we would not be satisfied until we reach a stage where we have only one high rise building in the city occupied by police officers. We inherited a system where there are two. Part of the department's review of its accommodation requirements is also to examine the nature of duties undertaken by those officers who occupy the two city buildings (the old police headquarters and the property known as Flinders Central) to determine whether those officers need to be engaged in their employment duties in the city, or whether those officers can undertake similar duties in another location in the suburban area. As a consequence, the old plan formulated in 1986-87 is under review and a total new accommodation and property strategic plan is being developed for this Government.

The department has also been requested to provide a strategic planning document specifically relating to office accommodation to assist the Government Office Accommodation Committee in considering the needs, particularly in the Adelaide Central Business District, of all Government departments. That requirement has been incorporated into the department's overall accommodation and property planning process. It is expected at this stage that that process will be completed by the end of December 1994.

The new plan will be based on those areas of Government policy I outlined earlier and will identify a five to seven year program of requirements necessary to ensure the adequacy of police accommodation in the long term recognising the changed policy initiatives under this Government.

Mr BASS: I refer to State Emergency Services. I know it is not the police, but it provides a planning service in conjunction with the police divisional commanders. Page 488 of the Program Estimates shows operational incidents responded to year by year. In 1992-93 4 172 operational incidents were responded to, yet in 1993-94 it dropped to 2 751. What are the reasons for the reduction in those incidents?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I know that the member for Florey is particularly interested in the activities of the State Emergency Service and has seen first hand the work it undertakes in his own electorate. The figure of 4 172 in the 1992-93 financial year represented a higher than normal number of incidents responded to. That essentially occurred because of the storm and flood activity during that period of time. Members would recall the devastation which was caused through storm and flood during that financial year and which was responded to through an enormous input from SES volunteers.

It is interesting to look at the incidents responded to by those volunteers from the 1989-90 financial year for in that financial year they responded to 2 523 incidents; in 1990-91 the figure was 2 674; in 1991-92 it was 2 692; and then it went to that jump in 1992-93 through those extra incidents of 4 172, back down to 2 751 for 1993-94. It is estimated that

2 900 incidents will be responded to during this financial year.

As members would expect, it is difficult for the SES to be in a position to predict any unseasonal events. All it can do is base its expectations on previous years, and we could again, this financial year or one in the near future, have that same jump that we saw occur in 1992-93. The SES has responsibility for the administration and coordination of all the volunteer SES units throughout the State, and the number of operational incidents is regarded as an appropriate indicator of its workload effectiveness assessment of the operational role of the program.

It is to be noted that, when one looks at those sorts of incidents and thinks that the people involved in them have dedicated their own time, it would be very difficult for the State to respond to its emergency service needs where flood or storm damage has occurred, in many cases with accident vehicle rescue, if it were not for the dedication of those volunteers. I have said in a number of public forums, and am happy to put it on the record here today, that I had the misfortune, but at the same time the privilege, to receive first-hand the assistance of the SES some years ago when my wife and I received substantial storm damage to our house. We were absolutely staggered by the amazing dedication displayed by the Happy Valley SES (as it was on that occasion) who came to assist us in the early hours of the morning, placed tarpaulins over the damaged parts of our home, worked throughout the night, went to work that day, came back again after work that night and tightened the tarpaulins on our home. They did that as volunteers. I think many South Australians are very grateful for the incredible role undertaken by these volunteers. There are some 3 000 registered volunteers throughout South Australia in the State Emergency Services.

Ms STEVENS: With respect to the State Emergency Service on page 488 of the Program Estimates, one of the things that the local group in my area has mentioned to me that is of concern to them is the fact that they need to constantly update equipment. They realise the necessity for that because of the ever more stringent safety requirements. However, this becomes a very big burden in terms of fundraising, and they feel that they only just buy something when it is out of date and they therefore have to buy something else. What role does the State Government play in equipping the State Emergency Service?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The member brings up a very good point. The cost of equipment and the need constantly to upgrade is of considerable concern to a wide range of emergency service organisations. Much of the concern is associated with the cost of communications equipment, the availability of that equipment and the fact that it is subject to constant change and the fact that that equipment is not compatible across all emergency service organisations. It is for that reason that this Government has in place through the Office of Information Technology a review of the communications equipment needed across Government (and this will also encompass the needs of the State Emergency Service) to determine how we can more cost effectively deliver a communications system that will provide commonality across agencies as well as deliver better money for the taxpayers' dollar.

Subsidies are paid in addition to local government authorities and to the Outback Areas Community Development Trust for the operating expenses, purchase and maintenance of equipment for local SES units. Local government

subsidies are based on a priority of need and are paid on a dollar for dollar basis up to a maximum of \$5 000 per council per annum. The State Government subsidies paid to local government bodies for this purpose in 1993-94 amounted to \$214 463. In addition, the Police Department paid out \$9 127 for building subsidies and \$41 000 for vehicle subsidies which were made available by the Commonwealth through the Emergency Management Australia group through the Department of Defence.

The Commonwealth subsidy has a maximum limit of \$20 000 per council for the purpose of headquarters provision and accommodation, and it also provides up to \$7 000 for the purchase of vehicles. The total subsidy for 1994-95 is therefore planned to be \$322 000, which will comprise \$215 000 from the State Government and \$107 000 as building/vehicle subsidies from the Commonwealth Government.

The honourable member also recognised the work put in by those groups in raising their own funds, and the enormous effort put in by those volunteers to raise those moneys has gone a long way towards providing equipment that groups may otherwise not have had. In addition, many groups have their own sponsorship through local businesses, and this is also gratefully appreciated by both those groups and I am sure South Australians who benefit from their service.

It is worth also mentioning that at this time we are holding \$126 000 in the 1994-95 budget for the purpose of SES communications upgrade. That also needs to be held against the fact that the Office of Information Technology is assessing those needs at this time. The other reason why it is there is that the Spectrum Management Authority now requires the SES to release its current VHF HB frequencies and to convert to the new 12.5 kHz channels. So, we have taken the opportunity while those changes are occurring to make sure we introduce some commonality to the equipment process to ensure that we have not only a network that meets the requirement of the Spectrum Management Authority but also one that is usable between agencies and is purchased at a cost effective price through commonality.

Ms STEVENS: I will refer to three programs funded in last year's budget and ask what is the funding allocation this year. The first is for child abuse investigators, which was funded for \$438 000 last year; the Domestic Violence Unit for \$864 000; and the victim contact officers for \$293 000. What is the funding for these programs this year and what will any alteration, either higher or lower, mean?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It would appear that we do not have at our ready disposal the exact breakdown of each of those programs. I am happy to take that part of the honourable member's question on notice and bring back those funding details. They are, of course, important programs and I think it important to place on the record that the Government maintains a commitment to these programs to ensure that they receive the funding and personnel requirements that are needed to undertake these important activities.

The police have in place a number of initiatives to provide support to victims of crime. As the honourable member has identified, there is the Child Sexual Abuse Unit. We also have within the department the sexual assault section, the victim contact officers and the domestic violence group. In view of the fact that the figures I have before me concern a composition of those groups, I will come back at a later date with information that will separate them.

Ms STEVENS: In relation to your budget, what specific projects have been undertaken by your department for the

women's suffrage centenary year, and how much of the allocation for these projects was made during the 1993-94 budget and how much for the 1994-95 budget?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It would appear at this stage that no funding was made available in the 1993-94 financial year, but I will take that part of the question on notice to confirm those details for the honourable member. In so far as the department's participation in the women's suffrage centenary is concerned, a number of events and activities have been examined in which police will be involved, including the Kate Cocks Memorial Seminar which will commemorate the first principal of the women police and which will be run in accordance with the centenary objectives and will focus on future directions for women in policing. Also the department will develop and conduct seminars on promotional issues for women police, and a recruitment information day will be held for women who are interested in a police career.

A small coordinating committee consisting of women police officers has been established to oversee the South Australian Police Department input into the 1994 Centenary and, as the Commissioner is well aware, during the past number of years the department has undergone a considerable change in the percentage of women police officers employed by it. I have been pleased to have the opportunity to talk to a number of those new officers during their graduations recently at the Fort Largs Academy. When in Opposition, I often heard that women would be disadvantaged in an academy with a military-style discipline. However, I am pleased to say that those women police officers have reported that both their fellow officers on the course and the commanding officers responsible for their course have been in no way discriminatory. And that in itself is not only an indication of the awareness of the department of the importance of the changes that have occurred within the Police Force but also an indication of the contribution presently being made by women police officers. Some officers of the department have advised me that they have strategies whereby women police can actually take advantage of those pre-conceived notions and ideas held by some males, and that the presence of a female police officer in a bar room brawl can have an amazing placatory effect, because not even a drunken man would want to hit a woman.

Women police officers have been able to play an important role, which goes far beyond the initial integration of women into the Police Force to areas, such as rape counselling and child abuse. I welcome these changes that have occurred in the Police Force and I commend the Commissioner for the way in which he has presided over this important change of attitude in the South Australian Police Force, which has taken place over the past number of years.

Mrs HALL: Page 485 of the Program Estimates refers to a number of crime prevention Watch programs. I am unable to see any reference to the River Watch scheme and, as the Minister knows, I am particularly interested in references to the river, given that the Torrens borders the northern part of my electorate. Is this scheme still in operation and, if so, what are the details of the scheme?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: River Watch is essentially a community organisation and its objectives are to prevent crime and provide a safe and peaceful environment on or near the Murray River, and coordination is provided by a committee elected by the general public. The scheme provides a central contact point for members of the public reporting illegal or antisocial activities in the South Australian section

of the Murray River, and it ensures that all reports are investigated by the relevant Government department. Two Riverland telephone numbers are advertised for public use. However, the public can also lodge complaints with Berri and Murray Bridge Police Stations, both of which are operated 24 hours a day. Reports are received by these police stations and then forwarded to the relevant Government department, and the police station nearest to the reported incident responds to reports requiring police attention.

The scheme commenced at Berri on 12 April 1989; an identical scheme, which now uses the name Murray Watch, has operated in the Lower Murray since April 1990, and is coordinated through the Murray Bridge Police Station. Together these two schemes provide a service for the length of the Murray River in this State. During 1993-94 a total of 99 incidents requiring action from a Government department were reported in the River Watch/Murray Watch schemes. While those two rivers are much broader waterways than the Torrens River, there is no doubt that a number of incidents needing police attention do occur along the Torrens River, and I am sure that members would have been interested to read in today's *Advertiser* that the court has now sentenced one individual, who was recently captured by police on bicycle patrols who operate along the length of the Torrens River Linear Park. The success of that bicycle patrol in areas, such as Linear Park, has been noteworthy and those sorts of activities will continue.

The honourable member has an interesting point and it may well be that a similar special Watch scheme could be introduced in the vicinity of the Torrens River, and I would certainly be interested to hear more ideas from the honourable member in relation to how that could occur. Perhaps it could be discussed in her electorate, and I am sure the Police Commissioner would be happy to talk to her about that possibility.

Mrs HALL: Page 485 of the Program Estimates also relates to the Business Watch program. How many such programs are now operating? What is the purpose of this particular Watch program?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I share the appreciation of the member for Coles for the work undertaken by people who participate in these Watch programs because they provide a valuable opportunity for the police to receive information to both detect and prevent crime. In conjunction with the Inner City Cooperative Action Group, the Community Programs Unit, formerly known in the Police Department as the Crime Prevention Service, has established Business Watch and Safety Shop schemes, which are conducted on lines similar to Neighbourhood Watch and Safety House. A number of their major objectives are to reduce fear and the fear of crime in the Adelaide central business district; to educate retailers and land owners in the requirements for improved safety for public and staff, as well as better building security and urban design; to provide and promote approved courses of action for the public to follow if they witness or become victims of crime in the inner city; to provide appropriate assistance and referrals for victims of crime in the city both in shop and on street; and to encourage cooperative action between business, police and human service providers through information exchange and an understanding of the respective roles and potential joint projects.

The staffing is allocated through the scheme, which is managed by the Programs Unit within Community Services as and when it is required. Each Business Watch area at this time costs approximately \$3 000 to establish and ongoing

costs are raised by the local group concerned, yet another example of volunteers in action. As at 30 June 1994, seven Business Watch areas are operating, six of which are in Adelaide and, notably, one is operating in Murray Bridge. The demand for the program is consistent. The Safety Shop scheme was launched in conjunction with Business Watch and the inner city business district of Adelaide. Businesses, which are part of the initiative, display a shopfront sign which designates the business as a Safety Shop.

Members of the public who feel threatened or who have been the victim of recent crime then are able to recognise a place of refuge where assistance will be forthcoming. The scheme is an integral part of the Business Watch initiative, and is also used in the central market area as well as the Elizabeth City Centre. A large number of businesses are involved in the program. Funding of the display signs and printed information material has been met by Commercial Union Insurance, the Adelaide City Council and the Government's Crime Prevention Program, administered by the Attorney-General's Crime Prevention Policy Unit. I take this opportunity to thank those groups for the way in which they have contributed to the scheme through funding.

I also take this opportunity to encourage those members who have electorate offices, if they have not already done so, to consider becoming part of the Safety House scheme. That scheme recently wrote to members asking that they become part of the scheme. It is an important scheme; it provides refuge for people who are fearful for their safety, or need assistance, particularly young children. I would encourage all members to participate in that scheme and have their electorate offices made a Safety House.

Mr QUIRKE: The new superannuation scheme as proposed, which is currently in the middle of the parliamentary process, will have considerable impact on police officers in South Australia. Existing police officers have a level of superannuation that will not be maintained in dollar value terms as a result of the closure of that scheme and the possibility of the triple S scheme. Does the Minister have any views about the situation where two police officers might be working together and one officer and his family will be more protected by having a better superannuation scheme than the other officer?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I appreciate the sentiment behind the honourable member's question, and I am happy to advise the Committee that I have met on numerous occasions—the most recent of which was this week—with representatives of the Police Association in South Australia. I have similarly afforded those members the opportunity of further meetings with Government, and meetings have taken place with those members, the Premier, the Treasurer and myself. As Minister, I certainly do not want to see a situation where a serving police officer, undertaking the same risks as other police officers, is injured on duty, leaves the department to be reliant upon his or her superannuation runs a greater risk of not being as well provided for than other police officers. It is for that reason negotiations continue. I believe that the Government is at a stage where the concerns of the Police Association will shortly be satisfied, and I thank the honourable member for his interest in this issue.

Mr ATKINSON: These are questions on notice, Mr Acting Chairman. What functions or requirements for goods or services have been or will be contracted out to private enterprise since the release of the Commission of Audit Report? What net savings are expected to be gained from such contracting out? Has each section of the Minister's

department been complying with the commitment given on page 30 of the June Financial Statement to market testing to identify and contract out functions? If so, who is carrying out the market testing, how is it done, and who decides what functions will be outsourced?

What information technology systems are operated by units in the Minister's department? What functions do they carry out? How many staff are employed to maintain and operate the systems, and what is the annual cost of such maintenance and operation?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am obviously willing to take the majority of that question on notice, but at this stage I am happy to give some information to the Committee. In line with the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission of Audit, the department has undertaken action to ensure that a number of its non-core activities are either performed internally on a full cost recovery basis or outsourced. By way of example, I give the following: a major review of the motor vehicle operations has just been completed and, as I outlined to the Committee earlier, will see the closure of departmental workshops at Novar Gardens from 1 January 1995, and the outsourcing of servicing and maintenance, fit and strip and vehicle accident repairs of the police vehicle fleet.

Applicants who have tendered for those various roles are being considered at this time. A review of aircraft services has also been undertaken to establish whether aircraft services has the potential to provide its services in a different way, to determine whether or not it needs to have the number of craft it presently operates, or whether the private sector can participate in that operation. A final draft report has been prepared, and I am considering that report at this time. The department also recently engaged a consultant to examine the current catering arrangements, to look at the most cost effective and efficient method of providing meals at the Police Academy. In line with the recommendations outlined in a consultant's report, a departmental working party has been established to develop the strategies on a full cost recovery basis.

The department is constantly reviewing its core and non-core functions, particularly since the change of Government, with a view to determining which of its activities can be outsourced. In addition to those examples I have just outlined, the department is also giving consideration to outsourcing other areas, including segments of information technology. Of course, as the honourable member would be aware, a number of those issues have recently been addressed through the Premier's announcement of the outsourcing negotiations with the company EDS. I will provide a detailed response as to the other items the honourable member raised at a later time.

Mr ATKINSON: Can the Minister detail the expected reduction in annual recurrent expenditure that will flow from plans to outsource information technology requirements?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I will take that on notice, Mr Acting Chairman.

Mr ATKINSON: How many motor vehicles in the various different classes of vehicle are maintained by each service or section within the Minister's department? How many of the department's vehicles are subject to home-garaging arrangements, and how many carry private number plates? Have any significant changes been made to the way in which the vehicle fleet is managed since January 1994, and, if so, what are the details?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It will be necessary to take the bulk of that question on notice, but it is worth indicating at this time that the Treasurer recently announced the appointment of Director, Fleet Task Force, whose role it will be to undertake a thorough examination of all vehicles owned and operated by Government. It is fairly well known that the successful person in this instance is Mr Mike Newman, with whom I have had, and at this stage still have, the pleasure of working. He is my Chief of Staff. Mr Newman undertakes his new role commencing early October this year.

Of particular concern to me has been the large number of police vehicles being taken home at night. One of the matters that will be investigated is the fact that more police vehicles are taken home at night in South Australia than in Victoria. I think I am right in saying that South Australia has approximately 60 more vehicles in that category than does Victoria, despite the larger size of the Victorian Police Force. In fairness, that example is not limited to the Police Department. It is an example that can be drawn against almost any agency of Government and, for that reason, this Government, through that new task force, will undertake a detailed examination of the way in which vehicles are used throughout our State to ensure that what is occurring is appropriate. It may be that most of those can be justified but, in the interests of the department and the taxpayer, that justification process needs to occur.

Mr ATKINSON: In view of the statement on page 48 of the June Financial Statement that the Government has factored into forward budget estimates a significant but controlled program of asset sales, can the Minister detail those assets controlled by his department that may be sold under this program? What are the details of forward estimates for returns from the sale of assets controlled by the Minister's department? Has the department or sections within it changed any accommodation arrangements since January 1994 by taking additional rental space or moving to other premises, and, if so, what are the details of the costs?

How many of those people who have taken separation packages have left positions later filled by the appointment of another person, and how many positions in the department are vacant as a result of people taking separation packages which must be filled and which are yet to be filled by someone else?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: A question has already been asked on that point; are you talking about the whole department now rather than just officers?

Mr ATKINSON: Yes. In relation to the June financial statement issued by the Treasurer, what share of this year's savings target of \$170 million reduction in recurrent expenditure was allocated to the Minister's department? We have had some dialogue on that. What staff cuts or changed work practices will be implemented in order to achieve the proposed budget reduction in the Minister's department? To what extent will staff cuts, changed work practices or restructuring lead to reduced services to the public in the coming year?

In relation on the June financial statement issued by the Treasurer, what are the target cuts for the next three years as part of the ongoing program to reduce overall recurrent expenditure by \$300 million over the next four years? I ask the Minister please to distinguish between the police and fire brigade operations in his answer. What are the staff reduction targets for the next three years in order to achieve proposed budget reductions in the Minister's department? Please specify for the police and fire services.

