

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 21 June 1995

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Chairman:

Mr H. Becker

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson
Mr C.J. Caudell
Mr M.R. De Laine
Mrs R.K. Geraghty
Ms E.M. Penfold
Mr I.H. Venning

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Transport, \$46 198 000

Witness:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw, Minister for Transport.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Payze, Chief Executive Officer.
Mr T. Delaney, Manager, Finance.
Mr P. Edmonds, General Manager, Ports Corporations.
Mr M. Benenista, Director, Technical Services.
Mr R. Frisby, Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

The CHAIRMAN: I welcome the Minister and her staff. The proceedings are relatively informal. 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 7 July. I propose to allow the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make an opening statement, if desired, of about 10 to 15 minutes. A flexible approach will be applied to giving the call for questions. Each member will be asked to address three questions to the Minister. I will permit supplementary questions to be asked provided they are relevant to the expansion of a particular line of questioning, but I will not permit continual supplementary questions.

Members will also be allowed to make a brief statement, if they wish. Subject to the convenience of the Committee, a member who is outside the Committee and desires to ask a question will be permitted to do so once the line of questioning on an item has been exhausted by the Committee or with the concurrence of both sides. An indication to the Chair in advance from a member outside the Committee who wishes to ask a question is necessary. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure, as revealed in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments (printed paper No. 9). Reference may be made to other documents, including the Program Estimates and the Auditor-General's Report, although I realise that the Auditor-General's Report has not been delivered and that members will have the opportunity later in the parliamentary year to discuss and debate that report when it is brought to Parliament.

Members must identify a page number or program in the relevant financial papers from which their question is derived. I remind the Minister that there is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the Committee, however documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution to the Committee. The insertion of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the House: that is, it must be statistical and limited to one page in length.

I will ask the Minister to introduce advisers prior to the commencement and at any changeover. All questions are to be directed to the Minister and not the Minister's advisers. The Minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. For the benefit of departmental officers a diagram showing facilities available to them is available from the attendants and at the rear of the Chamber. I also advise that for the purpose of the Committee there will be some freedom allowed for television coverage by allowing a short period of filming from the northern gallery. All television stations have been advised by the Speaker of the procedures to be followed, but they must not interfere in the seating arrangements for the other media. I now invite the Minister to detail any agreed program and to make a brief opening statement.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have pleasure in bringing to this Estimates Committee for debate the total budget for the Department of Transport which is \$344.1 million. This budget reflects the significant progress made in implementing the key reforms to transport over the past year and includes functions transferred from TransAdelaide and the Marine and Harbors Agency. During 1994-95 the department carried out a strategic review which identified four key roles:

- leadership in the development of State Government transport policy;
- leadership in the development of integrated transport system planning;
- management of the use of the transport system; and
- management of transport infrastructure.

The strategic review will carry the department towards best practice and is consistent with actions taken in other States for transport. Implementation of the strategic review is well advanced in contracting out provider functions while retaining policy, regulation and project management capacity, plus some operational functions.

The strategic review will see a reduction from 1993-94 employment levels of 2 600 to 1 300 as contracting out proceeds. The current work force number is 2 100. The review is anticipated to provide net financial savings to Government and therefore taxpayers of \$141 million over a 10 year period. These benefits will take the form of improved services, lower user costs and charges, and an improvement in the Government's budgetary position.

The 1995-96 budget provides for roads related State funded expenditure of \$222.4 million. In 1995-96 the Government has directed revenue associated with untied arterial road funds to the department. These road funds are now paid to the State as general purpose payments from the Commonwealth and this year, for the first time since 1993, will be passed on to the department in lieu of special purpose arterial road funds.

The budget reinforces the Government's commitment to seal all unsealed rural arterial roads in incorporated areas over a 10 year period with an allocation in 1995-96 of \$5.5 million. Cycling continues to be a high priority—and I know the member for Spence will applaud this initiative. In 1995-96 funding through the department for cycling initia-

tives will be \$2.5 million, an increase from \$1.2 million in 1994-95.

The budget for 1995-96 allows for the continuation of work on the following projects: Cross Road, between South Road and West Terrace; Main North Road, between Hogarth Road and The Grove Way; Port Road, replacement of the Hindmarsh Bridge; Salisbury Highway—South Road Connector; Sturt Highway, between Daveyston and Penfolds Hill; further work on the Mt Barker freeway toward a major upgrading of that road.

During the forthcoming financial year, the following work will be commenced: Southern Expressway, a major arterial road to the south from Darlington to Old Noarlunga; Tapleys Hill Road, works associated with the Adelaide Airport runway extension; and the South Coast Road on Kangaroo Island, the sealing of the unsealed section. Other major initiatives include: compliance with and active participation in national regulatory reform in driver licensing, heavy vehicle registration and management, and road safety; and establishing the Government's bus and depot leasing business on a commercial basis in support of tendering out public transport services, including a \$4.5 million allocation for a new bus purchase program.

In relation to the major road aspects of its functions, the department has been benchmarked favourably with comparable agencies interstate by the Business Council of Australia on a world's best practice comparison. The decision to bring forward the State budget to this time rather than the traditional time of August will assist the department in spreading contract work over the full financial year which, in turn, will provide efficiencies in the private sector. I look forward to questions from members of the committee.

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

Mr ATKINSON: No. I refer the Minister to Estimates of Receipts and Payments pages 110 and 112. In its 1994-95 budget, the Government estimated that it would spend \$227 000 on recreational boating facilities, but only \$97 000 was spent. If the Government believes there is a need for improved recreational boating facilities, why did it spend less than half its 1994-95 capital payments allocation for recreational boating facilities? If not, why does the Government plan to introduce a levy on small boat owners?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will start with the second part of the question. I think the honourable member was a member of Parliament when the Hon. Barbara Wiese was Minister for Transport. She introduced major legislative reform through the Harbors and Navigation Bill. An important part of that Bill was the initiative to establish a levy.

Mr ATKINSON: I opposed it in Caucus.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member may have opposed it in Caucus, but he did not have the numbers. The Labor Government of the day introduced it and, as I recall, it won unanimous support in both Houses. It was conditional support by the Liberal Party because we indicated that, while we supported a levy, we could not support a levy without Government funding being reinstated for boating facility purposes. The fund was established by the Tonkin Government with a sum of \$500 000. After the Tonkin Government lost the election, that sum of money was progressively reduced in value and was transferred to the portfolio of the then Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing (Mr Kym Mayes), and it disappeared altogether.

The Government has decided to reinstate that fund in the form of \$250 000 this year. It is my intention that it be built up to \$500 000 again. That fund will augment the sums of money raised from a levy. A working party has been established to assess the levy and it has recommended that the levy for recreational boat owners be \$25. I have sought further information in relation to the levy and smaller boats, and certainly boats 10 feet and under would be exempt. An issue is to be resolved in terms of houseboats, whether they be for recreational or for commercial purposes. A recommendation has not been considered by my Party or Cabinet in relation to the fee, but the fee will be introduced this year.

In respect of the recreational boating facilities to which the honourable member referred initially, the shortfall in the expenditure to that which was allocated arises from delays associated with grants to councils for capital works projects. They have been approved, but there has been some delay from the council perspective in the suspending of those funds. Therefore, while they have been approved, they have not been spent pending the work being undertaken by the respective councils.

Mr ATKINSON: Supplementary to that, how much will the recreational boating levy be and how much will it raise in 1995-96?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I cannot confirm how much it will raise until Cabinet has agreed on what the levy will be, but it is recommended to be \$25 per annum for recreational boats of 3.1 metres in length and longer.

Mr ATKINSON: How will the owners of small boats have a say in the use of the funds raised by the levy? In proposing this \$25 levy on boaties has the Government considered the impact on boat clubs and club maintained facilities, particularly country boat clubs? How will country boat clubs have an input into the spending of this money?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As I indicated earlier, a working party has been established, and that comprises representatives of the South Australian Boating Industry Association, the South Australian Recreational Boating Association and the South Australian Fishing Industry Council. It also comprises—

Mr ATKINSON: And the member for Kurna.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: And the member for Kurna. I have always considered it wise to have the wisdom of a politician—of whatever persuasion—on some of these committees.

Mr ATKINSON: Of whatever persuasion.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is just generally a mark of respect for politicians across the board. I believe that there are also two representatives from country councils and two representatives from the metropolitan councils, but I can clarify that. Certainly those representatives have been nominated by the Local Government Association and not by me or by the Government. That committee deliberately is designed to be alert to the interests of boat owners across the State in both the coastal and the Murray River areas, and it has made the recommendation in terms of the levy. It also will be making recommendations to me in terms of the priority for work to be undertaken. At the moment most of the applications have come from River Murray towns and country council areas. As they are received they will be put in a priority order and recommendations will be made to me from that broad-based committee.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister refers to the Boating Facilities Advisory Committee. How were the members of that committee chosen and what expertise does the Chairman

of the committee, the Liberal Party member for Kaurna, have in recreational boating?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I understand that she not only participates in and enjoys boating but also has a seaside electorate. Further, as a former member of the Noarlunga council she was actively involved in discussions about boating facilities some years ago. The other members of the committee have all been nominated by their respective associations, whether it be the Local Government Association or the boating associations to which I referred. I recall that the nominee of the CEO of the Department of Transport, Ms Gurr, is an active member of the Riverland boating community.

Mr ATKINSON: Will the report of the committee of the member for Kaurna, which recommends a \$25 levy on boats, be released for public scrutiny and, if not, why not?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Which report?

Mr ATKINSON: The report of the committee which recommends to you this levy.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It came in a letter. There is no formal report. The recommendation came in about a three paragraph letter.

Mr ATKINSON: May we see it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Of course you can.

Mr ATKINSON: How much does the Government expect to raise from recreational boat registration fees and motor boat operator fees in 1995-96, and will the Minister bear in mind that aged pensioners do not receive a discount on their boat registration as they would on motor vehicle registration, and would she consider a pensioner discount?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is a line relating to regulatory fees and fines under the Boating Act for \$1.287 million estimated this year, which includes fines. I will get a definite answer for the honourable member either later today or certainly by 7 July.

Mr ATKINSON: What about pensioner discounts?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will most definitely consider that.

Mr CAUDELL: In the Minister's opening statement, a brief overview was given of the projected outcome of the department's strategic review. Will the Minister provide more detailed information on the proposed organisation structure and the work force planning?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This major strategic review applies to ports, rail, aviation and roads because we are reforming the transport system in this State. We want to ensure that South Australia is nationally and internationally competitive in this respect. There is no point providing funds for new businesses to come here or providing support for businesses to stay in South Australia if we cannot get our product to domestic and international markets most efficiently.