What is the estimated cost of separation packages to be paid over the next three years? Please specify for the police and fire services. What are the classifications of staff who have accepted separation packages since January this year, and from which service or section of the Minister's department have they been culled? Have any classifications been denied access to the separation package scheme? Is there any process in place for identifying which staff would be more suitable than others for separation packages; if so, what are the criteria being used and are relevant unions or staff associations being consulted?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I understand that those are standard questions that are being asked in all Estimates Committees by the Opposition. We will take them on notice and provide answers to those to which we have not already responded.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I point out to the member for Spence that he can request the Minister to do something; he cannot really ask that he specify. The answer is entirely in the Minister's hands.

Before I declare the examination complete, I particularly thank the Commissioner and other officers of the Police Department who have been in attendance today. I realise that the Commissioner and his other officers hold a warrant of commission from the Governor so are in a special position in relation to this Parliament, and therefore we are most grateful for their attendance today. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for
Correctional Services—Other Payments, \$23 423 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr W. Haby, Chief Officer, Metropolitan Fire Service.
Mr R. Hagan, Acting Deputy Chief Officer.
Mr B. Treagus, Director, Finance and Administration.
Mr R. Tidswell, Manager, Finance.
Mr B. McNeil, Manager, Information Systems.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I refer members to page 175 in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments, on which references to Metropolitan Fire Service, Country Fire Service and St John's Ambulance can be found, and pages 473 to 542 in the Program Estimates. With the concurrence of members, at the end of the allotted time we will suspend questions and allow the leader of Opposition business to put questions on notice.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service formed an important part of a massive contingent of fire fighters and equipment utilised to combat the New South Wales bushfires. Regrettably, our neighbours in that State and also in Queensland are again facing difficulty in fighting fires. Ninety-four Metropolitan Fire Service personnel of all ranks volunteered their services and 73 off-duty personnel fulfilled the local duties of those firefighters who were absent. The efforts of those officers who took part and particularly the fact that they volunteered to undertake those duties are a credit to them and ought to be widely recognised and applauded. There are a number of new initiatives which have occurred in the service, but in view of the time constraints I look forward to questions from

honourable members and the opportunity to outline those initiatives.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand, Minister, that you intend to set up a new emergency service dispatch system which would bring together the dispatch systems for police, ambulance and fire services. Could I confirm that you issued a minute recently regarding emergency service dispatch systems, in which you said:

I have requested the Office of Information Technology to coordinate the development of a pre-feasibility study to examine the merits of a combined dispatch monitoring system for all of the emergency services in South Australia, based on a private sector model for funding and operation of the system. I would anticipate that this study would be succeeded by the development of a full business case and subsequent implementation of a combined system, subject to the findings of the studies.

I would appreciate if you could nominate a senior officer to represent your agency on a part-time basis on the pre-feasibility study. I anticipate receiving a report from this study by December 1994. Could you advise me by 19 September 1994 of the name of the officer who will be representing your agency on the pre-feasibility study.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Spence purport to be quoting from a Government minute?

Mr ATKINSON: Yes.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is the member for Spence aware that members can ask for a copy of that minute?

Mr ATKINSON: Yes.

Mr Leggett interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Spence have a line to which he can direct the Committee's attention?

Mr ATKINSON: Program Estimates page 536, I would have thought.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am happy to answer the question. I did circulate a minute of that nature to the chief executive officers of each of the agencies involved in emergency service delivery. The reason for circulating that minute is very clear. Under the previous Government, in the Premier's Department there was a subcommittee which was responsible for examining the communications needs of emergency services. That particular committee dithered and procrastinated for a period of some six years and achieved virtually nothing. It was a committee which was a source of considerable frustration to emergency services within this State, to the extent that under the previous Government they gave up any idea of a coordinated approach to communications and response, and as such each agency then went off and started to develop its own systems.

When this Government came into office it examined the blunders of the previous Government in those areas and undertook to apply itself to that area of information technology in much the same way as we have already undertaken investigation into other areas of information technology, resulting in the announcement of negotiations with EDS by the Treasurer recently. Considerable money is expended by this Government on communications equipment and the honourable member asked a question earlier in relation to the SES. It is absolutely vital that our emergency services have the communications equipment that they need, that that equipment is compatible and also that that equipment is purchased at a price that is not greater than the taxpayer ought have to pay through a non-coordinated approach being taken.

So the approach to communications will be coordinated. We are now undertaking the job which the previous Government failed to undertake over a period of six years. Each agency, as is appropriate, has been asked to nominate a

representative for the committee that is being established under the Office of Information Technology, again a Government initiative, for that office has the role of coordinating Government expenditure on high-technology. Through the workings of that group we will establish the guidelines for communications and response equipment for emergency services. I have absolutely every confidence that that will result in a coordinated approach and a much better equipped approach than has occurred in the past.

Mr ATKINSON: Supplementary to that, will such a dispatch system be staffed by uniformed personnel?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: At this stage that is one of the areas that will be investigated. The honourable member may be aware that the Victorian Government has recently announced plans to outsource the communications role in that State. We are certainly interested in examining that decision. There are obviously some concerns with that approach and we are keen to look at how the Victorian Government has satisfied those. At this stage I would not rule out that as a possibility, but it needs to be considered by the group which, as the honourable member sees from the memorandum that he has in his possession, has only just been formed.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister would countenance the possibility of non-uniformed personnel running the dispatch system?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I realise that Labor Party members do not have a great knowledge of outsourcing and certainly do not have a great knowledge of doing something about communications, because they allowed the communications equipment used by many emergency service agencies to deteriorate to the extent that it did and they dithered and procrastinated over a committee for six years when they were supposed to be looking at the issues about which the honourable member now speaks. There are a number of approaches that can be taken to outsourcing and also to the purchase of communications equipment. At the lowest level, that equipment can be purchased and owned by Government with common equipment used by all agencies. It could be that the equipment is owned by an outside body and still staffed by Government personnel. It could be that the equipment is purchased by an outside body, leased by Government and staffed in part by their own personnel and by personnel from outside.

The range of options is significant and it would be inappropriate of me to pre-empt the decisions of that committee. Each of the agencies concerned has a representative who will be investigating those options and each of the agencies concerned has indicated to me a willingness to be involved in that process. I am certainly aware not only from negotiations with those agencies but from discussions with their union representative groups that they believe it is high time something was done about communications. Naturally, on embarking on a project of this nature people have varying views and they will have the opportunity to put forward those views.

Mr ATKINSON: Can the Minister assure the Committee that such a dispatch system would be staffed by people who had served on the ground in the police, ambulance and fire services?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I do not know whether the honourable member is deaf or just does not want to listen. The answer to his question has been given, but I repeat for him: each of the agencies concerned will have a representative on that committee and they will be tackling something that his Government failed to achieve for six years. The

industrial bodies representing those employees have indicated a desire to have something done because they receive complaints from their members day in day out.

Whatever final system is implemented will be a system which is agreed to by the participating agencies and which is provided in the interest of emergency service delivery to South Australia, and we will not compromise the standards of emergency service delivery. Rather, this will enhance those standards by guaranteeing communications equipment which works and which is also common across agencies for the betterment of the service.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand that the Metropolitan Fire Service is funded by contributions made up of 75 per cent insurance company funding, 12.5 per cent State Government and 12.5 per cent local government; is that correct?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: That is correct.

Mr ATKINSON: Presumably, it was that funding method that was used to fund the purchase of the fireboat, the *MV Gallantry*, which I was honoured to greet when it came into the Royal Yacht Squadron at Outer Harbor earlier in the year. Given that the boat was funded by this method, is it not rather odd that the Minister at the time told Parliament (and anyone else who would listen) that he wanted to sell the fireboat? Is it not a bit odd that the Minister presumed to sell an asset that was funded three quarters from insurance companies and 12.5 per cent from local government and, if he did propose to sell it, what did he propose to do with the proceeds? My interpretation at the time was that he wanted to put it into Consolidated Revenue.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: In round figures, the purchase of that vessel amounted to some \$1.2 million. That purchase was made from capital funds allocated by the Government and, whilst it is correct to say that the funding of the Metropolitan Fire Service occurs through a funding contribution from each of the insurance industries, local government and State Government, the contribution towards that \$1.2 million is paid by the respective contributors over the life of the asset. Therefore, that \$1.2 million, as I understand, was put up by the Government in the first instance. So, I stand by my original comments. The fireboat has long been a debate within the Parliament and before these Estimates Committees. I do not stand back from my view that the boat was an inappropriate purchase. It was rejected by a number of Ministers of the previous Labor Government but finally agreed to by one Minister, resulting in the purchase.

We always need to ensure that we have a firefighting capacity to tackle areas such as along the Port River. If the honourable member cares to talk to his union mates, he will find that the union responsible for the operators of the tug boats in that region has continually argued that they can provide that firefighting capacity. South Australia has the only State Government owned, fire service owned, fireboat in Australia. Other cities, notably Sydney, for example, with its huge waterfront area, are able to capably provide a firefighting service utilising vessels not owned by the fire service. We can sit here and debate that in circles and nothing will change my mind. The vessel to date has not been needed. The day may well come when a fire does occur and it is needed to respond, but it could be argued that there are other vessels already there that could equally respond.

Nothing will convince me that that \$1.2 million was needed. There is a number of options for the future of that vessel. The Government owns a number of boats, and members will be aware that in opposition I was critical of the number of boats owned by the Government. It is for that

reason that the Police Department has already reduced the number of boats it has, and other Ministers have presided over the reduction in the number of boats in other areas of Government. It may well be that the most viable option for the fireboat is for it to be used by a number of emergency service agencies, ensuring that it is available easily at all times should it be needed in the advent of fire, and maximising the benefit to emergency services.

That is something that is being examined at this moment, and whatever decision is made will be one that is appropriate in terms of emergency service delivery and the funding available. If the honourable member is not happy with that or thinks that inappropriate, we might go round in circles all day.

Mr ATKINSON: As a supplementary question, will the Minister confirm to the Committee that, so far as he is concerned, the *MV Gallantry* is still for sale?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: We have not advertised the vessel for sale as such. If we as a Government received a reasonable offer from an interested party, it would certainly be an offer we would consider, because there are other appropriate ways of providing that same firefighting coverage. At this stage, an option being investigated is the joint use of that vehicle by other emergency services, in part funded by the sale of vessels already owned by those emergency services. I do not mind also volunteering that one of the vessels being sold at the moment is a police boat. Today it is known as the *Vigilant*; it used to be known as the *Des Corcoran*. The name of the boat was changed before my time as Minister, and I believe was changed under the previous Government. Members might want to talk to my predecessor as to why that happened.

But that vessel is not suitable for the purposes for which it was being used. I have heard only unsubstantiated rumours that it was known as a gin palace in the days of the Dunstan Cabinet. Far be it from me to speculate one way or the other as to whether that was the case. But that boat is about to be sold, to ensure that we have appropriate vessels for policing services. The boat is not suitable for the purposes for which police presently wish to use it, and they volunteered it to this Government as an asset which, to be quite frank, they did not want in the first place but were told by the previous Government they had to use. That also surrounded the fireboat debacle when police had applications for submissions for funding at the same time as the fire service did.

I do not want to go back over those troubled waters under the previous Government, but there are inappropriate boats the Government does not need to have. The aim of this Government is to ensure that the vessels used by emergency service agencies and others are appropriate vessels, equipped to undertake the duties they need to perform. Any decision relating to the *MV Gallantry* will be taken in that context.

Mr ATKINSON: Could the Minister confirm whether the Metropolitan Fire Service has since he became Minister lost seven uniformed positions and acquired two new non-uniformed positions which are being advertised just now?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As members would be aware, the targeted separation package program that was implemented by the previous Government has been continued by this Government and it has also been extended to the Metropolitan Fire Service. Seven senior SAMFS operational personnel accepted a TSP. They worked in the management/administrative areas, and this has resulted in the reduction of two assistant chief officer positions from a total of three, and five superintendent positions from a total of 10.

A restructure of the division is expected to result in more efficient organisation on the principle that administrative decisions have been devolved to other areas within the fire service, enabling officers to be more responsible and accountable for the decisions made by that service.

This in no way jeopardises the standard of fire cover provided by the Metropolitan Fire Service, and the staff reductions provide a saving in the vicinity of \$400 000 per annum. As Mr Haby has been presiding over these changes, I will ask him to advise further details associated with these positions and the other two to which the honourable member referred.

Mr Haby: The restructure being phased in at the moment provides for three separate divisions within the fire service, each headed by a director reporting to me, the chief executive officer. Each director will have day-to-day responsibility for the control, coordination, and management of one of the three divisions. The seven positions being vacated by TSPs are not being replaced, except that some of the roles are being picked up in different areas. Any staff replacements are being reviewed and jobs changed accordingly to fit the new roles. No additional persons are being employed. The restructure should result in an efficient and cost-effective administration.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand that one of the positions being advertised by the SAMFS is for a second senior financial accountant. Why is that necessary when the SAMFS has the splendid services of Mr Treagus?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I will hand the answer to that question to Mr Haby.

Mr Haby: Mr Treagus's place will be as one of the directors and he will have an overall responsibility in numerous areas. The position that is advertised is in a specific area. The position that we are advertising is not the position that Mr Treagus now holds.

Mr LEGGETT: I refer to page 540 of the Program Estimates under Issues/Trends, where the following appears:

That the public (awareness) of safety advice and information emanating from the SAMFS must be up to date, relevant and uniform throughout the community.

What advantages will be passed on to the community of South Australia through the sponsorship of the SAMFS?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As a part of our Government the member for Hanson, with other members, has been working toward the education of the community and the business sector as to what opportunities may be available to the mutual benefit of both those groups through the area of corporate sponsorship. The SAMFS is seeking a suitable corporate sponsor who will provide the necessary financial support to enable it to reach the South Australian community with the vital message of fire safety through education.

The SAMFS public relations function and the Fire Safety Department have not been able to mount a substantial education department in the past within their areas of responsibility due mainly to the level of demand for information which has already reached 100 000 leaflets being requested per month. The funding that it has had in the past has not been able to keep up with that demand. These leaflets to date cover 50 separate fire and emergency topics to assist in that process of educating the community. The reason for such a diverse number of leaflets is that they need to communicate a message to all ages within the community. Clearly, the message to be sent to children is quite a different one than that to be sent to adults. It has therefore been proposed that a sponsor accept the costs of printing suitable material, including the successfully marketed *Community*

Fire Safety Handbook, portfolios of information on smoke detectors and personal safety, and what to do in the case of fire—to name but a few examples.

The SAMFS therefore recently called for tenders from the private sector to indicate its interest in being involved in this program. While at this stage that process has not been finalised, I am at liberty to advise the Committee of today that the SAMFS has been absolutely overwhelmed by the nature of the response and the credible nature of those companies which have expressed an interest. To date, 14 companies have expressed an interest in being the sponsor for this program.

The SAMFS will market and distribute the fire safety education material so sponsored to schools, both primary and secondary, through its school education training programs, to industry and commerce, where it conducts relevant training, and through public access events such as the Royal Adelaide Show, the Home Show, and career nights conducted each year. The obvious advantage is for fewer fire related deaths, greater understanding of the threat of fire, and a safer South Australian community. This can potentially be achieved through this initiative.

Mr LEGGETT: On page 536 of the Program Estimates, where it relates to the program 'Fire suppression and control', it is stated that occupational health and safety issues are continuing to come under increased emphasis with appropriate consideration to emergency operations. How will the recently tendered provision of 1 000 level 2 fire fighting tunics assist? What was the background and the outcome of this tender requirement?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is a good news story not just for the SAMFS but also for an Adelaide based company at Lonsdale. The SAMFS, in the interest of safety, has adopted a policy to provide all operational firefighters with protective clothing manufactured to an approved standard. As a result of this policy, both full-time and retrained operational firefighters were issued in 1992-93 with protective over-trowsers at a cost of \$352 000.

Members would be aware that that particular purchase became an item of some questioning by both the now Attorney-General and me in a past Estimates Committee because those trousers were manufactured by a British-based company.

Further to the initiative to supply firefighters with this standard protective clothing, an order has now been given to a South Australian company for the supply of 1 000 level 2 tunics at a cost of \$439 660. It is important to place on record that that particular contract was won by the South Australian company in direct competition with bidders from both interstate and overseas. The tunics will be delivered to the SAMFS by the end of next month.

The SAMFS attended approximately 1 800 structural type fires during 1993-94 and these tunics are specifically designed and manufactured for this type of incident. The SAMFS specifications are based on an international draft standard document and as such the SAMFS is presently leading Australia in the protective nature of the clothing being provided to its officers. The successful company is Protector Safety Pty Ltd and is manufacturing the garments at its plant at Lonsdale. I was pleased to have the opportunity to inspect the plant and speak to those staff members who are manufacturing the protective clothing for our firefighters. They have liaised closely with the fire service during manufacture to ensure that a satisfactory conclusion is reached to the tender. The tunics are made from a fabric

known as Nomex, renowned for its ability to resist burning and thermal penetration. The fabric is used throughout the world by military, law enforcement agencies and other fire services. A specially designed mannequin was used to conduct a test on these tunics, and that particular mannequin was exposed to temperatures in the order of 800 degrees Centigrade for periods of up to seven seconds as per the specifications drawn up by the MFS.

Firefighters are provided with an initial issue of protective equipment which includes their helmet, gloves, boots, overtrousers and tunic, all of which comply with the relevant standards at the time of issue. The original Lancer tunic was adopted by the Australian Fire Service in 1890. These tunics were double breasted, made of wool and remained in service with the MFS until 1981 when a new woollen coat, similar in design to the modern tunic, was introduced.

Mr LEGGETT: On page 536 under the Fire Suppression and Control program, I note the commissioning of five new fire appliances recently. Will the Minister explain the MFS fire appliance replacement program?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Again this is a good news story for both a South Australian company and the Metropolitan Fire Service. Members would appreciate that the provision of an effective fire service relies heavily upon the fire appliance fleet and the program replacement of fire appliances is therefore critical to the achievement of an effective firefighting service. Fire appliances are replaced at the end of their useful life which, at this time, is a period of between 15 and 20 years of age by vehicles which meet the current firefighting technology requirements. Ongoing research continues into fire appliance design and specifications. Mr Haby has recently come back from a firefighting conference in Germany, again having the opportunity to inspect the latest in vehicles and equipment.

Five light urban pumpers have been constructed by the South Australian based Australian Fire Company, and are now being commissioned as replacements to the appliance fleet. It is worth noting that this particular South Australian company also manufactures appliances for other States in Australia, again demonstrating that in South Australia we have the knowledge, technology and expertise to be able to compete with interstate and overseas bidders. No further replacement of general purpose fire appliances is planned at this stage within the next 12 months until the existing specifications are re-examined, but a recent feasibility study has concluded it is uneconomic to significantly refurbish and overhaul the 21 and 19 year old aerial appliances. It is therefore planned to replace these units at this stage towards May-June 1995.