So, transport has a key role to play in the marketplace. As part of the reform process, the Department of Transport's budget is to be used more effectively in future in the promotion of the Government's economic development and jobs agendas while at the same time enhancing customer service and reducing costs by introducing greater emphasis on outsourcing and competition.

The strategic review which I announced in this place on 21 February committed the department to a significant change in its role and function plus a coordinated reform agenda to improve performance. There is a whole range of areas in which the honourable member may be interested in terms of work traditionally undertaken by the department that has

already been contracted out. That work, which has been completed, relates to routine laboratory testing and pavement assessments; geotechnical testing and pavement assessments; geotechnical drilling and testing; surveying services, including cadastral survey and Land Titles Office searches; metropolitan and rural testing which relates to driver testing for licences; salvage operations; structural design; road and landscape design; payroll services (although that has not been completed in terms of contracting out); all printing services; heavy transport; and stationery stores.

Work is progressing on the following areas: the rider safe program for motor cycles; plant operations training; pavement marking; supply warehousing and direct purchasing; all training programs; basic accounting and bookkeeping; accounts payable; debt management; and worker rehabilitation. It is clear that quite a lot of work has been undertaken with regard to contracting out since February.

We have also outsourced the operation of four ferries. The department is working with the asset management task force on the outsourcing of further functions. It is expected that registrations of interest for outsourcing of the asphalt production plant at Marino will be advertised in the next fortnight. The manufacturing of signs will be outsourced by late August. The department and the task force are currently scoping and preparing documentation for the sale of the department's entire plant fleet and workshops. That will be for later this financial year.

System and legislative changes are being prepared to enable registration and licence transactions to be outsourced to the business sector. Documentation is being prepared for the first two road maintenance contracts. That is interesting because road maintenance is an area over which the department has had a monopoly, although probably not by design. However, the private sector has not been involved in the area before. Therefore, this is a new experience for everybody—both the private sector and the department. The department will be competitive tendering for the work in future.

Documentation is now being prepared for two road maintenance contracts: one in the Mid North and one in the north-west metropolitan area. Tenders are anticipated to be called for those contracts in late July. All road construction, as opposed to road maintenance work, is already subject to open competitive tendering.

As I indicated earlier, we anticipate that implementation of those initiatives will lead to a 50 per cent reduction in the department's work force by December 1996. Equally importantly, it will save plenty of money in the immediate and longer terms. In the immediate term, it has allowed the department to undertake a host of new initiatives, including the sealing of unsealed roads in country areas. Money has also been contributed from that saving source for the Southern Expressway and other positive initiatives.

The CEO has initiated some organisational changes. The executive has undertaken an analysis of functions to be performed in future and has categorised these functions into groups and sections. Also, independent consulting advice has been sought on the most appropriate future structure of the executive and the directorates. These two studies are now being amalgamated with a view to announcing the new directorate and sections structure soon after 30 June. It is expected that there will be quite an extensive reduction in middle management positions arising from these two reviews.

Mr CAUDELL: As a supplementary question, will the department's head office at Walkerville be sold as part of the proposed asset sales program?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This matter has been considered. It is an issue that the Walkerville council and the local member have been keen to push, as I know are local residents, too. Some in Treasury think that the Walkerville land on which the department resides would provide windfall profits for Treasury. Accordingly, the department recently engaged Colliers Jardine to undertake preliminary investigations and to examine options to accommodate the department away from Walkerville and allow for the redevelopment of the site.

The study concluded, however, that despite the amount of attractively priced office accommodation in and around Adelaide, to which the department could move, the Government would be better off if the department remained located at Walkerville for the next six or seven years. Even with incentives or a discounted rental the cost of relocation to another site cannot be justified at this time. The study did make clear that the interest in respect of Walkerville council and the disposal of land along Walkerville Terrace are things that we are prepared to pursue, subject to satisfactory financial arrangements being concluded. So, we can anticipate that Walkerville Terrace will be redeveloped according to council requests in the near future, and developers and local residents can consider development options at that time.

Mr CAUDELL: My question deals with the Southern Expressway and refers to page 40 of the Capital Works Program and page 296 of the Program Estimates. I am sure that the member for Spence, being the shadow spokesperson on transport, will support the Southern Expressway, especially since his former Deputy Leader, the Hon. Don Hopgood, supported the building of the Southern Expressway, which will start in December 1995. When will decisions be made about the connectors at Darlington and Reynella, the form of the road in terms of any climbing lanes at Darlington, the bus priority lanes and facilities for cycling?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: When the Premier made the announcement for the \$112 million Southern Expressway it was apparent that further consultancy work would have to be undertaken in terms of some of the details that the member has outlined. The statement in broad terms was that we would have a two lane reversible road from Darlington via Reynella to Old Noarlunga. Rust PPK has been engaged to do some of the more detailed work. I have received the preliminary report on the connectors. That will be discussed with local councils and, if local members wish, they can also participate—and I suspect they would wish to do so—in assessing some of the details with the department in the very near future. I believe the next study I am to receive from Rust PPK is in terms of the cross-section. That will look at what will be required, that is, a climbing lane up O'Halloran Hill and provision for priority bus lanes and the cycling track. I am absolutely determined, as is the department, that this new expressway be of benefit not only to motorists but to other users such as cyclists, and that it be an important addition in terms of amenity to the area by having a linear park as was established by the former Liberal Tonkin Government, when we built the O-Bahn. We have this fantastic linear park from Tea Tree Gully to the sea. We would like to see a similar one from Old Noarlunga to Darlington, and further to the city, if I am around for long enough.

Mr CAUDELL: The Marion council has expressed a desire for consultation. Will there be ongoing consultation with councils such as Marion in the development at the Darlington end of the proposal and any other connectors that may be looked at?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, most definitely. There has been ongoing consultation for some years, and that has intensified in more recent months. The department does not have all knowledge in these matters. This expenditure of taxpayers' money must be for the benefit of taxpayers generally. It must also be accommodated by the local community and, therefore, the local council, plus the local member will certainly be involved and so will other bodies such as Aboriginal groups.

Mr CAUDELL: I refer to the Program Estimates (page 289), and 'Planning and Coordination of Transport'. The Prime Minister recently announced the funding for the extension of the Adelaide Airport runway. What funding is available from the Federal Government in 1995-96 financial year for this purpose?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: None. There is no Federal funding for the project included in the Federal Government's Government 1995-96 budget. The Commonwealth assumes that the State will cover all expenses next financial year. However, we are having good negotiations with the Federal Minister, Mr Brereton, and his officers, and I would have to say that they are most constructive at this stage. We are seeking to achieve an agreement with the Commonwealth on the runway option and the total funding required. We are also trying to reach a formal agreement between the Commonwealth and the State to confirm the Federal funding commitment and the recovery of the State's \$20 million. At this stage, all the Commonwealth envisages following the Prime Minister's commitment to the runway is that State funds be utilised. So there has been to be some better understanding on that matter than we have at present, and we are working through that constructively.

There must also be a formal agreement to undertake the works with the Federal Airports Corporation, which owns the property. In respect of the runway option and the total funding required, present indications are that an agreement will be reached between the Commonwealth and the State by early July. Also by early July we anticipate reaching a formal agreement confirming the funding commitment from the Commonwealth and the recovery of the State's \$20 million after the leasing process. By the end of July I anticipate that we will reach a formal agreement with the Federal Airports Corporation to undertake the works.

One problem that we face at the moment is the environmental impact statement. It would be logical for the Federal Airports Corporation to undertake this work, but I understand that it is reluctant to do so and that it may fall to the Department of Transport. We are trying to address some issues, because the Federal Airports Act requires a Federal parliamentary inquiry into these works. It may be that we can negotiate our way around having to do some of those things. I see that the member for Peake suggests that that will not be possible, but I might have to work around him as well. He suggests further that that will not be possible, either. Some procedures will have to be negotiated. No Federal money has been granted at the moment. We must undertake the preparation of the environmental impact statement as soon as possible, and when Mr Brereton returns from overseas shortly we anticipate that we will negotiate the proponent to undertake the preparation of that environmental impact statement.

The Government's preferred option is the \$71 million extension of the runway with the taxiway and a tunnel, but it may be that the Federal Government will prefer the cheaper option, which is a road diversion and extension of the runway together with a taxiway. Certainly, the State would be

distressed as would exporters and all airline companies if the Federal Government provided funds sufficient only for a road diversion and extension of the runway but no taxiway—that would be a rotten deal.

Mr CAUDELL: Supplementary to that, the Minister mentioned the possible need for a Federal Government parliamentary inquiry. She would be aware that the South Australian Public Works Committee may be required to review some of the activities if expenditure exceeds \$4 million. Will the Government hope to arrive at a compromise with the Federal Government so that there will be just one inquiry into the proposal by the South Australian Public Works Committee?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think that is a stunning idea, and I thank the honourable member for his suggestion.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Does the Minister agree with the member for Mawson that completion of the Southern Expressway will take a minimum of 15 minutes off a trip from the central business district to McLaren Vale, bearing in mind that in answer to a question from the member for Spence earlier this year she said that the expressway would take four to seven minutes off a trip from the CBD to Reynella?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Reynella and McLaren Vale are situated far apart. It is anticipated that there it would take some four to five minutes to Old Noarlunga and some 15 minutes to McLaren Vale. I think the member for Mawson has underestimated the benefit to his constituents. To visit the region, I would suggest 20 minutes.

Mrs Geraghty: I am not quite sure whether I agree with that.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It depends whether you are driving to the speed limit, going a bit faster or cycling, I suppose. It is forecast that the speed limit should be 100 km/h; it may be 110 km/h. That will make a big difference. In addition to the fact that there will be no traffic lights on this expressway, increased speed and free flowing conditions are very important factors in the time savings.

Mr Caudell interjecting:

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The member for Mitchell asked the member for Torrens whether she supported the Southern Expressway and the member for Spence answered on behalf of both members that the Opposition certainly does, I think without qualification.

Mrs GERAGHTY: What are the total costs of the preparation, production and distribution of issue No. 1 of *Expressway*, the publication circulated by the Government to advertise the Southern Expressway?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was funded by the Department of Transport. I will obtain those figures for the honourable member.

Mrs GERAGHTY: As a supplementary question, who outside the department helped to prepare the publication; did the Minister's political staff or that of the Premier participate in it; and, if so, what was their role?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The department contracted a consultancy firm to help with a whole range of communication strategies in relation to the Southern Expressway. That consultant was responsible for the layout, the photographer, the brochure and the bromide for that publication, as it did with radio station 88FM. That work was done through the consultant.

Mrs GERAGHTY: And your staff?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: My staff were not involved. I remember that I was provided with a draft copy to check about 15 minutes before it went to the printer, and I checked it.