As with all fire service equipment, fire appliances are manufactured within the guidelines of occupational health and safety. I also put on record the fact that the Australian Fire Company, a Prospect based company—I am not sure of the exact delineation of electoral boundaries, but if it is not in the electorate of the Hon. Michael Armitage, it is in the electorate of the new Deputy Leader of the Opposition—was the successful contractor for the Western Australian Fire Brigade Unit, and will be building two units for the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade. It is expected that it will be submitting a tender for further MFS units when they are called. Again, as I indicated, that is a good news story for both South Australia and the Metropolitan Fire Service. I trust that Western Australia and Victoria will benefit from using South Australian technology in those States.

Ms STEVENS: How many fire officers are presently on stress leave and what are the reasons cited for the stress suffered by these fire officers?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am advised that at this stage it would appear there are no operational firefighters on stress leave. To be absolutely sure, I will take that question on notice. I am aware that some firefighters were particularly traumatised by the incident to which I referred earlier, the NCA bombing, and some of those officers were counselled at that time through the procedures in place by the fire service. We will check that to ensure there are still no officers on stress leave.

Ms STEVENS: What problems have been revealed in respect of the induction process for country command firefighters as referred to on page 537 of the Program Estimates, and what will the Minister do to address these problems?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am unable to find the reference to which the honourable member refers. In view of that, I will take the question on notice.

Ms STEVENS: What specific budget allocation has been made in the MFS budget for programs specifically for women, what are these programs and what is their individual budget allocation?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am advised by the CEO that there is no specific allocation of which I can give details to the Committee. However, it is worth noting that, whilst there are some 793 full time firefighters employed by the Metropolitan Fire Service in our State, amongst that number is just one woman firefighter. The service would like to see many other women undertake a career in the fire service. The honourable member, through her question, has highlighted one area of Government which perhaps may not have been looked upon by women as a career prospect in the work force. The Metropolitan Fire Service operates under the equal opportunity principles and the opportunity exists therefore for women to compete equally for employment entrance into the Metropolitan Fire Service. I find it particularly disappointing that to date only one woman has succeeded in that but expect that over the coming time there will be many more who join that number.

Ms STEVENS: What strategies have you in mind to achieve this increase?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Chief Officer, Mr Haby, has indicated he would like the opportunity to respond to that question.

Mr Haby: The fire service certainly would like to see more females apply to become firefighters and, in its last recruitment drive, 20 to 30 females actually showed interest but none of them got through the entrance requirements. So, a working party will continue to monitor progress in this area and it will address related matters, including entry for applicants from other fire services. So, the service is looking very seriously at the way it recruits its firefighters; it has made changes in the past three to four years since its first female firefighter actually gained entry, and it wants to ensure that every opportunity is given to females to enter the fire service.

Ms STEVENS: Is the fact that no-one got through the entrance requirements related to the entrance requirements themselves, or related to the skills, experience and knowledge of the applicants, or a mixture of both?

Mr Haby: The entry requirements are job related and the whole criteria relate to skills necessary to perform the job. The service looks very closely at that matter to ensure that the

people it recruits as firefighters are capable of carrying out those particular tasks. However, most of those who failed, did so in the education battery, so it was not actually a matter of the actual physical requirements; it was their educational skills that let them down.

Mr ATKINSON: How much extra money does the MFS have to set aside this year for funding superannuation?

Mr Treagus: The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service manages its own scheme; it is not part of the Government scheme. The Liberal funding this year is only marginally different from that of last year. The scheme operates on people's salaries as at 1 April preceding 1 July and, as there have been no wage increases in the fire service since 1992, the effect on the contributions made by SAMFS is only marginal. Differences occur when career steps are taken by the firefighters and they get small wage increases, and that affects the superannuation contribution. However, there has not been a marked difference in contributions from one year to the other.

Mr ATKINSON: Has there been extra money allocated by the MFS owing to changes to the Federal Government's taxes on superannuation and fringe benefits?

Mr Treagus: The recent tax amendment effective in April did affect the budget for the MFS. The situation was that private industry companies were allowed a rebate of almost half of what the fringe benefits tax was. However, that benefit did not apply to State Governments or any organisation that was not paying a Federal tax. Therefore, it did have an effect on the MFS's budget level, and in fact doubled the fringe benefits tax from something like \$92 000 to about \$178 000 for 1994-95. The Federal decision has had no effect on the superannuation.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand that advertising on MFS equipment will help fund the acquisition of new protective clothing. Was the Minister referring to that clothing earlier? What is the timetable for introducing this protective clothing? How will advertising on MFS equipment accelerate that acquisition?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The honourable member is misinformed. The sponsorship is to fund the Fire Prevention Education Services; it is not to fund the clothing used by fire fighters.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr A. Ferris, Chief Executive Officer, Country Fire Service.

Mr Tony Crichton, Director, Corporate Services.

Mr P. Stump, Manager, Finance.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The CFS is dependent upon its 18 000 volunteers to provide high quality, low cost emergency services in rural areas. I have been impressed, since becoming Minister, by the dedication of volunteers, and by the willingness of the Country Fire Service Board to examine policies and standards to ensure their relevance today. The board is prepared to work closely with the Local Government Association and the Insurance Council of Australia to examine issues that have been of major concern and left unaddressed for a number of years. This will include examination of the funding base of the Country Fire Service.

The board will also be working closely with local government to examine the ongoing provision and maintenance of firefighting equipment in Country Fire Service protected areas. The service is examining its standards of performance and service delivery, including a review of the

policies regarding replacement age of appliances, and improved operating arrangements for the farming community to better utilise local farm units.

I acknowledge the attitude of volunteers and take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the CFS volunteers who, together with their MFS compatriots, fought bushfires in New South Wales. It is indeed a credit to our emergency services that they could assemble and deploy so many resources to assist with combating these disastrous fires. The volunteer effort was ably coordinated by the then Chief Officer, Mr Alan Ferris, who has since been appointed to the position of Chief Executive Officer, Country Fire Service, and has taken his position on the CFS board. In addition, two other new members have been appointed to the board, Mr Alan Holmes and Mr Michael Pengelly.

The Country Fire Service is in a situation where a new recurrent funding formula has been introduced to ensure that the CFS budget is based on the published income and expenditure statement consistent with reporting on an accrual basis. Provision for long service leave and depreciation have been included in the budget for the first time. This approach recognises the true cost of the CFS and provides internal funds to replace assets, repay debt, to defer borrowing and, as a result, also to reduce interest repayments. After payment of interest on loans which had been taken out the previous year, the CFS received a net reduction in available funds of 8.9 per cent compared to 1993-94. To reduce overheads the CFS board has therefore reduced its paid staffing levels by 20 per cent over the past two years, while at the same time improving productivity.

The CFS is in a position where it will not borrow funds from the South Australian Finance Authority in 1994-95 and, for the first time, has the facility to commence repayment of its debt. As Minister responsible for the CFS, I have ensured that adequate funding has been provided to the CFS in 1994-95, so that volunteers have sufficient resources and support to protect their communities. The year 1994-95 will also see a process of consultation with the CFS board, the Metropolitan Fire Service, the Insurance Council of Australia, the Local Government Association and CFS volunteers to establish an equitable long-term funding base to support CFS operations and MFS operations which is consistent with community expectations, as well as capacity to pay.

Mr ATKINSON: Referring to page 525 of the Program Estimates, by how many people has the staff of the CFS been reduced so far this calendar year, and what reductions in services has that caused?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am advised that the staffing numbers have reduced from 81 to 71. The honourable member would have noted in my opening statement that I indicated that, over the past two years, there had been a total reduction in staffing of 20 per cent. There has been no reduction in services as a result of that.

Mr ATKINSON: I noted that page 525 of the Program Estimates states:

Property owners with no fire insurance enjoy the same level of service as people who insure. This practice is inequitable and impartial, discriminating against those who insure.

The Opposition would have thought that the CFS was there for all home owners exposed to the risk of bushfires and arson, regardless of whether or not they can afford to insure fully. Is this quote from the Program Estimates the Minister's opinion only or does the head of the CFS agree also?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It would be mischievous of the member to infer through that line of questioning that there

was any intent on the part of the CFS, or any other fire-fighting body in the State, not to give attention to all South Australians, regardless of their insurance status, and that certainly will not be the case. However, there has been, for a number of years, yet another unaddressed problem by the previous Government.

During this process of budget estimates I find myself in a position where I am continually revealing those decisions that were regarded by the previous Government as being too difficult and were left in the unresolved basket. The funding of our emergency services is one such decision. At the moment, the CFS is funded one-third by local government, one-third from the insurance industry, and one-third from the State Government. The honourable member himself is well aware, because he also indicated to the Committee that he was earlier, that the Metropolitan Fire Service is funded 75 per cent insurance industry and 12.5 per cent each of State and local government.

It therefore means that, because of the large insurance industry component for both those services, those people who are responsible to insure their properties appropriately are paying a greater burden of the cost of providing for fire services in our State than those who do not.

Clearly, it is not an equitable scheme to have people who either under-insure their properties or do not insure at all, and the same applies to those people who under-insure their motor vehicles or who do not insure at all. There is a further difficulty in that there are some organisations, often large companies, which might insure total vehicle fleets or properties out of State or off-shore. That means that the insurance industry in South Australia is then unable to pass that funding back to the fire services. So, we have an inequitable system. It is for that reason in my closing remarks of my opening statement that I indicated that a number of organisations are presently looking at the long-term funding arrangements of the fire service.

I look forward to the Opposition's enjoining the Government to ensure that we do achieve this, because over the past few years there have been far too many reports into the examination of how fire services ought be delivered and how they ought be funded, the Bruce and the Whennen reports being the two most noteworthy examples. It is important that in this exercise all sides of politics work sensibly together to ensure an equitable funding base to deliver emergency services that South Australians deserve.

Mr ATKINSON: I thank the Minister for that splendid answer and remind him that the verb 'to infer' is something one thinks and is therefore passive; the verb 'to imply' is something one does and is therefore active. So, I implied, not inferred. Could the Minister outline the funding arrangement for the CFS again so that we get this on the record?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I have clearly indicated, the funding arrangement for the CFS is generally that one-third is from local government, one-third is from State Government and one-third is from the insurance industry.

Mr BASS: On page 124 of the Auditor-General's report, the interpretation and analysis of the financial statement indicate that cost recoveries increased from \$310 000 to \$379 000, mainly due to reimbursements from the New South Wales bushfire emergency. In January 1994 the CFS committed considerable resources to the New South Wales bushfires. Whilst everyone acknowledges the outstanding performance of both the CFS and the MFS personnel, are these costs to be met from the 1994-95 budget?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is an important question, because the honourable member and others would recall that the New South Wales Government indicated that it would ensure that full cost recovery was achieved by those States that were participating in that exercise. In April I advised Parliament that at that time \$512 770 had been incurred as costs by the CFS. However, because the New South Wales Department of Bushfire Services paid airline and accommodation costs direct, the actual amount paid by the CFS board was \$370 898. This amount was reimbursed progressively by New South Wales, with the final instalment received in June prior to the end of this financial year. I had the opportunity to meet with the person who administered that repayment of funds at the CFS demonstrations at Waikerie this weekend, and that officer from New South Wales was here in South Australia not only to witness our demonstrations but also to thank first-hand many South Australian volunteers who participated that exercise.

The costs that have been reimbursed included a variety of things, namely: salaries, wages and penalty rates for all staff hours committed by the CFS, the MFS, the Department of Primary Industries and Forestry and the National Parks and Wildlife Service; transport costs while in New South Wales and all accommodation and meal costs; replacement of equipment including communications vehicle related, such as hoses, etc., and hand operated tools; telephone, facsimile and administrative costs; all fuel used on the way to and whilst in New South Wales and for the return trip; all medical expenses incurred; all critical incidence stress management fees; all servicing costs of some 70 CFS vehicles while in New South Wales; and their servicing costs on return to South Australia. Resources at the time of the maximum commitment on 9 January 1994 were 468 CFS volunteers, 40 MFS volunteers, 14 management team members, including strike team leaders from CFS, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, MFS, Primary Industries, SA Forestry, communications officers, of whom there were five, and 10 drivers. Personnel on that day of maximum person input totalled 537, utilising 51 appliances and 13 support vehicles.

A critical incidence stress management team comprising four from the CFS and three from the MFS to provide short-term counselling to fire fighters arrived in Sydney on Monday 10 January 1994, and members would recall that on Tuesday 11 January all fire fighters in New South Wales were exchanged for fresh personnel in two Boeing 747 shuttle flights. The incident management teams were established at CFS headquarters at the Department of Bushfire Services at Rose Hill in New South Wales and later at Wilberforce, with the Country Fire Authority of Victoria.

Due to a more favourable weather outlook, a number of critical fires were brought under control and this enabled the CFS forces to be withdrawn from New South Wales on Saturday 15 January 1994, thereby allowing the total costs involved to start to be accumulated. It is fitting to place on record that the New South Wales Government paid the moneys as it undertook to do, and South Australians can derive some comfort from the fact that, while our personnel were ready, available and willing to be deployed to New South Wales, New South Wales and other States have indicated that they would be only too prepared to do the same thing for South Australia. That sort of spirit is indicative of what volunteers produce in the way of effort right around Australia.

Mr BASS: On page 525 of the Program Estimates, the 1994-95 specific targets and objectives, I note that the CFS board aims to complete the negotiation of long-term plans with local government to ensure that all brigades and groups have adequate resources on a rolling five year basis. It is also pleasing to see that the South Australian manufacturing area can produce appliances of high quality at a competitive cost and that the 2 000 and 3 000 litre appliances required by the CFS can now be produced in South Australia. Is it true that South Australian manufacturers will be providing these appliances?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, South Australian manufacturers will provide the new appliances. Members will be aware that this, too, was a topic of questioning in past Estimates Committees. Certainly I as Opposition spokesman and before me the Hon. Jamie Irwin had both expressed concern over the fact that fire appliances were provided from interstate, whereas at the same time we had two manufacturers in South Australia who were capable of manufacturing those appliances.

I am pleased to have been able to advise the Parliament recently that Moore Engineering of Murray Bridge will be manufacturing fire appliances for the Country Fire Services in South Australia. To date, 291 appliances out of a total of 480 approved within CFS standards of fire cover have been replaced since the replacement program commenced in 1987. In 1994-95, 20 appliances will be replaced out of 28 identified in the first pass; the remaining eight appliances will be rescheduled for the future, after the end of this financial year. The 20 appliances will be made up of 12 2.4 appliances and eight 3.4 appliances built by Moore Engineering at Murray Bridge.

The CFS also plans to procure three communications vehicles and a dangerous substances vehicle during this financial year. The current status of these acquisitions is at the specification stage. The three-year contract with the Country Fire Authority in Victoria, which previously had the contract for manufacturing South Australian appliances, in this case for 1.4 appliances commenced in 1992-93, has been suspended to provide local manufacturers further opportunity to tender and, as soon as the specifications are updated, alternative quotations will be sought from local body builders.

The State Supply Board has awarded Moores of Murray Bridge a contract over three years with a two-year renewal option. I am sure members will be pleased to hear that again a South Australian company has competed with other companies through the tendering processes, under the appropriate scrutiny and has managed to win that contract—yet more jobs for South Australia.

Mr BASS: On page 527, under the 1993-94 specific targets and objectives, I see that the State Fire Service training facility at Brukunga was commissioned and is now used by both CFS and MFS personnel. However, for several years the issue of amalgamation of the CFS and MFS has been raised in Estimates Committees. Will the Minister outline his intention to settle this matter, which still causes concern amongst the volunteers?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Again, this is a question that has caused concern in previous Estimates Committees, because it is fair to say that for a considerable period of time CFS volunteers felt threatened over the potential for amalgamation and heard a number of rumours which indicated that they were about to be taken over by a paid service.

The dilemma that was faced by ambulance service volunteers was foremost in their minds and they believed that they were the next to be lined up. That is now in the past and as Minister I am pleased to have this opportunity to dispel any fears that remain in the minds of volunteers. The joint use of the Brukunga facility, a training facility that was instigated and funded initially by the CFS is indeed a sensible use of a resource. Clearly, the MFS derives benefits from using that CFS instigated facility and I know that the MFS believes that the partnership use of that has now been worthwhile.

The Liberal Party in its pre-election policy indicated that it would establish a separation Bill to remove any perception that the services would be amalgamated, in order to restore the confidence and morale of volunteers. I will soon be introducing to the Parliament the Fire Services (Mutual Recognition) Bill. I realise that this issue is likely to have bipartisan support from the current Parliament. I note that the possibility of a separation Bill was certainly supported by previous Ministers Klunder and Mayes, Mr Klunder in 1992 and Mr Mayes in 1993, and that support is on the record. So I look forward to that support being forthcoming in the current Parliament. I also believe that it needs to be placed on the record that, while recognising that the CFS and the MFS are currently operating under different Acts, the legislation simply affirms the status of each of those two bodies as independent fire services and recognises the valuable contribution of both voluntary workers and the paid officers of the MFS and gives those officers certainty for the future.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions from the Committee on the CFS, I thank the officers of the CFS for coming in and giving their time.

Mr QUIRKE: We hope you do not have a bad season.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr I. Pickering, Chief Executive, St John Ambulance Service.

Mr D. Gillard, Director, Finance.

Mr C. Lemmer, Director, Metropolitan Ambulance Service.

Mr K. Hosking, Director, Country Ambulance Service.

Mr B. Hinton, Director, Corporate Services.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now examine the Minister on aspects of the budget related to the South Australian St John Ambulance Service, and I invite the Minister to make his opening statement.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As a result of changes to the way in which the budget is now framed, following the ambulance service coming under my responsibility as Minister for Emergency Services, this is actually the first time that officers of the ambulance service have had the opportunity to come before the Estimates Committee and to be here when questions are asked of the Minister relating to their duties.

Significant changes occurred within the ambulance service over the past nine months and I take this opportunity to place on record my tribute to the dedication of our ambulance officers who have worked well through the period of change to ensure the delivery of a more efficient and cost effective ambulance service. Four new members have joined the Ambulance Board, those being: Mr Ian Pickering, Professor Garry Phillips, Dr Mervyn Allen and Ms Robyn Pak Poy. The Ambulance Service CEO, Mr Ian Pickering, has also been appointed as Chairman of the board. Significant changes have also been made to the ambulance management administrative

structure, which have been facilitated through the acceptance of 21 targeted separation packages. Following the changes to the Ambulance Board and management administrative restructure, the ambulance service is refocusing on its core activity, that being patient care.

The service has been separated into emergency and elective elements of the service in the metropolitan area, two distinct activities which will enable more efficient and cost effective use of ambulance resources. Paramedics have now been introduced as a pilot program into the front line of the service, as of 24 August 1994. The six participating officers have successfully completed the six week classroom section at the Ambulance Training School in New South Wales. The six week practical hospital based training has been carried out in the major hospitals in Adelaide under the direct supervision of senior medical officers and members of the Medical Advisory Committee. The introduction of paramedics into the front line of the ambulance service has the potential to improve patient care and enhance the skill of qualified ambulance officers who will work with them. I look forward to witnessing the success of that pilot program.

Changes to information and administrative systems will enable more resources to be directed to the ambulance service's core function. The ambulance service is committed to providing high quality service to the South Australian public, recognising the need to contain costs at the same time, within the financial resources available. Efficiencies introduced over the past nine months have resulted in a reduction by 22 per cent of elective carry fees, which has the additional benefit of reducing costs to the South Australian Health Commission.