Mrs Geraghty: A short time.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I also think that it was rather a short time—I agree.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Who is the consultant and how many issues of *Expressway* are planned; when will they be produced and how much has been set aside in the budget for publicity of the Southern Expressway?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will provide answers to those detailed questions for the honourable member. The consultant is O'Reilly Consultants.

Mr ATKINSON: Mike O'Reilly?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: He is the principal.

Mr ATKINSON: It's nice to keep it in-house.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I take objection to that remark. The member for Spence made a notoriously underhanded and objectionable comment about keeping this in-house.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This consultancy had nothing to do with the Liberal Party, me or the Premier's office, for which Mr O'Reilly previously worked. As is required by Government generally: in respect of any consultancy over \$20 000, the Government seeks submissions and tenders for that work. That is a very important criterion. In this instance it was not a public tender. Three to five people were asked for expressions of interest to undertake this project. The major public relations firms in Adelaide were all invited to submit their proposals. The decision was not mine: I was informed of the outcome. I did not know whom the department was considering until that had been resolved, and that was a week after the event being confirmed. In fact, I did not even know at that stage that Mr O'Reilly had left the Premier's Department, so I could hardly have been involved.

Mrs GERAGHTY: You said that you will undertake to advise how many issues of *Expressway* are planned.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes.

Mrs GERAGHTY: What was the total cost of establishing and operating Radio Roadside 88FM; who outside the department was involved in establishing Radio Roadside 88FM; what was their part; and did your political staff, or that of the Premier, participate in setting up Radio Roadside 88FM?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That was one of the proposals from the consultant. It was seen as an innovative communications strategy and it was one of the reasons why the consultancy was won by the firm O'Reilly Consulting. I will provide the other information for the honourable member. As I say, that was the consultant's own inspiration. My office did not even know that the department had approached Mr O'Reilly, let alone been involved in any suggestion that this would be a sound communication strategy, which it has proved to be.

Mr CAUDELL: I understand it has topped the rating survey in the area.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It has topped the rating survey—that is great news. Because it is true; it is a communications strategy. What the department has done is, after people have phoned in expressing concerns and interest, including seeking advice about when the jobs will be forthcoming—because there is high unemployment in the south and people want jobs—change the message on the radio signal to answer the queries from the public. For those people

who do not drive and cannot switch into the signal, we have provided the same advice through the newspaper to which the honourable member earlier referred.

Mrs GERAGHTY: It would be interesting to have a look at the transcript of that.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You could ring my office. It is on my office phone. You will not hear it all because we do not keep you waiting long.

Mrs GERAGHTY: As a supplementary. What is the total expenditure on the Southern Expressway publicity to date; and what expenditure has there been on constructing the Southern Expressway?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will supply the figures in terms of the publicity. There have been no preconstruction activities in terms of the consultancies to which I have referred. Rust PPK and Maunsell have been engaged as the project managers, but no construction activity has commenced yet. Certainly, it will have commenced by December this year—I do not care if it is just before midnight on 31 December this year, it will start. Land acquisition proceedings have commenced.

Mrs GERAGHTY: There has been no expenditure?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: On earthworks, no.

Mrs GERAGHTY: And leading up to that?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Preconstruction activities, in the sense that I have mentioned. The consultancy studies, the engagement of the project manager and land acquisition: all those preliminary things are proceeding well.

Mr VENNING: My first question concerns the Blanchetown bridge, Program Estimates, page 296. The media has reported that the Blanchetown bridge has major engineering and structural weaknesses and overloaded semitrailers could cause the bridge to collapse. Many of my constituents are alarmed and I have been drawn to make public comment about it. The Riverland Tourist Association has called for traffic signals to be installed, so confining traffic to one-way operation on the bridge. What is the Minister's assessment of this proposal?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: My assessment is solely dependent on advice I receive from the department and it in turn has received independent confirmation of its findings. The bridge was built in 1964 to design standards at the time. I understand it was the first prestressed concrete bridge ever built in Australia. So, while it was designed to the standards of the time, standards may not have been what they would be today. Anyway, a departmental investigation of the Blanchetown bridge last year concluded that the girders may not be sufficient to withstand a severe—I emphasise severe—overload situation such as two grossly overloaded vehicles positioned in the same span at the same time. The probability of this happening is extremely small and the department—and this is important—has had this statistical calculation confirmed by an independent source. The probability of the bridge collapsing, according to a statistical calculation, is once in around 4 000 years. So, it is a pretty remote possibility.

The transport industry has been kept fully informed of the load restrictions and, in addition, the department has begun an extensive campaign targeted at the trucking industry to enhance its awareness of the risks. This campaign consists of letters to transport companies, brochures to be handed out to heavy vehicle drivers by departmental inspectors on the road and at waste stations, posters for roadhouses, etc. There has also been a media campaign. The local member has also been active, as usual. Monitoring of heavy vehicle traffic has been

stepped up with more Department of Transport traffic inspectors assigned to patrol alternate roadways and approaches to the bridge. I emphasise that the Blanchetown bridge is not in danger of imminent collapse. It is not a threat to public safety. It will safely carry all loads up to the legal limit of 42.5 tonnes.