The service has also held the emergency call-out fees at the 1993-94 level, pending the further review and efficiency changes within the service. Ambulance subscription fees have been increased by an amount held to the CPI. Ambulance service delivery is being provided at a lesser cost than last year while at the same time delivering an increasingly improved level of service. This trend will continue in the 1995-96 financial year. As Minister responsible for the ambulance service, I have ensured that adequate funding has been provided to the service in 1994-95, so that ambulance service delivery can occur at the level demanded by South Australians.

Mr ATKINSON: The Opposition is worried by the end to the 100 per cent discount on ambulance services in country areas (page 511 of the Program Estimates). We are worried about the revenue that will be lost to the ambulance service and that pensioners in country districts will use inappropriate health transport. I therefore ask the Minister: will he have a change of heart and revoke his decision to make pensioners pay for country rescues?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The decision is not mine. The Health Commission funding is forthcoming through the responsibility of the Health Minister and, therefore, the decision is one which he made and of which he advised my agencies.

Mr ATKINSON: If a person who is injured and required to be transported to a hospital from a remote area in the State says he cannot afford an ambulance bill of thousands of dollars, will the ambulance service decline to assist such a person under the new fee recovery regime?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is absolutely outrageous for any honourable member to imply that people would be left at the side of the road or in any other location injured because they did not have coverage. Clearly, the first role of an

ambulance service is to ensure that those people who need assistance are provided with that assistance. That will always be the case but, at the same time, the service has an obligation to ensure that as many people as possible are advised of the benefits of ensuring that they are covered for ambulance service provision. There is a number of ways in which they can do that. They can pay subscription fees, and many health benefit schemes also have arrangements whereby full coverage for ambulance service can be provided.

It is also worth noting that bad debt write-off has been a problem. In the 1993-94 financial year the ambulance service had a bad debt write-off of \$2.2 million, and the service is constantly working to keep bad debt write-offs to a minimum. Unlike commercial enterprises, the service provides services to any member of the public, irrespective of his capacity to pay. Because of that, it was always going to incur a level of bad debt and it is our role to ensure that, through public education, that level is reduced accordingly. Homeless people, people who are drug and alcohol dependent and persons deceased with no estates comprise some 60 per cent of the amounts written off, while some members of the Aboriginal community also comprise a significant portion of that write-off.

I would think that all members would wish the ambulance service to continue to provide that service, and it will do so. Of the remaining 40 per cent, a number are unemployed, sick, victims of crime and pensioners who, in many instances, simply do not have the capacity to pay. The amount recorded in the 1993-94 financial year represents 22.5 per cent of the net fees charged to patients who are personally responsible for the cost of ambulance transport. In an effort to keep the level of bad debts to a minimum, the ambulance service employs a commercial debt recovery practice. It uses an external debt collection agency to assist it with its part-payment agreements (payment by instalment) and the recovery of debts through legal action where such action is inappropriate. These part-payment arrangements are interest free and the debtor is able to choose a payment plan that suits his financial circumstances.

The only restriction with these arrangements is that the account must be settled within 12 months. Clearly, in an example such as the one given by the honourable member, if someone does not have the capacity to pay; if it involves thousands of dollars and it is clear that it cannot be met within 12 months, the bulk of that would be written off, as has occurred in the past. Debt collection policies and procedures of the service have been reviewed by the internal auditors (previously KPMG Peat Marwick and currently Price Waterhouse). While these reviews recommended general control and reporting improvements to the debt collection function of the service, the debt collection policies and procedures were found to be commercially sound.

The ambulance service is currently undertaking a commercial review of its activities, and in this regard employed a specialist management consultancy firm to assist it. As part of this review, the debt collection policies will be further examined and, where necessary, changes will be implemented to further improve performance.

Mr ATKINSON: Does the Minister think it appropriate for the Chairman of the board also to be the Chief Executive?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Clearly, if I felt it was not appropriate I would not have made that appointment. It is a common commercial practice for the Chief Executive Officer also to be pointed Chairman of the board. At a time when the ambulance service is undergoing significant change, I felt that

it benefited from the continuity of leadership over both the service and the board. Mr Pickering is eminently qualified to occupy both positions, having considerable international experience in ambulance service delivery.

Mrs HALL: In relation to page 517 of the Program Estimates, the program description refers to the feasibility of the ambulance service's sharing resources with other emergency services, particularly the collocation of properties with the Metropolitan Fire Service. What benefits are perceived to result from such an action and what other measures are being taken to ensure that the ambulance service is appropriately housed in the future?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is a particularly important question, because it could be the forerunner to significant change in the way in which both the ambulance service dollar and the firefighting dollar are spent. At present, a trial project is in place at Wakefield Street MFS headquarters involving a crew from the Unley ambulance station, the reasons for which trial are quite logical. When one looks at what is an ambulance station or a fire station, the answers are fairly similar. In both cases they are buildings that provide garaging accommodation for vehicles and also provide accommodation for personnel and equipment. It therefore seemed reasonable to look at the possibility of both those services occupying the same facility, the major savings obviously being those related to capital expenditure. The duplication of properties, not just by those two emergency services but by others, is not economical and, where Government funds or funds raised by public appeal are involved, the ownership of separate properties is pretty difficult to justify.

Looking at some other agencies, there are already examples whereby some country communities, in particular, have taken it upon themselves actually to collocate facilities in the one station or, in some cases, to work the emergency services together. It is important that those regional areas and areas in the city have the opportunity to utilise their capital funds in an optimum manner to ensure that, rather than spending money on buildings, where possible that money is freed for emergency services delivery. Beyond that, there have been combined training opportunities and mutual support experience, which has the potential to be a very productive exercise compared with when dealt with remotely.

The concept is working very satisfactorily at this stage in the Wakefield Street MFS headquarters. The agreement with the agencies and also with the union bodies involved was that there would be a trial period, at the end of which the ambulance crew would withdraw from the MFS station. Interestingly, some of those officers have indicated a willingness to keep going, although that is something to be worked out between the agencies and the trade unions involved. I feel pretty encouraged that officers are saying that it is working so well they would rather just keep going. I am advised that there have been 911 cases to date from that station and that officers are finding they can respond particularly quickly in areas of ambulance service need in the city, because it is the only ambulance station in the city area at this time. The closest station previously was at Unley.

It is worth noting that all properties occupied by the ambulance service in South Australia, other than the training college, are either owned or leased by the separately incorporated volunteer St John organisation which, of course, prior to 1991 was the body responsible for providing the State's ambulance service.

The Ambulance Services Act of 1992, which was put in place by the previous Labor Government, did not provide a

mechanism to provide for the current and future property needs of the ambulance service. When coming into Government we found that we had inherited a system whereby an Act had been put in place but the property issues had not been settled. Over the past few months we have been tackling those property issues to once and for all resolve the property problems experienced by the service. To date, the ambulance service and St John management have mutually agreed upon a property distribution in the metropolitan area, and I believe that if implemented this will see the ownership of a number of properties passing to the ambulance service.

In country areas, both organisations envisage the continuation of the existing joint occupancy arrangements; however, final settlement of this issue will depend on the outcome of discussions that will determine the structure that will apply for the provision of volunteer ambulance services for this State. It is also worth putting on record that the priority representatives from Canberra were actually in Adelaide from yesterday discussing the delivery of volunteer services and their future through the St John organisation in South Australia. I look forward to discussing with the St John organisation its final decision on the way in which it would like to see change continued in South Australia in ambulance service delivery.

In the interim, the Government has supported the initiative to encourage joint occupancy of properties by all emergency services, and I look forward to the completion of the trial project to be able to evaluate the success or otherwise of that operation. It is worth noting in closing that, as an example of the work that has been occurring with the services, the tragedy that occurred on 25 July at the intersection of Pulteney Street and North Terrace when a motor vehicle hit a number of pedestrians saw both the Metropolitan Fire Service and the ambulance service on the scene. Firefighters volunteered to drive ambulances to the Royal Adelaide Hospital while ambulance officers attended and treated casualties. Having those officers at that scene and then volunteering their service in this way was an encouraging initiative and it meant that the ambulance officers could devote their attention to the injured. I was particularly encouraged by that sort of cooperation which was brought about by both services gaining a renewed appreciation and respect for each other's activities.

Mrs HALL: As we know, the ambulance service employs a considerable number of staff. It is important to know what steps the ambulance service has taken to implement equal opportunity and affirmative action programs as part of its operating and recruitment policy.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, this is an important matter. The ambulance service has established a committee to deal specifically with issues pertaining to women and employment within the ambulance service. The committee comprises five female and three male members. It has reviewed the ambulance services equal opportunity, sexual harassment and pregnancy policies, and made recommendations on other issues of possible concern. Those officers have undertaken to examine the pregnancy policies because involved in the duties of an ambulance officer is the need to carry patients on stretchers. The needs of a female officer who is pregnant at the time in undertaking those duties, and the way in which their employment is continued when in the service, were important considerations of that.

We have reached a stage in the service where 25 per cent of its employees are female. A personnel officer has been designated the responsibility of equal opportunity and

affirmative action. This person ensures that recruitment, promotion and other recruitment processes meet with equal opportunity guidelines. That person also maintains the affirmative action reports of the Federal Government and advises on requirements under the Act. Liaison with the office of the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity in all relevant matters, including the implementation of in-house training programs for management supervisors, is also the responsibility of the personnel officer. I am pleased to put on the record those initiatives being undertaken by the ambulance service.

Mrs HALL: I refer to the Program Estimates at pages 516 and 517. As an objective it lists the reduction of mortality and morbidity from accident and sickness. What specific steps is the Government taking to ensure the continual improvement of ambulance services throughout South Australia, and at the same time ensuring the adoption of best practice commercial principles in its business activities consistent with the Treasurer's statement in May 1994?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is an important question in the management of the ambulance service. Since coming to office this Government has created the environment which has seen the cost of ambulance services reduce while at the same time significant improvements in service quality have been achieved. For the first time, as I indicated in my opening statement, we actually have paramedic officers operating in metropolitan Adelaide and, subject to the success of the pilot project, we will see the program expanded over coming years to include major country centres. Significant improvements in patient outcomes are expected. A more cost-effective and customer responsive patient transport service will be introduced into the metropolitan area in October of this year. Already, price reductions in the order of 22 per cent of the call-out rate have been achieved in this area of ambulance service delivery.

Programs are being developed for country volunteer ambulance officers to ensure that they receive the appropriate training to meet their needs in the community, and I am reviewing measures in conjunction with both ambulance service providers (St John and SA St John ambulance) to protect volunteer involvement in ambulance service delivery in the country areas and also volunteer commitment to ambulance service provision and fund raising.

I have approved the appointment of a specialist management consultancy firm to undertake a commercial review of the activities of the service. This review will include management information operation and control systems. It will be undertaken in two phases. To date, I have approved phase one which involves the review of current processes to establish whether they are adequate, and to ensure that appropriate commercial principles are adopted throughout the ambulance service. Potential solutions may encompass re-engineering of processes and practices or could even include the outsourcing in whole or in part of existing functions. The consultants will be providing the ambulance board and myself with the report of their recommendations on phase one in November this year.

A decision to proceed with phase two will be subject to the findings of phase one, and if phase two proceeds it will be intrinsically linked to the whole of Government approach in information technology. This approach will ensure that the strategic direction of the ambulance service is consistent with the Government's intention that best practice principles are being adopted within Government agencies and departments.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to page 515 of the Program Estimates. How do employee numbers in the ambulance service compare with the numbers for the preceding financial year?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Program Estimates book on page 511 shows that the full-time equivalents in the service at 1993-94 were 616, and for 1994-95 are estimated to be 596. Those estimations are obviously subject to the findings of the review that I indicated earlier is under way.

Ms STEVENS: Can the Minister provide details of the capital expenditure which is allocated to the ambulance service this financial year?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is important that this question has been asked today, because I am advised by my officers that there is a mistake in the way the figures have been printed on page 175 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments book. In order to explain that error and the way in which capital funding occurs, I will hand over to Mr David Gillard.

Mr Gillard: In response to the honourable member's question, I can advise first of the changes and perhaps a little bit about the capital payments to be undertaken in the 1994-95 financial year. First in respect of the amendments that should be made, the amount of \$400 000 recorded as information technology should be \$650 000, and the amount recorded as purchase of motor vehicles should be \$910 000, making a total of \$2 510 000 as the total expenditure. Internal fundings, shown as nil, should be \$1 730 000, with the amount to be provided through Treasury being \$780 000.

In relation to the first capital expenditure, there has been, as a result of the ambulance service being involved in the whole of Government direction on information technology and communications equipment, a need to review its communication needs, and that will be done in conjunction with the whole of Government process, and that is the reason for the provision of \$200 000. With respect to information technology, the \$650 000 recorded relates to the need to upgrade information technology in the ambulance service which is now seven years old and is certainly past its useful life. Being an emergency service, it is critical that our information systems are up to date and fully operational. That expenditure will be linked also with the whole of Government direction on information technology.

With respect to the land and buildings, an amount of \$300 000 has been provided on the basis that it is anticipated an amount will be required as a result of property settlements between the foundation and the ambulance service's likely expenditure in this area. As to minor capital items, the amount of \$450 000 relates to the provision of capital expenditure for items less than \$2 000 and includes office furniture and equipment, plant and equipment and medical equipment. The amount of \$910 000 shown as motor vehicles is the cost of replacement of motor vehicles.

Ms STEVENS: Also referring to page 515, in the list of 1994-95 specific targets, it states, 'to create further operational and administrative efficiencies by having major users on contract by 30 June 1995'. Will the Minister expand on that and provide some details?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is a particularly important question and relates to a statement I made earlier. There is a number of ways in which agencies can be held more accountable for their costing structure and also demonstrate initiative in the way they manage their services. In an effort to streamline the administrative and operation arrangements, the

ambulance service is currently pursuing contracts with major users of the ambulance service.

Members are aware that the Health Commission is a major user of the service. The way in which, for example, patient carries from one hospital to another have often been funded in the past is through separate billing of each individual hospital. Obviously that has considerable administrative overhead involved. For that reason, the ambulance service is negotiating a contract with the Health Commission for the provision of emergency and elective ambulance services provided to Government hospitals and the Health Commission for the 1994-95 and 1995-96 financial years. The contract will be worth in the vicinity of \$7.6 million and will involve an estimated 10 105 emergency and 12 990 elective patient movements. At the proposed contract elective call-out rate of \$78, this contract arrangement will result in savings of about \$488 000 to the Health Commission compared with the 1993-94 elective call-out fee of \$115.60. I stress that the arrangements are still being finalised, but those figures I am providing to the Committee are preliminary.

The ambulance service is currently pursuing contracts with other major users, such as the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and also with health funds. The service currently has an arrangement with SGIC for ambulance services provided in relation to motor vehicle accidents. This arrangement covered 8 155 cases of vehicle accidents in the last financial year and the amount received for the service was \$4.9 million. In contracting services in that way, it obviously gives the ambulance service certainty as to what income it will receive during the year. It also enables the users of the service to know with certainty what their expenditure levels will be.

Mr LEGGETT: The program description on page 515 details the separation of emergency ambulance services from patient transport services. How will this impact on ambulance service delivery?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This question flows particularly well from the question asked earlier by the honourable member. The ambulance service has taken great care to ensure that emergency response is not compromised as a result of the restructuring proposal within the metropolitan ambulance region. The total number of ambulances rostered will not be reduced; rather, they will be reassigned so that emergency and routine work are handled by two separate divisions of the ambulance service.

Until recently, all ambulance cases in the metropolitan region were attended by a single level of highly qualified and expensively equipped ambulance officers. This was despite the fact that over 40 per cent of patients transported by the service are of a routine nature and do not require the same level of clinical expertise or equipment as is the case with emergency patients. Those areas of contractual negotiation to which I referred earlier are areas in which it can be known with some certainty, prior to the calling of the ambulance, the nature of assistance and care that will be needed to be provided by the ambulance officers. Under the new arrangements, all this routine work will be handled by appropriately qualified and equipped patient transport service. The additional capacity that will be created within the emergency ambulance service will more than compensate for the reassignment of a small number of multifunction vehicles to the routine transport role.

Mr LEGGETT: I refer to the country ambulance service on page 516 where the support and training of the volunteer sector is emphasised. What steps has the Government taken to ensure the essential role of volunteers is preserved within

the ambulance service, and that volunteers are given the appropriate support and encouragement?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is a particularly important question, because members would well remember the upheaval that occurred in the ambulance service at the time of what the then St John volunteer officers perceived as being an attack on them by the Government of the day. Many members would remember that that issue was particularly prevalent during the 1989 election campaign. This Government is committed to the concept of volunteerism and has clearly indicated to both volunteer and career staff of the ambulance service that there will not be any further intrusion of paid ambulance services into areas served by volunteers under existing conditions.

The Ambulance Employees Association is fully aware of this policy. I have had the opportunity to meet a number of times with members of the Ambulance Employees Association and I am pleased with the working relationship that I enjoy with that representative union and am particularly pleased with the way in which its Secretary, Mr Phil Palmer, has been prepared to discuss issues of concern with this Government in a sensible manner.

Also, I have been in close consultation with both the St John Ambulance Service and the Country Ambulance Service Advisory Committee (CASAC), and have sought their recommendations on what they believe are the best means of preserving the identity of the volunteer sector of the ambulance service. The introduction of modular training programs, which have been specifically designed for volunteers will certainly enable the standards to be maintained with minimum disruption to any individual volunteer, and the service is seeking to reduce the administrative workload as a further step to focusing the volunteer effort on the core part of the business to which they devote their time, particularly in relation to patient care in rural communities.

Changes to the Ambulance Act are likely to be made during this session of Parliament, and some of those changes will enhance the position of volunteers. As I indicated earlier, representatives of St John priory have been in Adelaide since yesterday to discuss with their South Australian representatives the way in which St John volunteers ought to be involved in ambulance service delivery, patient care, first aid and training in South Australia.

Mr LEGGETT: Some of the objectives described on page 517 of the Program Estimates in relation to the Metropolitan Ambulance Service program are very challenging indeed. How does the Minister expect to achieve these objectives, given the industrial unrest that plagued the service during the term of the previous Labor Government?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is a very important question indeed; that industrial unrest during the previous Labor Government certainly did not assist either the paid or volunteer officers of the ambulance service in getting on with the job of providing a professional level of patient care. The introduction of a new grievance procedure at the end of 1993 appears to date to have assisted in dealing with minor disputes effectively and quickly, and these procedures were negotiated and endorsed by both the Ambulance Employees Association and the LHMWU. A rolled-in rate was negotiated and implemented in the metropolitan area on 6 December 1993, and that has provided a consistent method of remuneration and has overcome to a considerable extent the previous discontent caused by wages going through highs and lows depending on the roster of the ambulance officer.

Negotiations are well under way at this time to consolidate the ambulance awards into one; currently officers operate under the Ambulance Services Award, the Salaried Officers Award and the Officers Award, and it is the current intention to progress to an enterprise agreement once these processes have been completed. The employee relations officers are operating very effectively and are pro-actively addressing issues, whereas six months ago most issues, regardless of how large or small, were taken by employees of the ambulance service to the Ambulance Employees Association. Employee relations have earned the respect and confidence of employees, and this has had a visible and positive effect on industrial relations within the ambulance service.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Bass): There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Brindal): Order!