However, as the bridge is part of the national highway system it is imperative that it can accommodate modern, heavy freight vehicles, and I addressed that earlier in answer to the member for Mitchell. We want to make sure our transport network is efficient in this State. The Blanchetown bridge should be able to accommodate heavy freight vehicles such as B-doubles—it does not at the moment. Maunsell and Hassell have completed some preliminary planning work. Consultation has been completed with the Blanchetown community. Construction will begin next year. It will be completed in 1997, in terms of a replacement bridge. In the meantime, alarm has been spread through the media, big stories in the *Advertiser*, worry expressed by the Riverland Tourist Association, as the honourable member referred, and through local councils. I do not think it is necessary, but I have had discussions with the CEO for the department, Mr Payze. We have come to the conclusion that, in terms of the alarm in the community at this time, we will make sure that the Blanchetown weighbridge is staffed 24 hours a day and that every truck going over the bridge both ways is assessed or weighed.

Trucks will be weighed if there is any suspicion that they are overweight, and that will require three shifts of inspectors. They will be in place soon and, after a trial period of, say, a few months, the effectiveness of that will be assessed. We have to get the message through for truckies to be responsible. We should also get the message through that there is no need for immediate alarm. Such a strategy would be much better than a one-way operation with lights, as proposed by the Riverland Tourist Association, although I understand the basis on which the association, whose President is Mr Hill, has approached that idea.

Mr VENNING: We do need monitoring of the bridge, given its deterioration and after the treatment the issue received on the front page of the *Advertiser*, which raised a lot of fears in the community. Is the condition of the bridge being monitored regularly?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, the bridge has been under constant oversight. Mr Payze, the CEO of the department, is an engineer, and he may like to elaborate.

Mr Payze: The structural sufficiency of the bridge is kept under constant surveillance, as are all our structures. The issue of replacement is more about enabling the bridge to carry the loads of the future rather than in respect of its current structural sufficiency. Because it was built to old design standards, the bridge does not have sufficient strength within the existing structure to carry the loads that a national highway system is expecting.

Mr VENNING: We know that construction of a new bridge is being organised. What is the date of the planned completion of the bridge? Can that date be brought forward?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No. It is expected to be completed in 1997, but I am not sure of the exact month. What I am certain about is that there will be no replacement bridge for the new bridge for a long, long time, so I will not cut corners.

Mr VENNING: The Morgan-Burra Road is referred to in the Capital Works Program (page 38). That paper states that funding for this year will be \$3.432 million. I want to say

how pleased the local residents are about the completion of the road between Spalding and Burra. For so many years, this key area has had the roughest roads in the State, so it is pleasing that we can now drive on a sealed road between Spalding and Burra. All eyes are now on the Burra-Morgan section. I know work is being done there at the moment. Will the Minister give the Committee some detail about the work that is being carried out and about what we can expect in the next 12 months? When can we even dream about the completion of this road?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member can dream about it for a little bit longer! The completion is scheduled for 1999-2000. The honourable member can celebrate on New Year's Eve of the year 2000 about the completed road. Money has been advanced not only because the honourable member told everyone I would ride my bicycle along that road and I did not wish to but also because the department agrees that there is merit in giving some priority to this road. The funding allocation is as follows: 1995-96, \$3.3 million; 1996-97, \$3.1 million; 1997-98 \$3 million; 1998-99, \$3 million; and in the final year, 1999-2000, \$1.3 million. The estimated cost is \$14 million. It is seen as an extraordinarily important road for east-west transport, for freight and tourism in this State. The figures relate to a rural arterial road program to seal all unsealed roads and incorporated areas which I will release in the near future.

Mr VENNING: Will the Minister say what is to happen in the next 12 months, so that we can let constituents know where work will be carried out?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have just approved the department's seeking expressions of interest from consultants up to the value of \$80 000 to do a slope stability analysis, not only around the Burra area but also in a number of other areas of the State. It is not just \$80 000 being spent on this one project. The slope stability analysis is very important, because the road comes down through the hills into Burra. Other design work has been undertaken. There will definitely be road construction activity, but I suspect mainly at the Morgan end because at the Burra end we still have to define the route of the road around some of the older, important, historic houses.

Mr VENNING: My next question relates to the National Road Transport Commission (Estimates of Payments, page 287). I understand that all Transport Ministers previously agreed that all National Road Transport Commission charges could apply across Australia from 1995. Why is not legislation being introduced in South Australia, and when will it be so introduced?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think that the past two Labor Ministers (Hon. Frank Blevins and Hon. Ms Wiese) stated—and this Government has agreed—that South Australia would not proceed with any such uniform national charges for heavy vehicles until we were confident that the New South Wales Government would not, by sleight of hand, agree to such a national charge and then introduce heavy additional imposts on heavy vehicle operators by way of a permit system. No Government around Australia was confident that that would not happen in terms of the permit system while the Liberal/National Coalition Government remained in power. While I did not applaud the election of the Labor Government in New South Wales, I was pleased to note that it has indicated that no such permit system will be introduced and that it will forgo through Treasury about \$40 million in registration fees for heavy vehicles, and that is a very big

concession. Therefore, all States around Australia are proceeding with this legislation. It will not be in place by 1 July, but it will be introduced in this coming session of Parliament and it will be implemented from 1 January.

Further work will be done on other reforms that will be introduced in conjunction with these charges, namely, charges for light vehicle registration, which will be in place by 1 July 1996. The legislation for heavy vehicle charges will require some in-depth assessment by my own Party colleagues and by the Parliament in terms of the concession structure, because some people may not wish to see the loss of primary industry concessions.