Mr BASS: From 11 a.m. this Committee has questioned the Minister and his advisers over five areas for which the Minister is responsible, and they are the Police Department, the SES, the MFS, the CFS and the South Australian St John Ambulance Service. Those organisations service the people of South Australia in many ways and usually under very trying circumstances. I move:

That this Estimates Committee acknowledge the magnificent service that the members of the Police Force, the SES, the MFS, the CFS and St John Ambulance give to South Australia, and congratulate all personnel on contributing to the safety and welfare of all South Australians.

I think that all those officers have done a magnificent job over the past 12 months.

Motion carried unanimously.

Department for Correctional Services,
\$78 988 000

Departmental Advisers:

Ms S.Vardon, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Correctional Services.

Mr R. Bos, Manager, Financial and Physical Resources.

Mr T. Kelly, Director, Offender Services (Metropolitan Area).

Mr G. Vinall, Director, Offender Services (Country).

Mr R. Wright, General Manager, Prison Industries.

Mr J. Hayward, Finance Manager.

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

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I propose to be a fraction lengthier in my opening remarks than I would normally be because the role of the Correctional Services Department has been subject to considerable change during this Government's time in office. Two major pieces of legislation have been introduced: the Criminal Law Consolidation (Truth in Sentencing) Act, which is now in operation; and the Correctional Services (Private Management Agreements) Amendment Bill, which is presently before the Lower House. Major strategies have been implemented to reduce the cost and to introduce policy reform, with a clear focus on rehabilitation and education for prisoners.

This Government inherited from the previous Government the most expensive prison system in Australia. The Audit Commission identified that South Australia spent 25 per cent

more on corrective services delivery than the average of all other States. The Audit Commission identified that one of the reasons for our State's high prison cost was its high level of staffing to prisoner ratios relative to other States. On coming into government, we also inherited the highest remand rate of any State in Australia: 25 per cent of the South Australian prison population comprised remandees compared to the national average of 17.4 per cent.

Further, the prison system had insufficient bed space to cope with the State's prison needs. Rather than admit to this problem, the previous Labor Government managed its prison bed space by inappropriately releasing violent prisoners early into home detention. Under the Labor Government, South Australia imprisoned fine defaulters in a purpose-built fine default facility. This type of facility, I have previously stated, is totally inappropriate and, to my knowledge, the only one of its kind not only in Australia but in the world. In the past financial year alone 10 people are recorded as having escaped from the fine default facility.

Additionally, a report from the Correctional Service Advisory Council which I received soon after my appointment highlighted problems with the condition of the security fence at the facility: it showed wear marks, which, in the committee's view, was due to constant use by people absconding or climbing over it. The fine default centre, however, was not alone in its problems. In fact, the whole Northfield Prison complex also had serious problems. My CEO established, on 20 January this year, a review team to investigate the problems and its report, which was received on 10 February 1994, revealed some serious problems. The team described the Northfield Prison complex as:

A poisonous environment with staff in deep and chronic conflict with their colleagues.

These conflicts included cases of litigation, allegations of fire bombing of one officer's home, physical threats and verbal abuse. Most disturbing of all, the team advised that these issues, as well as other structural system concerns, had been clear to prison management for around three years. The team concluded that there was little doubt about the destabilising, confusing effect on prisoners that the destructive tension between the two main groups of staff was having.

As well as these problems, we inherited a prison system where there was no reward for effort. As part of Labor's mismanagement, for example, the worst offenders in Yatala were put into the best accommodation. Under that Government the prison system had poorly developed education and rehabilitation programs and very little in the way of work programs, rendering it almost impossible to rehabilitate a person for the time they were in gaol.

At Port Augusta we inherited a standstill on building work of expansions to that prison because the major contractor had gone into liquidation. We inherited the Mount Gambier Prison, which was built for just 56 inmates, completely defying through its small size all national and international trends for cost-effective prison administration.

The facility was inappropriately built as a group of houses which would have been both expensive to manage and build due to their design. We inherited a department without a constructive forward plan, a prison system with a high level of staff absenteeism, and associated call-backs in overtime, as well as an unacceptably high WorkCover claim level. In short, as a Government, we inherited Australia's most expensive and probably Australia's worst-managed correctional services system. In the past nine months, we have set

about the task of rebuilding correctional services, and giving the department direction with a sense of purpose.

The release from prison of inappropriate offenders to home detention was stopped early this year, resulting in increased prisoner numbers. In May of this year, the prison system reached its tightest accommodation point, when it was 72 beds short for the numbers it needed. At that time, as an interim measure, mattresses were provided to cater for additional sleeping facilities while accommodation was being expanded and prepared.

Having finalised and resolved the construction difficulties at Port Augusta Prison, this Government ensured a speedy completion of extensions. On 14 June this year, these extensions provided an extra 88 beds, as well as 52 bunks to cater in the future for expanding prison numbers.

Port Lincoln Prison has now been reconfigured to add nine more prisoners and reduce staff to make it a more cost-effective institution.

Additional accommodation was created for high and medium security prisoners at Yatala, and that was achieved by moving 70 remand prisoners to the Adelaide Remand Centre. Extra accommodation has been provided at the Remand Centre as an interim measure by installing 90 bunks. This has fulfilled the medium-term need to provide additional accommodation quickly.

Prison 2000, which was recently implemented by the department, is a forward plan for the configuration of the prison system from now to the year 2000, when it is expected that we will need to accommodate, on present trends, approximately 1 800 prisoners. To accommodate this number of prisoners, it will probably necessitate the building of a 500 to 700 bed prison in or near the Adelaide metropolitan area. It is likely this prison will be private sector designed, built, managed and possibly financed. South Australia's prisons now have a capacity to hold 1 464 prisoners; today, there are 1 341 prisoners.

Therefore, there are 123 empty beds, despite the fact there are 108 more prisoners than there were on the day we were elected to office. New management has been placed at the helm of the department through the appointment of my CEO, Ms Sue Vardon, and her selection of other senior officers who have been installed at the Adelaide Remand Centre, the Northfield Prison complex and the Yatala Labour Prison to tackle the particular difficulties at those sites.

The high staffing levels of the department have now been considerably reduced. A total of 133 staff have now taken targeted separation packages. The department has reduced staffing levels by some 10 per cent, while at the same time accommodating extra prisoner numbers.

I am also pleased to place on public record the fact that my senior officers meet regularly with representatives of the Public Service Association, usually each fortnight. This is a courtesy which the former Labor Government was not willing to extend to that union. Significant reforms have occurred in particular at Yatala Labour Prison, reforms which would not have been possible without the total support of the staff at that institution. Staff at Yatala were advised that they needed to do a number of things, including reducing their level of staffing, changing the regime at the prison so that it provided prisoners with incentive through reward for effort, and operating the prison under a regime of unit management, devolving responsibility to more officers.

In response to these challenges, Yatala staff formed a committee which succeeded in doing the following. It reduced their staff levels by 28, the first time staffing levels

had been reduced at Yatala under any Government, and it has undertaken what is probably the largest single movement of prisoners in our State's recent history. More than 300 prisoners were moved to different cells in Yatala Labour Prison to create the regime proposed and implemented by Yatala staff. The staff at Yatala have demonstrated an unprecedented contribution in their endeavours to help reform the State's prison system. There is still a long way to go at Yatala, but I am confident that with the prevailing staff attitude the Government will be assisted in delivering necessary reforms.

Yatala is also to be the focus for work program changes. The State's prison system does not have sufficient work for prisoners, and I have previously outlined the processes that this Government is putting in place to ensure that we provide rehabilitation, work and education opportunities within our prison system. New education and rehabilitation programs have been implemented and others are being developed. In so far as remand numbers are concerned, the Attorney-General and I have focused attention on remand numbers through improvements to court processes, through ensuring that bail can be granted to remandees with no fixed address.

Through the assistance of agencies such as OARS in providing accommodation to those of no fixed address, the remand level has now been reduced to below 20 per cent. This is well on the way toward achieving our objective of reducing remand levels to the Australian average or better. In addition, the Attorney-General has released a discussion paper on fine payment options in a bid to reduce numbers in prison for fine default. It is this Government's objective to reach the situation where we can close the fine default facility and no longer have people needlessly languishing in gaol at the taxpayers' expense for not paying a fine.

It has been a tough nine months in my department and staff. I pay tribute to those officers who have dedicated themselves to the implementation of these changes. Most officers of the department dislike the tag of being Australia's most expensive prison system and are determined to reduce the cost of imprisonment in South Australia. There have been some minor detractors to this objective, but those are a minority and the majority of dedicated officers are ensuring that the department gets on with the job. While a great deal has been achieved in nine months, however, significant reform is still to occur within the department toward our objective of reducing costs and delivering a better service.

Mr ATKINSON: I am glad to be able to commence questioning in relation to this line, although the absence of the shadow Minister for Correctional Services, the member for Hart, is regrettable. Through his officers the Minister was perfectly well aware of the member for Hart's responsibilities in another Committee at this time, and it is unfortunate that the Opposition has been left with the clear impression that the Minister has resisted timetable changes that would have allowed the member for Hart to examine the Minister now.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Is the member for Spence reflecting on the Chair? This morning I asked whether all members of the Committee were happy with the time allocation, and there was no indication at that time that the arrangement was less than satisfactory. I am disappointed that the member for Spence should now raise an issue that seems to suggest a level of dissatisfaction, when he did not take the opportunity earlier.

Mr ATKINSON: The Chairman misunderstands. The member for Hart has been in another Committee, for which he has portfolio responsibility all day. There is a direct clash

and there has been no attempt to conciliate the matter. However, if now the Minister were willing to wait until after the dinner adjournment, the member for Hart would be able to carry his portfolio responsibilities for the Opposition.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I have absolute confidence that the Minister is quite prepared to attend this Committee as long as the Committee sits, and in the meantime I am sure that members of the Government benches and your very able colleague the member for Elizabeth can adequately serve this Committee by pursuing the line of questioning until the member for Hart can arrive.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is important to clarify this, because the honourable member has raised the issue: the Committee was asked during the day whether it was happy with the arrangements. Over a fortnight ago I approached the member for Hart and invited him to discuss with me any difficulties he may have had over the arrangements of Committees, because with its small numbers the Labor Opposition was having difficulty in spreading itself over the portfolio responsibilities it has across those Committees. It was not until yesterday that my staff finally received a response, despite the fact that I also wrote to both the member for Hart and the member for Spence proposing a program for today and asking for their comment. My office had significant discussions with a staff member of the Opposition—not with the members for Hart or Spence—following that letter, and those discussions were at such a late point that in frustration at not receiving any response my officers were advised yesterday morning of the changed programs. However, in spite of that we certainly endeavoured to accommodate the member for Hart, and he outlined to me as recently as the afternoon tea break that he was unsure as to his availability even after the dinner break. It is for that reason that we have proceeded as we have.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: That certainly was not the information that was available at the afternoon tea break.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The Chair has satisfied itself that no-one will be disadvantaged. I am sure every member of the Committee is aware of the gross difficulties that the Opposition faces in having so few members of the Chamber, so I suggest that we just get on with the questioning.

Mr ATKINSON: Minister, I understand that prisoners are at least two to a cell in the Adelaide Remand Centre, and some inmates have even been sleeping out in the reception area of the wards there. Does this overcrowding necessitate extra labour costs, for example, for extra overtime for Correctional Services Officers at the Adelaide Remand Centre, and what are the extra costs?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I have asked my officers to provide me with today's accommodation numbers to give the most up to date information to the honourable member, but the statements he makes are incorrect. If he had listened to my opening statement he would have found that most of his question has been answered through that. The Adelaide Remand Centre has increased its accommodation through the provision of some 90 bunks. As I indicated earlier, 70 remandees were placed in Yatala Labour Prison. I would certainly hope that the honourable member agrees that it is inappropriate to have remandees accommodated with hard core offenders, particularly in the State's high security institution. That is a system that continued under the previous Government, and the reason the Remand Centre overfilled beyond its capacity was that the previous Government

allowed the remand numbers to reach the extent where they were 25 per cent of the prisoner population, whereas the national average is 17.4 per cent.

This Government has undertaken a number of initiatives in that direction. First, we have put the problem up front by accommodating remandees in the Remand Centre and provided 90 bed spaces for that, but to date have not had to use all those 90 bed spaces. The Remand Centre has a capacity for 248 prisoners; today there are 26 empty beds. I believe I am right in saying that an average of fewer than 80 of those 90 beds has been occupied, and in fact we have usually had 20 or more empty beds in the Remand Centre since the implementation of the new regime. The honourable member would be aware from those numbers that, clearly, if there are 90 bunks and 248 prisoners there is also a large number of single cells with one person to a cell. I have outlined before the Parliament that the way in which prisoners are selected to go one or two to a cell is undertaken carefully.

When the process was first implemented there was some anxiety by some corrections officers, and some of them may have expressed their anxiety to the honourable member. That anxiety has subsided considerably. In fact, I visited the Remand Centre last week. I took the opportunity to visit most units in the Remand Centre to speak to prisoners and staff and found that staff were very satisfied with the way the process was now settling. They felt that it had initially tested their expertise, because, obviously, different management procedures are required when you have two people to a cell.

They were quite confident that the interim system was working and working successfully. In the main, prison officers take a great pride in their work, and they certainly do not enjoy speculation by the Opposition or the media about crisis in the Remand Centre, and to be quite frank they found that speculation at the time it was raised in the Parliament particularly insulting, and some of the members have communicated that to the PSA when they attempted to indulge in similar antics. The staff have quite rightly been questioning of the way in which different procedures have been implemented. They have satisfied that questioning. My Chief Executive Officer has been to the prison on numerous occasions, as have other senior staff, to carefully monitor the process as it occurred.

The other option we could have taken was to leave the 70 prisoners in the Remand Centre and do what the previous Government did, and that was to release inappropriate prisoners on to home detention early. I am sure that the honourable member does not need to be reminded that I have used the example a number of times of a person who received a five year head sentence for rape with a two year non-parole period and, despite that sentence, they were out on home detention after eight months. I do not think that is appropriate, and I am sure the honourable member does not, and through these changes we have been able to solve that problem.

In relation to the cost of overtime pertaining to the Remand Centre, we can provide those details. If the member is trying in any way to infer that, through this process, there has been an increase in Correctional Services expenditure across the board, I draw his attention to the Auditor-General's Report, which indicates that we have already made significant savings. There are eight vacancies at present at the Remand Centre which have yet to be filled and some of those vacancies are being accommodated in the short term while negotiations are being undertaken on industrial issues, to fill

those vacancies in the future. So at this stage some of them are being undertaken by overtime.

I also want to put on the record that, when we came into office, there were 158 prisoners at the Remand Centre and there were also 160.2 full-time equivalent staff—more staff than prisoners. That made it the highest staffed remand centre in Australia. The previous Ministers for Correctional Services used to belt their head against the desk almost literally because they could not get those staffing numbers down. If all of those 90 beds in the Remand Centre were fully occupied—and as I indicated earlier they never have been—for the first time the Adelaide Remand Centre would actually reach the Australian remand centre average of prisoner/staffing ratios. To date, they are still well above that. It is certainly a point of frustration, but tolerance by the Government, as we move further to ensure that those staffing levels are appropriate. Most officers have been very cooperative with the change that has occurred.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand that prisoners on remand, accused people not convicted of any crime, have been held at Yatala while awaiting trial. Some have been held in B Division, a maximum security unit. Did this cause the Yatala Prison budget for 1992-93 to be exceeded? To what extent has this sort of overcrowding been factored into the budget for Yatala in the current financial year?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I point out to the member for Spence that repetitious questions are out of order, and the Minister did say in his opening statement that some 70 prisoners were held in Yatala, so I hope he is not canvassing the same ground.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Using again the most up-to-date information—and I know that the honourable member likes to be precise—I can advise him that as at 14:41 on 21 September 1994 there were 10 empty beds at Yatala Labour Prison. The prison has a capacity for 371 prisoners and at that time it had 361 prisoners. In the time that has passed since then maybe one or two prisoners have been moved elsewhere or one or two more have been added, but there are certainly 10 vacancies, from the most recent information available today—ten empty beds. It is hardly an overcrowding situation and, as I indicated earlier, we presently have throughout the system 126 empty beds. I have already outlined to the honourable member that a number of changes have been put in place. Firstly, remandees were transferred from Yatala to the Adelaide Remand Centre, with the exception of those remandees considered to be in need of high security accommodation. I have also outlined that Yatala Prison has undergone significant reform and staff restructuring resulting in the removal of 28 positions. I think that those changes ought to satisfy any concerns that the honourable member had. It is also worth noting that last year they were a million dollars overspent at Yatala and it is for that reason that many of these initiatives were put in place to start bringing down the costs.

Mr ATKINSON: The Audit Commission report at page 322 stated:

There appears to be a high propensity inherent in the judicial system operating in South Australia to imprison and/or remand offenders in custody and to issue community correction orders. Or is the question that the statistic is high because of a more criminally active population in South Australia as opposed to being the result of more apprehensions by a more effective and better resourced law enforcement service? These questions need to be resolved.

Has the Minister or his department considered these questions? What conclusions have been reached and what are the budget implications?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I have indicated to the Committee earlier, through my opening statement, that the Attorney-General's Department and mine have been working closely together on a number of initiatives. Of considerable concern to us has been the high remand numbers and we have already achieved a significant reduction, to the extent that those numbers are now below 20 per cent and continue to drop. That has occurred through freeing up of the court processes, and also something that was occurring through the fact that a number of prisoners had no fixed address. In the past, if a prisoner had no fixed address they were remanded. What has occurred through this Government is that, through the auspices of agencies like OARS, we have been able to provide a fixed address for a person before the courts so that their opportunity to receive remand is increased proportionately, and OARS and other agencies who have worked with them have been able to assist in that reduction of remand numbers also. But the question raised by the honourable member is an important one and it is one that is being assessed.

Mr BASS: On looking at page 499 of the Program Estimates, and from listening to the Minister's opening statement, we can see that there has been considerable reform in the Department for Correctional Services. Does this reform extend to recruitment procedures for Correctional Services officers?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, the reform does extend to the recruitment of Correctional Services officers. I would like to precede my answer by saying that the vast majority of officers employed by the Department for Correctional Services are good, honest citizens of South Australia and undertake their duties with diligence. However, I was concerned in Opposition and then since being appointed as Minister at being approached by Correctional Services staff who claimed that there were those who worked with them who had criminal records.

I asked for evidence of that, and those staff indicated that a cursory examination would prove that it is so. Those staff also indicated they believed there was some evidence that such criminal activity may be continuing. Again, they were unable to provide evidence. However, having been faced with that information, as Minister I felt it appropriate that an analysis be undertaken initially of the records of one prison, and the findings of that necessitated a complete criminal record check of the entire department. That criminal record check is almost completed and, to date, I am able to advise that 919 criminal record checks against departmental officers' names have been undertaken, of which a total of 42 personnel have been found to have records relating to criminal activity.

The nature of this activity falls into a number of categories: those officers who had offences they declared at the time the department employed them but who, despite this, were still employed; those who had offences but there is no indication that they declared those offences at the time the department employed them; and those who have committed offences since being employed by the department, and we have been examining the action the department took to deal with them. Checks have to date been conducted on personnel employed at Yatala Labour Prison, Mobilong, Northfield, the Adelaide Remand Centre, Mount Gambier, Port Lincoln and Port Augusta prisons, and checks are under way to examine

any potential problems with records associated with employees of Cadell Training Centre.

Of the 42 personnel to date who have been found with records relating to a criminal offence, 15 declared their offences at the time the department employed them; 23 had offences but appeared not to have declared them; and a total of 10 personnel have committed offences since being employed by the department. It must be noted that there have also been some crosses through those categories. For example, one person who declared offences also committed offences since being employed by the department; and six personnel had offences but there was no indication they had declared them, and they too have committed offences since being employed by the department. The offences that were declared at the time of employment include a number of categories ranging from minor crime to more serious crime, including: larceny; hinder police; driving under the influence; driving unlicensed; assault; possession of firearm without licence; negligent driving; throwing a missile; prescribed concentration of alcohol; disorderly behaviour; drunk and disorderly; illegally on premises; possession of marijuana; disorderly conduct; and, the most serious, carnal knowledge.

Despite these admissions, all those officers were employed. The types of offences that were not declared at the time of employment include: possession of firearm without licence; disorderly behaviour; carnal knowledge; assault; offensive language; assault police; resist police; wilful damage; aggravated assault; threaten life; breach of restraint; breach of bail; illegal use; shed break and larceny; sell prescribed film; refuse breath analysis; unregistered firearm; receiving; burglary; consorting; hinder police; larceny as a servant; illegal interference; possession of hemp; damaging property; unlawful possession of personal property; and resist arrest. The types of offences committed since employed by the department includes a range of driving offences involving speed and/or alcohol, assault and behavioural offences and property offences.

Instances include: driving with excess alcohol; driving at dangerous speed; failing to submit to an alcohol test; larceny; common assault; possession of firearm without licence; prescribed concentration of alcohol; driving without due care; occupy common gaming house; driving under the influence; carry offensive weapon; breach restraining order; breach of bond; property damage; indecent language; assault occasioning actual bodily harm; offensive language; and hinder police. Under the past Government, random police checks were conducted on applicants being considered for employment or if information pertaining to an applicant was brought to the notice of the department regarding an offence or offences. This system has now been changed so that all applicants being considered for the position of trainee custodial officer are now required successfully to pass a police clearance.

The department also conducts further investigation on any applicant who has served in the military forces, with a police department or with another correctional department, with a view to ascertaining whether the applicant had any conviction or has breached any regulation. Now with a conviction or breach of regulation regarding an applicant, a number of factors is considered. Those are: the seriousness and nature of the conviction or breach of regulation; the age of the applicant at the time of the conviction; the length of time elapsed since the last conviction; and the applicant's record of employment and community involvement since the conviction. Having regard to this, if an applicant has successfully completed all sections of the selection process for

trainee custodial officer, applications and all relevant information regarding the selection process of successful applicants are reviewed by a director within the department for comment and concurrence prior to final recommendation for appointment.

A recommendation is then made to the Chief Executive Officer, who ultimately has responsibility for making the final decision regarding the selection of applicants for the position. The Chief Executive Officer is seeking advice from Crown Law to see whether officers who did not admit to their criminal offences prior to employment can be dealt with. The Crown is also being asked to give advice as to whether officers who have committed offences since their recruitment, which are of a violent or dishonest nature, can be further disciplined over and above what has already been done. Action taken by the department in relation to offences committed whilst employed has included: departmental investigations, in some cases in cooperation with the police; notices of inquiry; disciplinary action; notices of suspension; formal counselling; and, in some cases, dismissal.

The role of a correctional officer is an important one, and I am sure all members will agree that these officers must be beyond reproach and of the utmost integrity—and most correctional officers are. However, clearly the situation I have outlined should not have occurred, although it did, and this Government has acted and new procedures are now in place. With all these problems behind the department, it can get on with the job. It has a task of rehabilitating offenders, in the interest of those offenders and of justice in South Australia.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: In view of the seriousness of the statement you just made, I would like a little clarification. You spoke about criminal activity: do you mean 'criminal' in terms of the Criminal Consolidation Act or were some of them summary offences?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: You are quite correct in differentiating: some are summary offences and some relate to the Criminal Law Consolidation Act but, as such, they are breaches of the law and have resulted in criminal records.

Mr BASS: I refer to page 502 of the Program Estimates, 'Support Services', which includes financial management. What is the department doing to identify and ameliorate the risk of fraud?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The department stands by the Public Service code of ethics, and the recently completed strategic plan, now in place, outlines the ethical beliefs of the department. Other matters of behaviour are detailed in departmental instructions and policy statements that are issued by the Chief Executive Officer. A model for a more intensive fraud risk identification has been developed through the end of the 1993-94 financial year and is being implemented during this financial year. This will impose on managers of the department the responsibility of identifying risks in their own areas and advising action taken or proposed to minimise that risk.

The department has developed staff exit procedures to ensure that all materials issued are properly accounted for. There is a program for implementation when delegations are revised early in this financial year. The department's initiative in monitoring the incidence of overtime and call backs has resulted in a cost reduction of \$1 million in 1993-94. I say that carefully, because I certainly would not want to infer that an incidence of overtime or call back costs indicates fraud, but there have been in the past expressions of concern about the level of that cost and it is important that that be covered in any fraud management plan.

More detailed attention to the most significant factors contributing to these costs is expected to reduce expenditure by another \$400 000 in 1994-95. The department has already devoted resources to the better management of both sick leave and workers' compensation, and the results are expected to go beyond an improvement in overtime and call-backs to better program delivery and, in particular, a reduction in the cost of workers' compensation by up to \$900 000. I make that statement carefully because we always need to have in place appropriate sick leave and workers' compensation schemes to ensure that those officers who are ill and who need the support through workers' compensation when they are injured—and correctional services is an area where the risk of injury is much higher than in many other occupations—have those schemes in place. However, it is important that those schemes are not abused, and new procedures have been put in place to ensure that only the genuine have the benefit of those programs.

In view of the delays in the implementation of the Government-wide human resource management system, it has been decided to develop a computer based rostering system independently to allow the department to make changes to its rostering practices. The developments are well advanced and the system is being tested at Yatala Prison. The department has a \$9 million supply function. This year the department conducted a review of its supply operations of one major prison and the findings have been acted upon. The review reinforced, among other things, that there is a need for an improved supply system. A computerised system has been successfully tried at the Adelaide Remand Centre and is currently being tested at the Yatala Labour Prison. The successful outcome of this trial will lead to the implementation of such a system in all institutions with expected movements in procurement and venturing management, more accountability, and improved auditing capacity.

Six fraud investigations were recently undertaken in the department. Of these, one has not yet been completed, three were not sustained, and two have led to disciplinary action under the Government Management and Employment Act. It is important that these procedures are in place to ensure that fraud is not only minimised but also the potential odium of things such as this, which I outlined in answer to the earlier question, are put behind us so that correctional officers can get on with the job of doing what they do best which is assisting in the rehabilitation of offenders.

Mr BASS: Can the Minister explain how the department expects to save \$900 000 on workers' compensation costs?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I agree that \$900 000 is a large target to set for the department, and it has been arrived at by my officers after careful consideration. The department has given a commitment to Treasury to achieve this budget reduction in the 1994-95 financial year. The budget for less than two years' workers' compensation claims for 1993-94 was \$3.5 million and a budget figure of \$2.6 million has been established for the 1994-95 financial year. The savings of \$900 000 were determined on the basis of a number of occupational health and safety initiatives being implemented.

These initiatives cover a range of issues including: staff counsellors providing individual counselling to many staff and families who, in the past, would have contacted their doctor with the likely outcome being a stress claim; early intervention and attention to the identified issues which has prevented many potential stress claims by ensuring that officers receive the support and assistance they need when feeling that they are having difficulty in coping with various

situations associated with their working environment; an accident report form which was designed and distributed to each work site (analysis of accident causation, particularly by the local committees, will enhance prevention initiatives); the departmental rehabilitation policy, which clearly sets out the roles of managers and supervisors in early intervention, that was distributed; workers' compensation budgets which have been devolved for individual locations and will be managed locally and have been since 1 July this year; the attendance by managers at the Worksafe Australia Health and Safety Best Practice Seminar which has increased and raised local level awareness of issues; the launch of a health and safety prevention action plan in February to all managers and local health and safety committee chairpersons; site meetings with all health and safety committees and management teams by managed human resources (the project manager, health and safety, to further explain the strategies in the plan and consult how these strategies can be implemented at the local level); training to managers and supervisors in health and safety responsibilities; safety awareness and hazard management (training was also provided in pre and post incident skills and counselling, and these training programs are ongoing); health and safety committees and representative structures which are being reviewed and elections held as necessary for positions on those (training has been provided to health and safety committees); negotiations being undertaken with the Public Service Association to provide level 1 and level 2 training to elected health and safety representatives (specific courses have been provided for departmental representatives); a rewrite of the departmental health and safety policy which will be implemented in the near future; a stress management policy which has been distributed to the health and safety committees for comment and will also be implemented in the future; critical incident counselling which has been provided by the staff counsellor and rehabilitation officer since April of this year (this has provided a more responsive service which has been readily accepted by departmental staff); and management and staff have received educational training relating to post-traumatic stress and the benefits of defusing potential issues and, where necessary, debriefing those people involved.

That is a very extensive summary of the changes implemented to tackle this difficulty that has been faced by the department in workers' compensation claims. It is anticipated that the cumulative results of these initiatives will achieve a 33 per cent reduction in workers' compensation claims and a significant reduction in workers' compensation costs. Another contributing factor was the finalisation of claims through targeted separation packages. This will also assist in achieving a reduction in expenditure. The department considers that the collective effect of these initiatives and the continued diligent commitment to occupational health and safety by all levels of departmental staff will achieve the required savings of \$900 000.

Mr BASS: Will the Minister disclose the number of long term workers' compensation recipients with claims greater than six months as of 31 August 1994?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: There are 28 people working in other positions in the Department for Correctional Services; 39 people are presently undertaking duties in other departments; eight people are supernumerary; and 29 people at this time are not working.

Mr QUIRKE: On page 498 of the Program Estimates it reveals a significant increase in payments made under the

special Acts. What are these payments and why is there such a considerable increase?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The amounts actually refer to the cost of the Minister's office. Members of the Committee would be aware that, as a result of the change in Government and the previous budget processes in place, different agencies are now responsible for administering the costs of respective agencies. In my case, the Department of Correctional Services administers the cost of my Ministerial office for all portfolio areas covered. The amount for the past financial year is for the balance of the financial year and the increased amount is because it is covering the full financial year.

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

Mr QUIRKE: Last year the Labor Government funded the following projects which were particularly for the benefit of women: \$5 000 for the Domestic Violence Service to develop understanding of domestic violence and its prevention through a specialist group training program; \$5 000 for the Sexual Assault Support Service for specialist counselling and specialist group work; \$20 000 for the Children in Prison project to assist the maintenance of parent-child relationships between offenders and their children; and \$8 000 for the Department of Correctional Services Service to Victims of Crime for information and counselling for victims. Which of these projects have received or will receive further funding in the current financial year? I am sure that the Minister would be glad to provide the details accordingly.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: My Chief Executive Officer has indicated she would like to answer this question.

Ms Vardon: The services for women have been a priority over the past few months as we have moved into Northfield and worked with the women prisoners. There have been about 10 to 15 changes in services for women and their children. We are looking to provide extensive training in relation to domestic violence, and not just at Northfield; we are introducing anger management programs throughout all the male prisons. Just to list some of the changes we have made at Northfield, we have introduced swing shifts so that programs can be held in the evening and they do not have to be locked up as they were before. We have improved the medical services. We have play groups for children in prison. Low security women have access to their children every second night instead of once a week. I think we would be adding significantly to the amount of resources going into services for women. In particular, we will be reallocating from areas of waste to identifying a more purposeful use for the money that the department has already.

Mr QUIRKE: I take it that you are about to do marvelous things. I have asked you about four specific areas. You have two options: you can give me the information now as to whether or not you are continuing that or you can take it on notice and tell us later.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I will be pleased to take that question on notice and come back to the honourable member with the exact detail he requires.

Mr QUIRKE: Will the Minister tell us a little about the projected planning for the next prison? As I understand it, the Minister has indicated to the House that sometime within the foreseeable future there will be the necessity for, I think, a 500 bed prison. Are any funds this year being made available for planning for that project? Will the Minister give any other relevant details?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, funds have been allocated this financial year. I will provide detail of those funds amounts from the capital works document. I indicated in my opening address that the department has prepared a planning document to take account of the needs of the prison system between now and the year 2000 and that document has become known internally within the department as Prison 2000. I was concerned, on coming to government, that there did not appear to be a constructive forward planning process in place for the department, nor a continual examination of the numbers projections of prisoners in the department. For that reason, in consultation with the Attorney-General's Office of Crime Statistics, forward projections were put together for prison numbers between now and the year 2000 and the department has a periodic review process by which it assesses those projections against the actual numbers. To date the numbers are keeping in line with those projections. At this stage the department is working towards an imprisonment number of about 1 800 prisoners by the year 2000. That is the first part of the equation. The second part is that there are a number of dependencies, as members would be aware. I indicated previously that the Cadell prison at this stage has been allocated funds for this financial year, 1994-95, and the allocation of funding beyond that is dependent on other changes that might occur to the prison system. We are presently investigating a number of options. It may be that Cadell is retained and upgraded or it may be that another prison within the system is expanded to take equivalent numbers. That may result in a medium term solution and the numbers from Cadell being incorporated into a larger prison.

At the same time, the needs of Northfield also need to be taken into account. I have put on record many times that the facilities at Northfield complex certainly cannot serve the long-term needs of women prisoners at that institution and there is a need to build a new women's prison. In taking into account the Cadell needs, those of the system to the year 2000 and the need to build a women's prison, it is possible that a new prison with a capacity to hold in the vicinity of 500 to 700 prisoners (depending on the decisions that are made) will need to be built in or near the metropolitan area. In order to look at the site for such a prison, and make allowances for land acquisition and preliminary design, in the current capital works budget for 1994-95 an amount of \$1.15 million has been allocated.

Membership:

Mr Foley substituted for Mr Atkinson.

Mr FOLEY: I have been locked away on the other Committee today and have not seen the television service tonight. Will the Minister recap on his press release which was given today and of which I have been provided with scant detail? I believe that it involved a number of funding lines in this area relating to prison officers. Will the Minister recap on his comments today?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: My comments have been made before the Committee and have been recorded by *Hansard*. I appreciate that the honourable member would like to be made aware of my comments, but he has the opportunity to read the *Hansard* extracts, from which he can appreciate the extent of the matters that have been raised. I do not see any value in indulging the Committee any further in relation to that matter tonight.

Mr FOLEY: I know very little about the facts and it would assist me in my line of questioning if I was able to have that information.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I am quite sure it would be in order for the Chair to ask the messenger to obtain a copy of the relevant piece of *Hansard* so you know what has been said.

Mr FOLEY: It would be useful, because I would like to come back to that matter.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: It would save the Minister's time and you would have accuracy on your side.

Mr FOLEY: I take the point that I was not here earlier, but unfortunately that was due to the arrogance of this Government yet again in taking no account of the fact that some shadow Ministers have multiple responsibilities when it was scheduling these Estimates Committees.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Would the member for Hart like a copy of the question relating to activities of prison officers—

Mr FOLEY: I understand that 40 prison officers have been stood down or are in the process of being stood down or transferred.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: That is in respect of criminal records, I think.

Mr FOLEY: The point is that I do not know the details about the matter; I have scant information in relation to the details and I want to get that information so that I can pursue that line of questioning if I deem it appropriate.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The Chair has sent for the relevant passage of *Hansard*. If the honourable member has some other questions that he would like to ask in the meantime, he may proceed.

Mr FOLEY: I do, Sir. As the Minister would be aware, the Government has entered into negotiations with EDS to be the major supplier of computer services. What is the degree to which the Department of Correctional Services will be outsourcing its requirements to EDS? What are the expected savings to the department's recurrent expenditure in its first year of operation?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The announcement by the Government with respect to negotiations with EDS encompasses at this stage the areas of network and hardware associated with computer processing. The Treasurer has already outlined publicly that this process is necessarily one of ongoing assessment, whereby each agency will have the opportunity to identify those areas that will be involved in any outsourcing contract with EDS.

The Correctional Services Department utilises the justice information system, which has both network and mainframe responsibilities. Therefore, it is feasible to look at that as being one of the areas that is included within the EDS contract. In so far as particular savings from that process are recurred, the Treasurer has already intimated that the individual detail for each agency will be released publicly as soon as that process is completed with EDS. I think I am right in saying that the Treasurer indicated that the process, which covers all of the 140 agencies and departments throughout Government, could take until about early March 1995.

Mr FOLEY: So, the Minister is not in a position at this stage to advise the Committee as to the recurrent savings he expects to achieve through the utilisation of EDS?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The honourable member is well aware of the nature of the announcement made by the Deputy Premier. That announcement indicated a general cost saving to Government across the whole of Government. We

are anticipating a minimum saving level in the vicinity of 10 per cent of our current costs, but those final figures will be released by Government as the contract is put in place for each agency. Needless to say, the opportunities are significant, as has been indicated by both the Premier and the Deputy Premier in their public statements.

Mr FOLEY: You mentioned 10 per cent of your current costs. What are the current costs?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I will take that question on notice and bring back a detailed costing for the honourable member as to how much is spent at present.

Mrs HALL: I refer to page 499 of the Program Estimates, under the heading 'Offender Detention Services—1994-95 Specific Targets/Objectives'. Can the Minister advise what training has been put in place for custodial officers to prepare them for the truth in sentencing arrangements?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As the Committee would appreciate, this legislation has been passed by the new Government and was recently proclaimed. An extensive schedule of training programs was developed and is being implemented throughout the department. The performance objective of these programs is that unit officers at the OPS 2 level will have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to take greater responsibility for the humane management and discipline of prisoners. To this end, OPS 2 unit officers in the custodial ranks are being systematically trained in interaction skills such as conflict management, assertiveness, communication, managing difficult behaviours and team development and maintenance.

Departmental officers at the Staff Development Centre have formed a task force to enable them to run this training program for up to five days per week and still meet other departmental training objectives. The training program is two to three days in duration, depending upon the rank of the officers, and it caters for between 15 and 20 officers at any one time.

In this process the department has moved away from offering only development programs to an emphasis on targeting training aimed at meeting required competencies to particular levels, streams and work units. The department is developing competencies in line with national standards, and training is focused on providing staff with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to perform their duties to a high standard. This approach to training has been applied across the custodial, professional and administrative levels.

In the current financial year, institutions set aside time each week for local training and operational issues. In addition, in this period the department-wide training has consisted of 310 training days covering 246 programs and involving an aggregate of 1 485 staff. With a view to maximising work-site training in order to cater best for country staff, 94 programs were conducted in the past financial year at departmental institutions or regional offices and 152 were conducted at the Staff Development Centre in North Adelaide. In addition, 51 activities attended by staff were provided by outside agencies, including TAFE, the Australian Institute of Management and the Graduate School of the University of Adelaide.

This focus on training has occurred because the truth in sentencing arrangements, as well as introducing new legislation and regulatory changes for the department, also involved a different style of management of prisoners that has led to a much more interactive management role by staff and a much greater focus on rehabilitation, training, education and work experience.