Mr VENNING: What impact will the new heavy vehicle registration charges have on farm vehicles, particularly in relation to compulsory third party insurance?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know that this issue has been of importance to the honourable member for some time. The NRTC's proposals for a national registration scheme include the requirement that all vehicles using the road network be registered and covered by third party bodily injury insurance. As I have indicated, the commission's charging regime and other reforms will be implemented in two phases commencing 1 January next year and on 1 July next year for light vehicles.

The category of heavy vehicles includes all vehicles with a manufacturer's gross vehicle mass greater than 4.5 tonnes. It will provide for three, six, nine and 12 month periods of registration for all vehicles in this category—and the honourable member has advocated this for many years. I think he is pleased that the Liberal Government has got in and even that I am a Minister because he is getting what he wants quite often. A 36 month period of registration will be available for those conditionally registered farm vehicles, and for other special purpose vehicles which attract no registration fees an administration fee will be charged.

Premiums for third party insurance on farm vehicles have yet to be determined by the premium's committee, and I commend the efforts of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, Mr Frisby, who has worked diligently in trying to seek a resolution to this matter. Consideration will be given to the limited access of these types of vehicles on public roads. Farm vehicles will be required to display one number plate and a registration label.

The CHAIRMAN: We have had 12 questions and 13 supplementary questions in the first 60 minutes. I remind members that the practice of allowing three questions is based on the practice of the House of Assembly in Committee. There is no provision in the Standing Orders for supplementary questions, but I allow them to enable members to enlarge on specific issues on specific lines. However, if the practice of asking a supplementary question after each question continues I will disallow further supplementary questions.

Mr ATKINSON: I was surprised by the cavalier approach of the member for Custance and the Minister in relation to the Blanchetown bridge. I know that the people in that area are very faithful in supporting the Liberal Party, but I think they deserve better questions and better answers.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: What do you mean by 'cavalier'?

Mr Venning: Yes, explain yourself.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Everyone has their turn.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Oh, he's a ratbag.

Mr ATKINSON: Can the Minister confirm that the tendons or ties holding the Blanchetown bridge together have disintegrated owing to incorrect grouting and that there is

nothing holding the bridge together other than the weight of the concrete stands and beams that form the horizontal part of the bridge? Is the bridge supporting itself by concrete standing on concrete?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I regret that the member has brought such ill-informed advice into this place and deliberately sought to alarm people further in relation to a matter where, as I have indicated, both the department and an independent study have confirmed that the chances of the bridge collapsing, if it were ever to happen, would be once in about a 4 000 year occurrence. It is not going to fall over just because there is a gust of wind: it would be because there were two grossly overladen vehicles positioned on the same span at the same time. Alarm has been generated over this issue and it now has been perpetrated by the honourable member, but for what purpose I am not sure, other than to get his name in the paper. Other than for his campaign in relation to Barton Road, hardly anyone would know that he is shadow Transport Minister.

The CEO for the department, Mr Payze, and I have decided that, notwithstanding all assessment that this effort is not warranted, we will be deploying on a 24-hour basis inspectors at weighbridges for a period of time to ensure that grossly irresponsible and overladen vehicles do not even travel on the bridge, let alone travel at the same time on the same span. It is almost impossible to believe it could happen but the department is being cautious as it should be. Now, it is being particularly sensitive because of ill-informed and scurrilous suggestions about the status of the bridge.

Mr ATKINSON: What regulations prevent the Department of Transport from pulling Adelaide-bound semitrailers across the highway to be weighed? The Minister was replying to an earlier question about the Blanchetown bridge when she said that trucks would be weighed, and one of her advisers interjected that some of them would be assessed rather than weighed. What does being 'assessed' rather than 'weighed' mean? What does the Minister mean when she says that the weighing and assessing will occur for a period of time? Can she assure the committee that the weighing will continue until such time as the Blanchetown bridge is replaced?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Weighing is undertaken on a periodic basis, and that will continue until the replacement of the bridge. It may be increased beyond current effort, certainly for a minimum period of four months, and then we will assess the importance of the lessons that have been learnt by the community. If after four months it is judged that we still need 24-hour weighbridge attendants at Blanchetown, we will continue that effort.

It would be unwise to say that there are such grossly irresponsible people in the community that all the efforts that have been made, including the inflated claims by the honourable member, will not help to get the message through that people should not travel on the bridge with vehicles over 42.5 tonnes. If such behaviour continues and if the department assesses that it is necessary to keep 24 hour inspector presence at that site, we will do so.

Mr ATKINSON: As a supplementary question—and I regret having to ask one—the nub of my question was what regulations prevent the department from pulling Adelaide-bound semitrailers across the highway to be weighed.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is a matter of safety. Mr Payze can address it in more detail if necessary. We have already discussed the fact that some minor road works will be required at the Blanchetown weighbridge site to bring vehicles travelling from the Riverland area or from the

Eastern States into the weighbridge. I understand that there was an incident some time ago at Keith or in the South-East where a truck was encouraged to turn into a weighbridge and that truck was found responsible for causing an accident. The department then had some claim made against it, and we would not proceed with such a practice. Minor road works will be required and these will be undertaken. The department is a responsible agency, and I am a responsible Minister, for that matter.