Mrs HALL: On page 501 of the Program Estimates reference is made to the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the review of probation and parole. To what extent has this occurred so far?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The probation and parole review was completed in August 1993. Of course, given that timing, it was completed under the previous Government. The review concluded with 49 recommendations determining the areas and issues that needed consideration. From there, the department established a working committee to implement the recommendations, and staff are participating in working parties to develop policies, practices and procedures for the department.

Following a critical path analysis of the recommendations, the three most significant areas were identified as: through care; targeting; and the case management service provision model. The consultation papers in these areas have now been finalised by those working parties and are currently being distributed to all staff for their comments. Where appropriate, those comments will result in some changes, and the final documents will then be released.

It is intended that staff training will be provided by academic staff from the University of South Australia, commencing in November or December of this year to facilitate the implementation of the case management model. A number of recommendations of the review related to the restructuring of community corrections, and this was completed under this Government in July 1994. The overall objective was to maximise the delivery of best practice and customer service to the client contact model. I am sure members of the Committee would be interested to note that reference to academic staff from the University of South Australia.

For too long in this State, and in other parts of Australia or, for that matter, other parts of the world, the role of the correctional officer or the community corrections provider has been viewed by many as being a gaoler or a supervisor to stop someone from reoffending. I would hope that by now this Government is starting to communicate the message to the public in a way that it understands. Correctional service delivery is much more than that: there must be a prime focus on rehabilitation, education, work programs, and interaction between staff and officers to assist that rehabilitative process, so that the person who is finally released from a correctional institution, or finally completes a community corrections program, is a person much less likely to reoffend than they were before that program or that period of imprisonment started. This Government has been most concerned at the recidivism rates that have been prevalent in this State for some time and is, for that reason, targeting these programs carefully, continually upgrading them and continually implementing new programs in a bid to reduce that recidivism rate.

Mr LEGGETT: On page 499 of the Program Estimates, under the title 'Offender Detention Service', reference is made to the department's drug strategy. Would the Minister provide information on the number of times drugs were detected in prison, how that compares with previous years, and what steps have been taken to eliminate drugs from the prison system?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is a most important question from the member for Hanson. As members would be aware, in Opposition I was particularly critical of the incidence of drugs in our prisons. I also indicated from Opposition, as the then Liberal spokesman for correctional services, that I

believed that the drug incidents were potentially much higher in view of the fact that officers believed that, if a more diligent approach could be taken, resources provided to them, and more extensive use made of the dog squad, the drug finds would increase. Over the past nine months the department's efforts to detect drugs within the prison system has been considerably upgraded.

It is for that reason that we now see, during 1993-94, 562 incidents of drugs detected within the prison system. The majority of these detections involved Indian hemp and its derivatives. This figure compares to 511 in the year 1992-93. In January of 1993 the department developed a correctional drug strategy in conjunction with the Drug and Alcohol Services Council. Members of the Committee would be well aware that in Opposition I was particularly critical of that strategy and indicated it did not go far enough.

The strategy is in the process of being upgraded and revised, and that takes into account the greater efforts to detect drugs. Members would also be aware that the Liberal Party in Opposition gave a commitment to undertake a drug inquiry within our prison system. That inquiry is shortly to commence. There have been some delays due to the difficulty in finding a suitable inquirer with the appropriate skills. Such a person has now been located, and the contract with that person is in the final stages of negotiation. I would expect that person to start within the next month.

These measures, plus the findings of the investigator, will lead to an optimum drug strategy, which will enable the department to tackle this difficult problem. Finding the drugs in the prison is one thing, and certainly drug detection is now involving actions such as establishing the *bona fides* of visitors, staff bag inspections, restricting the entry of professional visitors' bags, staff surveillance, searching of prisons, drug searches conducted by the dog squad, restricting visitor access to prisons, and prisoner urine sampling.

Those things detect the problem only after it has occurred. One needs to be mindful why it is that prisoners turn to drugs in prison. If someone is placed in an institution with no work and limited education opportunities, boredom will become one of the biggest problems in their everyday life. For that reason the department has been tackling the issues of introducing more constructive work for prisoners and also better education and rehabilitation programs to occupy the prisoners' time gainfully, thereby reducing their chances of turning to drugs and increasing their chances of rehabilitation. Many prisoners have found themselves in the system in the first place through drug dependency, turning to crime to support that dependency. If that cycle is not broken, their chance of being rehabilitated is almost nil. The department does not for one minute pretend that it has anywhere near solved these problems. There are still enormous problems and a lot of effort lies ahead, but the initial stages of tackling the problem have now commenced and the department's officers are working diligently to start to bring this enormous problem under control.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Before the evening dinner adjournment the member for Spence read from a minute which one of the members of the Committee asked to be made available to the Committee. It was made available to the Committee. I am looking at the document and I wish to refer this matter to the Speaker, because I am not sure whether the whole document has to be tabled and I am not sure whether in this case it has been. I ask whether I can tell the Speaker that I have the member's cooperation in seeing the original document so that he can compare it with the one

I have, to ensure that the full document was, if it needed to be, tabled before the Committee and that it has in no way been altered.

Mr FOLEY: On page 496 of the Program Estimates under the heading 'Offender Detention Services' it appears that about 25 jobs have been lost in the area of security. Would the Minister care to comment on that and does this mean that there is less security in our State's prisons?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: In the first phase, there have been considerable staff reductions in the department in bringing the costs of the department in line with best practice. We are separating out which of those may be included in offender detention services. In the honourable member's absence I outlined to the Committee earlier the fact that we inherited a correctional services department with one of the highest staffing levels in Australia. By way of example in response to an earlier question I gave the example of the Adelaide Remand Centre, which on our coming into office had 158 prisoners to 160.2 full-time equivalent staff, making it the highest staffed remand centre in Australia. It is fair to say that many other of our institutions had that difficulty. The 133 targeted separation packages have occurred across both correctional institutions and also head office personnel. I have also given the example of a reduction of 28 staff at Yatala.

Far from causing any difficulties in the provision of security in the prison, the reduction in staffing program that has been put in place by this Government brings us into line with the staffing levels of the rest of Australia. The honourable member would have heard me say before in the House that, on coming into Government, we inherited the highest cost correctional system in Australia, and indeed it cost 25 per cent more to deliver the same level of corrective services in South Australia than the average of the other States. One of the principal reasons for that cost imposition identified by the Audit Commission was the high level of custodial staffing to prisoner levels.

Of the 133 TSPs, 47 of those have been removed from the prison system and still more positions will be removed during this financial year. As I indicated, 28 were removed from Yatala and covered by the restructure proposal of staff; six from Northfield; four from Cadell; five from Mobilong; and four from Port Lincoln. There is no doubt that we still have a staffing number difficulty in the department. However, the issue of further separations has been somewhat relieved through the fact that there are also more prisoners in the system than there were when we came into office, and the increase in numbers that I have indicated to the Committee earlier also assists that process further, whereby the officers we presently have are able to cope with a larger number of prisoners. To sum up, no, there is certainly no threat to security, quite the contrary, and by Australian averages we are still one of the highest staffed correctional service systems in Australia.

Mr FOLEY: Under the heading 'Offender Community Services' on page 496 of the Program Estimates, it appears that recurrent expenditure for probation and parole services on that line are cut by nearly 10 per cent. Why is this so, why the cut in the human resources, and how will this decrease in staff numbers be achieved?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: There are two differences that need to be highlighted here: first, the 1993-94 actual figure compared against the 1993-94 estimate and, secondly, the 1994-95 estimate compared against the 1993-94 actual. The numbers for 1994-95 appear to be lower because they exclude casuals, which are expected to average some 20 during this

financial year. Hence, there is a real increase on last year's outcome in this program; for instance, the community corrections area, where there has been a staffing emphasis rather than de-emphasis, because it is one area of the department that needed a greater staffing representation. A new organisational structure for community corrections has been put in place from 1 July 1994.

The major benefits of the new structure include a more efficient allocation of resources across regions with a reduction in upgrading and management positions from 23 to 13, but an increase in staff allocated to working directly with clients from 94.5 to 103.4; the placement of resources to enable the development of policy and research on a regional basis (2.5 positions for that) rather than being performed as a control function; the provision of a career path for professional staff and the encouragement of professional standards through the provision of senior practitioner positions at the PSO2 level; the provision of senior community correction supervisor positions at the OPS4 level to supervise regional community service orders and home detention programs; and the creation of a Manager (Resources) at the ASO3 level. Those positions will provide regions with the resources to manage the administrative aspects of regions and to support the devolution of financial and human resource planning in regions.

Mr FOLEY: On page 499 of the Program Estimates, under specific targets and objectives, there is reference to a drug-free unit at the Cadell Training Centre. Why are such units not being established in every South Australian correctional services institution? Will the Minister advise the Committee what else has been done to eradicate illegal drug use in South Australian prisons? I take on board that he has made some earlier comments, but it seems an innovative way to address the issue at Cadell. Therefore, I ask: why not other prisons?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is an innovative way to tackle the incidence of drugs, and it goes some way towards assisting that process. The new Mount Gambier Prison, under construction as a greenfield site, will be declared a drug-free prison to extend that unit concept—

Mr FOLEY: That is just like saying that Hindmarsh is a nuclear-free zone.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Perhaps the honourable member will be serious and listen. It will be declared a drug-free prison. That prison, by its nature, offers better accommodation and in future will offer potentially attractive work opportunities for prisoners, which will make it a place to which prisoners who behave and demonstrate that they want to be rehabilitated will aspire to go. If a prisoner who goes to the Mount Gambier Prison is found to be involved in drugs, he will be sent back to the start of the process at Yatala. Similar drug-free units are in the process of being introduced or are in place at Port Augusta, Yatala and Northfield Prisons as an expansion of that program. That adds to the answer that I gave earlier to demonstrate that the long task of tackling drug problems in our prisons is well under way.

Mr LEGGETT: I refer to page 499 of the Program Estimates relating to offender detention services. Will the Minister advise the Committee how the truth in sentencing legislation will affect discipline in prisons; and, without asking a supplementary, how does the truth in sentencing legislation affect the imprisonment of violent offenders?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: These are two very important questions. There was some condemnation of the truth in sentencing legislation by the Labor Party at the time it was

debated. Opposition members believed that, rather than assist discipline in prisons, the truth in sentencing legislation would make the task more difficult. By way of example at that time, they considered that the incentive offered through the remission system was being removed by this Government. In fact, I can report that the program has now been in place since proclamation of the legislation, and there is strong evidence that the new measures that we have put in place have become extremely successful. In order to understand this issue properly, members need to put themselves in the position of a prisoner. Prisoners tend to live from one day to the next by virtue of the nature of their predicament and do not think largely beyond that, because for some the time of release seems to be too far off.

Mr Chairman, do we have a quorum? I am absolutely staggered that, during budget estimates, not one member of the Opposition is present in the Chamber. The Government is effectively continuing the estimates process through the presence of its own members. All Labor Party members have left the Chamber. The budget estimates questioning is provided for the Opposition to scrutinise the budget for the benefit of taxpayers. I am still happy to keep putting this answer on the record, and at the completion of that answer the Committee may well wish to decide whether it ought to continue in the absence of questioning from the Opposition.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The Chair notes your comments and is somewhat embarrassed by the present predicament, because the Chair alerted members of the Opposition to the requirement for a quorum. The Standing Orders are clear: four members of this Committee constitute a quorum and therefore the Committee technically does not have a quorum. However, on behalf of all present I believe we owe the Minister and his officers some apology for the current predicament, and I hope that Government members will not suspend the sitting while a quorum is not present.

Mr BASS: Mr Chairman, the member for Hart spoke to me earlier. He had to leave the Chamber on a matter of urgency. He will only be a couple of minutes and under the circumstances I did not think I could refuse his request. I know it is disappointing for the Minister but I think it is appropriate at this stage that we continue.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I thank the member for Florey for explaining the problem.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Under the old system prisoners found that, if they lost remissions for a misdemeanour, that loss of remissions seemed to be something that was far off in the future, had no immediacy and so was not an immediate deterrent to their behaviour pattern. However, under the current system, where a series of processes can be applied to a prisoner, a more immediate penalty can be put in place. At the minor end of the scale those penalties range from warning prisoners about their behaviour and recording the matter on their unit card through to taking management action within the unit for minor breaches of the regulations in accordance with section 42A of the Act. Penalties can restrict prisoner privileges or work with other prisoners for up to seven days. A manager's inquiry can be held into a breach of the regulations, which can include a complex behavioural matter.

In accordance with section 43 of the Act, penalties can range from fines of up to \$25 to restrictions for up to 28 days. A more serious or particularly complex breach of the regulations can be referred to a tribunal for a formal hearing and determination in accordance with section 44 of the Act. Penalties include fines of up to \$50, compensation of up to \$500, and restrictions for up to two months. Through a more

immediate imposition of penalties in the form of loss of privileges and a fine to the prisoner, correctional officers advise me that they are finding that prisoners fear detection for breach of regulations and know that there is an immediate penalty. They believe that for the first time as correctional officers they are in a position where they are able to deal with prisoners in a far more sensible way and have prisoners see reason with respect to modifying their behaviour patterns.

In addition, there is the requirement for criminal acts to be reported to police. Such serious matters are also often subject to the laying of a charge, as has always been the case, under a regulation and referral to a visiting tribunal with a request for an adjournment pending court action. Penalties in formal hearings are tripled for breaches in regard to the disruption of urinalysis sampling.

The honourable member also asked how truth in sentencing affects the imprisonment of violent offenders. Broadly, there are four main ways in which those offenders are affected by this legislation. First, when any offender is now convicted and sentenced by a court, the non-parole period set will mean what it says; that is, there can be no parole before that minimum parole period expires. The non-parole period can neither be shortened nor lengthened except by a court. For violent offenders who would tend to receive a substantial sentence from a court, those who are sentenced to five years or more will now have to apply for parole to the Parole Board. The legislation sets out what the Parole Board must take into account when considering the application.

Before the implementation of truth in sentencing, a prisoner's release was automatic and the sentence was subject to reduction due to remissions. It is now anticipated that the requirements of meeting the expectations of the Parole Board will ensure that violent prisoners will increasingly take up opportunities on offer through work and programs to change their ways. Indeed, prison officers advise me that already prisoners are asking to go onto these programs—prisoners from whom officers previously had difficulty in gaining cooperation to participate in such programs—and the officers are encouraged by the more positive attitude being adopted by those prisoners because they are aware of the consequences they now face. Prisoners can submit to the Parole Board that they are ready for parole, but if they do not take on the opportunities on offer they cannot expect automatic release as in the past.

Secondly, if violent offenders are also later violent in prison, they are segregated from other prisoners. These people are effectively isolated. Often, all the remission was taken from such prisoners for that month and no more remission left that could be granted while their behaviour was still undesirable. As I indicated, that remission practice was not a good management tool in such circumstances. In such a restricted regime, these people subsequently received month after month of full remissions after being locked away from the general prisoner population. That can no longer happen, as remissions have been abolished. Also, there are now increased powers for managers to fine prisoners and hit them in the hip pocket. That is striking a raw nerve.

Thirdly, violent prisoners will not be allowed on the home detention program. They will need to do their non-parole period or minimum term of imprisonment in prison. Fourthly, we have now made provision for both police and victims of violent crime to make representation to the Parole Board when violent prisoners apply for parole. I am sure that members can cast their minds back to the more notorious criminals who have been released from our prison system.

Members from both sides of Parliament have expressed to me their personal abhorrence over the nature of some of those crimes and the fact that these people have been released. We now have a situation where both police and victims of those crimes and/or their families can make representations to the Parole Board.

Mrs HALL: In relation to page 502 of the Program Estimates, 'Support services', under 1994-95 'Specific targets and objectives' are some wonderful words about the requirement for a comprehensive EO strategy. What is the Department for Correctional Services doing to improve the percentage of women in its work force generally and, in particular, to improve the percentage of women in management positions?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Members will, of course, have noted that my Chief Executive Officer is, quite obviously, a woman and is, of course, the only chief executive officer of my agencies who is so.

Mr FOLEY: Appointed by the Labor Government, too.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Ms Vardon is particularly conscious of the need to ensure that an appropriate equal opportunity strategy is engaged. I remind the honourable member who interjects that professional public servants owe affinity to Governments of neither political persuasion but regard themselves as professionals to serve the Government of the day. Women within the department presently constitute 29 per cent of its work force, and 14 per cent of these occupy middle or senior management positions. In addition, Aboriginal employees represent almost 2.5 per cent of the department's work force, most of whom are in base grade and custodial positions. That is something that is of concern to the department, and we are looking at the reason why our Aboriginal officers have not been able to move their career paths at this stage to higher levels within the department.

The recruitment of women into custodial positions has maintained its focus. In the last financial year, 28 per cent of new trainee officers were women. In view of the difficult nature of the role of correctional officers, in view of the fact the majority of prisoners are male, it is almost surprising to me that such a large percentage of people in this position are women, because it is a particularly tough, daunting job. Yet it attracts a large number of women recruits and 28 per cent of those new trainee officers were women and undertake their duties extremely well. A project officer was appointed by the department to develop and implement training and development strategies for Aboriginal staff to enhance their careers within the department, and the position profile for custodial officers is regularly reviewed to ensure that the possibility of indirect discrimination is eliminated in the recruitment process. Management position profiles have been similarly updated to reflect more generic abilities. This year, the department has appointed also an equal opportunity coordinator who is developing a strategy to address a number of issues.

Policies and procedures are being reviewed to ensure that women in other designated groups are not disadvantaged. Staff and management are to be trained in equal opportunities and the prevention of sexual harassment, and women are being encouraged to take up training opportunities, especially to increase their managerial skills. The equal opportunity strategy will also consider issues related to Aboriginal employment, multiculturalism and working conditions of people with family responsibilities. Indeed, when one looks at those issues, one almost has to ask the question why it should be necessary for those things to be put in place

because, as a matter of course, the discrimination should not have been there in the first place. However, regrettably, throughout many areas not only in Government but in many work forces in our State, discriminatory practices have been employed, and the Correctional Services Department is certainly exercising every opportunity to ensure that that is not the case.

Mr FOLEY: The point I was making about the Minister's Chief Executive Officer was not that she was appointed by a former Labor Government but that the former Labor Government, of which the Minister has been extremely critical repeatedly, made a conscious effort to increase the number of women in senior levels of Government. Having worked in Government, I am fully conversant with the fact that chief executive officers are appointed to serve the Government of the day. I in no way was implying anything other than that. I understand the Minister has included in his budget line about \$2 million savings in anticipation of the current legislation we have in the House. I appreciate we are not a position to debate legislation that is before the House. Where are those savings structured within the budget papers?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Those savings in this financial year are expected to be about \$250 000 principally through savings in the remaining half of the financial year, as it will then be, after the construction of the Mount Gambier prison. We cannot debate legislation that is presently before the House, but those savings and that outsourcing can occur whether or not that legislation passes through the Parliament.

Mr FOLEY: Can the Minister elaborate on that?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I encourage the honourable member to read the existing Correctional Services Act and look at the way in which Government can outsource those things that are in place. We are not debating the Bill and, if the honourable member wants to question me later as to why that Bill was introduced in the first place, he will see that it is to give Parliament control over the contractual process, not to enable the contractual process to occur.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The member for Hart asked the question, and that is why I allowed it, as to where savings could be identified, but if the Minister has answered the question, that is fine.

Mr FOLEY: I am not sure whether the Minister has answered the question, but in the Minister's words there is a veiled threat that if the Bill is not supported he can do it anyway. We will have to wait and see whether that is the case.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I resent that accusation. It is not a veiled threat; it is a statement of fact. I encourage the honourable member to look at the Bill and what it does.

Mr FOLEY: I turn to the Minister's statement today, which I have now had the opportunity to peruse. Having been involved from the Minister's side of the fence in tactics that Ministers of the day undertake and now having responsibility as a shadow Minister, I find his publicity statement today quite extraordinary. The Minister has done many things in his all but brief time as a Minister, and I think this is certainly up there with some of the best ones. As I said, having been a spin doctor of sorts myself, I know that it is always a good tactic to have a story to deflect a line of questioning or a possibly vulnerable position that a Minister may have when he appears before an Estimates Committee, but I find this quite extraordinary. In one fell swoop he has cast enormous aspersions on the character of every serving correctional services officer in this State. The Minister has said certain

things that are of concern to the Opposition, the sorts of things that should be dealt with in house. To suggest that people who have been convicted of drink driving and other offences which are not criminal offences and to make the broad sweeping statements that he has made today is very dangerous, extremely provocative and extremely transparent.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The honourable member is making a statement. He has not referred to a budget line and he has not asked a question. Further, he is making a statement about something which he acknowledges he neither saw nor heard.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Unfortunately, Standing Orders do not necessitate that the honourable member must ask a question; he can make a statement.

Mr FOLEY: The point I make is that it is a very dangerous and extremely provocative practice for a Minister of the Crown for an expedient political reason to make this statement and obtain the sort of mass publicity which he has today. My statement is leading to a very relevant line of questioning. We are talking about the salary line of the majority of the Minister's staff. It is a reasonable assumption that, if someone commits a criminal offence in this State, serves their sentence and is rehabilitated and acknowledges that to the person who is employing them, that person is entitled not to expect to have doubt cast on their name or character. I acknowledge, as the Minister smirks, that a number of people did not admit that at the time of their employment—that is a separate matter. Some of the points in what the Minister has said are relevant and appropriate to be raised, but he has attempted to do this with a broad brush. One of his colleagues, the Minister for Primary Industries, has been convicted of drinking and driving. I do not say that, because of that offence, he is not fit to serve in Parliament or to represent his constituency. I accept that he has done his penance—paid his dues on that issue.

Why is it that officers, because they happen to be Correctional Services officers, have been singled out today because they have been found guilty of drinking and driving? You talk of a number of other offences which are not criminal and which, I suggest, are very minor. You even talk about people driving at a dangerous speed. I have been booked for driving at a dangerous speed. I suspect there are many politicians in the same situation. Why in your style of management as a Minister do you have to go for the sensational, provocative and completely transparent approach to issues such as this? Good management would mean that you would deal with this in house, internally and not make a song and dance about it on the day you come before the Estimates Committee so you can defer and deflect any other point that may be highlighted.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Before the Minister answers the question, as the Minister referred to in a point of order, you have a perfect right to make a statement as a member of this Committee. However, you only have a right to question the Minister on budget lines. The member for Hart asked a rhetorical question at the end which had nothing to do with the budget process. I rule it out of order for the Minister to reply to that question, unless the honourable member can link a question to the budget lines under consideration. I am not being hard on the member for Hart. It is quite clear. You may make a statement; you may question the Minister; but you may question the Minister in connection with the budget lines, not in the rhetorical fashion that you just did.

Mr FOLEY: I refer to page 499 of the Program Estimates and make the comment in terms of reform to the recruitment

procedures for Correctional Services officers. I simply ask: why has the Minister felt it necessary to conduct himself in the way he has today?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The statements by the Opposition member are outrageous and I would encourage him to go through the statement he has in front of him and count up the number of offences that have been listed. It is not a complete list, but he will find that the number of offences exceeds 42. In fact, most of these officers have been charged with multiple offences. I freely acknowledged that the multiple offences ranged from, in the minor part of the offence, the drinking charges through to more serious charges.

These issues were not raised lightly. They were raised because they were serious—very serious indeed. Some of these officers were convicted of offences such as carnal knowledge. The question that this Government has had to grapple with is whether or not it is appropriate for people convicted of those sorts of offences, no matter how far in the past, to undertake the duties of correctional officer. The honourable member indicated that he did not hear what I said to the media. I am pleased to have the opportunity to let him know exactly what it was I said. I am advised that these statements were played on the media.

I couched my opening statement to the question here today, and also to the media, by saying, 'The majority of correctional officers, the vast majority, are honourable people who undertake their work with diligence and want to get on with the job.' However, both in opposition and in government, I was approached by officers who were concerned that there were some who, in their words, had slipped through the net and had convictions, many of them not declared, and they believed the problem needed to be attended to. I put to the honourable member that, if he were in the position of Minister and were approached with such allegations, he would have to do something about them. As a consequence—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: If the honourable member sits back and listens for a change, he will hear that, as a consequence, to date 919 name checks have been conducted to ascertain the seriousness of the problem. A total of 42 officers came up with records, some of them more serious than others. What this Government wants to do is to put the problems of the past behind it and get on with the job. This is one of the problems the department has had before it for some time. The record checks have just been completed. It is an arduous task that has taken many months and could have come out at any time.

The Government sees this estimates process as a process for finally putting things behind it and getting on with the job of a new budget for which this Government takes responsibility. As part of that process, this information has been made public to let the public know that again action has been taken to make sure the system works appropriately.

I have detailed new recruitment procedures that are in place and have also detailed that, as part of those recruitment procedures, if a conviction or breach of regulation is revealed regarding an applicant, a number of factors under our new procedures are taken into consideration, those being the seriousness and nature of the conviction or breach of regulation, the age of the applicant at the time of conviction, the length of time elapsed since the last conviction and the applicant's record of employment and community involvement since the conviction.

It may well be that there are instances where a person would be suitable for employment by the department for a misdemeanour of a minor nature that occurred some time ago. I fully acknowledge that; that point has never been in dispute. However, a number of serious areas need to be tackled and tackled they now have been. So, I resent the honourable member's accusations and inferences. This should have been tackled some time ago, but it was continually swept under the carpet by his Government.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I did not hear that interjection.

Mr FOLEY: I get tired of the repeated clichés coming from the Minister about former Governments. At some point he will own up to his own responsibilities.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Hart is entitled to get tired or not get tired, but he is not entitled to use unparliamentary language by way of interjection. Interjections are not really acceptable, but unparliamentary language is not acceptable in any form.

Mr FOLEY: I apologise, Sir. I did not know that 'crap' was an unparliamentary expression. I will not use it in future.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Despite your guidance, Mr Acting Chairman, the honourable member's behaviour does not seem to be improving. This is a serious issue and it has been tackled. If the honourable member was listening to my reply, he would have heard me say that this budget is one for which this Government takes responsibility. Some of the budget initiatives here admittedly are in place because of the mismanagement of the Government of which he was a part through his advice to the former Premier as economic adviser. The honourable member can raise his eyebrows, give the ho-hum comments and say that he is sick and tired of that, but those are the facts.

Mr FOLEY: On a point of order, Sir, I was not the economic adviser to the former Premier: I was the Executive Assistant.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Executive Assistant to the former Premier: I am happy to give the honourable member his correct former title.

Mr FOLEY: They wouldn't listen to my economic advice; I can tell you that much.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The actions that have been taken by this Government in ensuring that correctional officers who are employed are people of integrity, honesty and standing in the community and who are suitable to provide guidance to prisoners to assist in their rehabilitation are entirely appropriate, as is any action taken by this Government to ensure that past appointments are also appropriate. The role of correctional officers in our community is an important one and one that must be taken seriously. The same integrity and probity checks of correctional officers need to be in place as apply for police officers. Both jobs are equally important, and it is that message that needs to be sent to improve the standing of correctional officers in our community. As I have said in this Committee today, correctional officers are not jailers but people who have a prime responsibility of rehabilitating and educating people in our system. It is for that reason that those officers are now being involved in training at universities in this State to lift the skills that they have as officers, and the community in so seeing that will acknowledge that they are a profession within our community.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: This Committee seems to be developing a more confrontationalist flavour than is good

for the best deliberations of this Parliament. I ask all members to consider that when framing their questions. When the member for Hart takes a point of order, he should wait until it is ruled upon. If he wishes to make a personal explanation he knows that there is an appropriate way of doing that as well.

Mr FOLEY: Further to this issue, in the Minister's statement today he referred to such activities as negligent driving, throwing a missile, prescribed concentration of alcohol, disorderly behaviour, drunk and disorderly and possession of marijuana, to name the bulk of the issues put before us. If any of the Minister's departmental officers were guilty of those charges, would he be making a similar statement in this Committee today?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The same integrity and probity checks are conducted in association with officers who are engaged in the Police Department to undertake public service roles, and those checks will also include the other correctional officers. I repeat: it is an important responsibility that these people are charged with. The honourable member dismisses lightly the charge of possession of indian hemp, but that is an offence for a prisoner within the correctional system. You cannot have on the one hand officers setting one standard, and on the other hand the penalising of prisoners for exactly the same thing. This is regarded very seriously by the Government and it has taken appropriate action. If the honourable member does not think that the action we have taken is appropriate, and if he disagrees with the new standards applied to recruitment of officers, let him say that those standards are wrong.

Mr FOLEY: I find it beyond explanation that the Minister would frame a statement in which officers, because they happen to be correctional services officers, are having their past record paraded in this place for offences which—although it would be preferable that they did not occur—are committed by people in every walk of life in every occupation within the Public Service. I take the Minister's point in relation to marijuana, but many of the other offences are misdemeanours. Even the Minister's own ministry would contain people who have committed an offence such as drunken driving. I simply make the—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I caution the member. I said earlier that many of these offences were multiple offences, and drunken driving combined with, for example, assault police does not become a minor offence. The honourable member would be well aware that the police often lay multiple charges.

Mr FOLEY: The Minister does not have to lecture me. I would have been more comfortable with this matter if the Minister were able to provide the Parliament with the serious offences: take out the irrelevant offences and table the real offences. I want to see whether that number of 42 comes down to five or six, or 10 or 15. If someone has been guilty of any criminal activity, I have no problem in supporting the Minister's actions. I simply draw the distinction why, in areas such as speeding, that is such a major impediment to the conduct of a correctional services officer's position. Is the Minister able now or at a later date to provide to me a list which really concentrates on the important issues that he as a Minister is trying to stop?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: After the department has cleared the process of taking its advice from Crown Law and after it has assessed in each individual case what action is appropriate, I will be reporting to the Parliament the final results of those deliberations. I repeat for the benefit of the

honourable member that where the matters are at the lower end of the scale in terms of offence they are not isolated matters. For example, it is quite obvious that if someone has received a speeding ticket their name will not have a criminal record attached to it for that reason. What has occurred is that many of these have resulted in multiple charges being laid against those officers for which they have been found guilty, and the member would be well aware that it is common practice for police to charge an offender with multiple charges and quite often all those multiple charges are charges for which the offender has been found guilty. I do not particularly enjoy this process. I would much rather have come into office to find that the previous Government had proper checks in place. It had not thorough checks but random checks. That process has now been changed.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: If the honourable member sits back and listens he will hear the rest of the answer. He was not in the Committee previously, when the statement was given, and he did not hear it on the media; now is his chance to hear it. The Correctional Services Department and the Police Department receive special consideration for a very good reason: in both cases they are departments responsible for the administration of the law, within the law. Correctional Services officers ought to have the same integrity and probity as police officers. If the honourable member disagrees then we will have to agree to disagree. However, I would have thought that that was a fair approach to take. The circumstances under which they perform their duties make those officers different from other officers within the Public Service.

The same checks have also been applied to administrative officers within the department, and the department felt that it was a worthwhile process to undergo. Complaints from correctional officers were received that resulted in the process being undertaken in the first place. The process is almost completed and, when it is over and done with, the department can put it behind itself and be assured that it has correctional officers who are serving in those positions who have undergone the utmost scrutiny—they are people of integrity in our community and that is appropriate.

I have been advised that one media outlet today ran a story which indicated that the Government wished to sack correctional officers for alleged misdemeanour, and that is certainly not the case. As is often the case, many press advisers tape media conferences, and that was done on this occasion. That implication was not given to the media at that time. I have outlined in my statement to the Committee the process that will be undertaken. It could well be that it was that information that was actually conveyed to the honourable member. If that is the case, I can understand the reason for the particular avenue of questioning that he has followed tonight. I can assure the honourable member that that is not the case, and I would be more than happy to sit down with him to explain what has occurred.

Mr FOLEY: That was certainly one of the media reports we were given prior to coming into the Chamber, but I think we have done that issue to death. On page 501 of the Program Estimates, under the heading 'Broad objectives', there is a reference to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. What has been achieved to date and what recommendations are still to be implemented by the Government?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As the honourable member would be aware, my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal

Affairs recently tabled in the House of Assembly the report of the progress to date across all Government agencies in terms of implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission. I am happy to summarise the things that affect the Department for Correctional Services for the benefit of the Committee.

Many Aboriginal communities in South Australia have obviously had input into the way in which the Government is meeting the recommendations of the commission. Since the conclusion of the Royal Commission in mid-1989 there have been six Aboriginal deaths in custody in South Australia, three of these having occurred within correctional institutions. It should be noted that the Coroner acknowledged all three of these Aboriginal deaths as being caused by long-term illness. In each case the deceased were males in their mid-30s, and had suffered chronic health problems for a lengthy period. The department is conducting a review into the imprisonment rate of Aboriginal prisoners, because figures suggest that the rate is still extremely high—sitting at about 18.8 per cent of all known race admissions to the prison.

Aboriginal inmates in the Port Augusta Prison quite often make up over half the number of inmates, which is of considerable concern. The majority of the 339 recommendations of the report have been supported by this Government. The commission made it patently clear that Aboriginal people experience more ill health, more crime in their lives, more poverty and more barriers to educational success than is experienced by the general community. The department has undertaken programs to ensure that the Aboriginal component of its prison population is recognised as having special problems requiring special consideration.

Of particular note is the high number of Aboriginal offenders in prison for failing to pay fines. I am sure the honourable member would agree that a number of legal and structural changes need to be explored to ensure ways of dealing with these issues other than imposing a sentence of imprisonment. Recently, the Attorney-General released a Fine Options paper, which should assist in reducing those numbers. As mentioned, the detention levels for Aboriginal people remain exceedingly high. The trend will be changed only when the disadvantaged and unequal position of Aboriginal people in our society is addressed; the department is working in its endeavours to achieve that.

Also, any new cell accommodation constructed by the department will be constructed in such a way as to meet the recommendations of the commission; particular note of that has been taken in the construction of the Mount Gambier Prison, which is presently being built.

Mr FOLEY: I do not want to ask any more questions. I would like, with the Committee's indulgence, to read a number of questions into *Hansard*. I refer to the last item on page 500 of the Program Estimates.

Why has the workers compensation liability to the sum of \$400 000 not yet been apportioned to the program?

On page 499 of the Program Estimates, under the heading 'Specific targets and objectives', reference is made to the reconfiguration of Yatala Labour Prison: what will the new divisions be named, and what category of prisoners will be accommodated in each of them?

As a result of less staff at Yatala will there be fewer amenities, less surveillance and less lock-up time?

The Audit Commission Report on page 329 specifies a range of outsourcing possibilities: what functions or requirements for goods and services have been or will be contracted

out to private enterprise since the release of the Commission of Audit report?

Will the Minister please specify plans, tendering processes and budget for privatised prison facilities in his answer?

What net savings are expected to be gained from such contracting out? Has each section of the Minister's department been complying with the commitment given on page 30 of the June Financial Statement to market testing to identifying contract-out functions? If so, who is carrying out the market testing, how is it being done and who decides what functions will be outsourced? What funds are specifically earmarked for social justice improvements in our prisons this financial year? How many prisoners are expected to pursue employment, training and educational programs during the current financial year and what is the cost of providing such programs? How much did the provision of counselling, psychological and psychiatric services to prisoners cost in 1993-94; how much are such services expected to cost in 1994-95; and what will be provided in the nature of such services in the current financial year?

In view of the statement on page 48 of the June Financial Statement that the Government had factored into forward budget estimates a significant but controlled program of asset sales, can the Minister detail these assets controlled by his department which may be sold under this program? What are the details of forward estimates for returns from the sale of assets controlled by the Minister's department? Has the department or sections within it changed any accommodation arrangements since June 1994 by taking additional rental space or moving to other premises? If so, what are the details included in the cost?

How many Correctional Services officers are presently on stress leave; what are the reasons cited for the stress suffered by these correctional officers; what measures are in place to counter these problems; and what is the cost of such measures? Which prisons will be expanded this financial year and at what financial cost? Which prisons will be closed this financial year and over the next three financial years? What plans and budgeting are there for new prisons to be built whether by the Government or by private enterprise in this financial year and over the next three financial years?

How many people in the Department for Correctional Services have taken separation packages since the beginning of January 1994; how many of those people have left positions later filled by the appointment of another person; how many positions in the department are vacant as a result of people taking separation packages which must be filled and which are yet to be filled by someone else? What share of this year's savings target of \$170 million reduction in recurrent expenditure was allocated to the Minister's department? What staff cuts or changed work practices will be implemented in order to achieve proposed budget reduc-

tions in the Minister's department? To what extent will staff cuts change work practices or restructuring lead to reduced services to the public in the coming year?

What are the target cuts for the next three years as part of the ongoing program to reduce overall recurrent expenditure by \$300 million over the next four years? What are the staff reduction targets for the next three years in order to achieve proposed budget reductions in the Minister's department? What is the estimated cost of separation packages to be paid over the next three years? What are the classifications of staff who have accepted separation packages since January this year? Have any classifications been denied access to the separation packages scheme? Is there any process in place for identifying which staff would be more suitable than others for separation packages and, if so, what criteria are being used and are relevant unions or staff associations being consulted?

On page 499 of the Program Estimates under the heading 'Specific Targets/Objectives' there is a reference to 'planning for programs for behaviourally disordered prisoners, drug offenders and child sex offenders'. What are these programs, who first proposed these programs, how much is each allocated for such programs, when will each program commence and how will prisoner cooperation in the programs be enforced?

How many motor vehicles in the various different classes of vehicle are maintained by the department? How many of the department's vehicles are subjected to home garaging arrangements and how many carry private numberplates? Have any significant changes been made to the way in which the vehicle fleet is managed since January 1994? If so, what are the details?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The first three questions asked by the honourable member have already been answered through other questions that have been asked during this Estimates Committee process today, as have the questions relating to stress leave measures, expansions and closures, new prisons and TSPs. As to the other questions asked by the honourable member, the department will endeavour to provide answers, and in so doing we acknowledge that some of those questions are general questions that are being asked of all Estimates Committees by the Opposition. In addition, the process of consultation with the PSA has already been outlined and I was pleased earlier to put on the record that this Government consults regularly with the PSA, at least fortnightly through its senior officers, a practice that was not in place under the previous Government.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.1 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 22 September at 11 a.m.