Mr ATKINSON: In prefacing my third and final question, I point out to the Minister that the source of my information which she characterises as irresponsible and scurrilous is the District Council of Berri. Is there a risk of overladen vehicles snapping the bridge or parting the uprights so that the horizontal portions of the bridge collapse into the Murray River? Does the Minister believe that the chances of two overloaded semitrailers crossing the vulnerable point simultaneously and causing the collapse to be, in the words of her spokesman, 'absolutely minimal'?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have said it three times; perhaps the message cannot get through to the honourable member or perhaps he is just going through his written questions and cannot assess the answers. But it is about a once in 4 000 year possibility. You will not be here, I will not be here and the bridge will still be going. Nevertheless, we will be replacing it in part because of this issue but mainly because 42.5 tonnes, which we now believe must be the legal limit for heavy vehicles, is totally inadequate for B-double movement from the Eastern States to South Australia. It is that sort of movement that we must encourage in terms of economic development of the State and efficient transport of produce and products to market.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 288, and to page 40 of the Capital Works Program, which indicates that work will commence on the South Coast Road on Kangaroo Island. Will the Minister explain how this work is funded and is the project compatible with the Kangaroo Island sustainable development strategy?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The sealing of the South Coast Road to the Flinders Chase National Park boundary is estimated to cost \$11 million to \$12 million. We will be spending \$2 million this year on this important project. This is not a State Government responsibility in general terms because this road is a local government responsibility and I would not want councils generally to consider that the Department of Transport is, in the next financial year, providing \$2 million or will find \$12 million over the next five years, thereby setting a precedent for other council areas to seek such funds. This is a special circumstance relating to the tourism priority to Kangaroo Island. It also relates to the fact that the Government made a decision last year to suspend, and then cease, the services of the *Island Seaway* to Kangaroo Island, thereby saving \$5 million a year in subsidies that is now being used for other transport purposes on Kangaroo Island—purposes which have a much greater benefit for the whole community.

In terms of the sustainable development strategy being prepared by the Department of Transport in association with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Tourism Commission, this road work is seen as the highest priority. In funding this road we are not interested in maintaining it in the longer term. It is a local government road and we anticipate that the council will be responsible, the State Government having taken this affirmative action.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 285. The Government's transport policy statement made a commitment of sealing all unsealed rural arterial roads in incorporated areas by the year 2004. One of these roads is the Elliston-Lock Road. Will the Minister provide details of the strategy to seal this road?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Elliston-Lock road is an issue which the member for Flinders has single-mindedly pursued, and in the process worn me down. In terms of the strategy of the Department of Transport, adopted following the Government's commitment for a 10-year plan for funding of unsealed roads in incorporated areas, the Elliston-Lock Road has been given some priority. It is currently 72 kilometres in length and is unsealed, and I know that it is a big problem for the area because the people of Elliston must get to Lock, which is the administrative and sporting centre. It is important for tourism and for a whole range of purposes. There will be funding of \$.4 million in 1996-97 (I am sorry it is not this year, but it has not been possible) for the sealing of this road. Funding for this road will be like rain to the area after a drought.

Mr VENNING: Fresh air.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: 'Fresh air,' says the member for Custance, and that is so, because I think they thought the world had forgotten them—although not the local member.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is probably right: no member of Parliament has been able to achieve what the member for Flinders has achieved in terms of Government commitment for this road. The estimated cost is \$5.8 million. It will be fully sealed at the end of the 10-year strategy. It will be progressively sealed from 1996-97. Preliminary work, assessments and surveys will be undertaken in the coming financial year.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 287. The road train trial to Lochiel is to end in November 1995. Will an evaluation of this trial be undertaken and what issues need to be resolved for any possible extension of road train operations south of Lochiel to Gillman?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: An evaluation will be undertaken. I anticipate that it will be completed by early to mid-October. I would not agree to future road train operations further south than Lochiel, notwithstanding a positive outcome for the trial, until passing lanes have been built between Lochiel and Port Wakefield. The Government recently released a passing lane or overtaking lane strategy, which the Department of Transport coordinated through its working party. Ten overtaking or passing lanes are proposed at a cost of \$4.8 million, of which the department has sought \$2.2 million under the National Highways Fund this coming financial year.

I note that the dual highway, funded by the Federal Government, from Port Wakefield south to Adelaide is of a consistent standard for not only B-doubles but also A-trains and road trains. It would seem logical that in time this route for A-trains should be right through to Adelaide. This will be of extraordinary benefit to farmers, people in the Far North, on Eyre Peninsula and in the trucking and mining industries; in fact, to everybody involved in haulage. Just to Lochiel the savings this year will be \$3 million. It will be \$7 million a year to transport operators coming through to Adelaide because they do not have to couple and uncouple their vehicles. We anticipated, when this trial began, that there would be 20 per cent fewer heavy vehicle movements on the road, which is proving to be the case. For environmentalists

such as myself it is good to know that we anticipate that fuel consumption, because of the fewer vehicle movements on the road, will save some two million litres of petrol per year.

The Government has received fantastic letters from trucking operators in the electorate of the member for Flinders and from elsewhere. For example, Bunker Transport, which employs 60 individuals and has a \$3 million salary budget, has advised me that it has been able to reduce its costs by \$370 on each of its 40 Adelaide to Lochiel return trips which it undertakes each week. It therefore saves \$60 000 a month and that is just one example of the savings that have arisen from the A-train trial. The savings have been significant.

Mrs PENFOLD: Besides the overtaking lanes, has any action been taken to ensure that road train operators abide by the rules and do not abuse their rights in respect of other road users?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It has been made very clear to road transport operators that they are on notice in terms of the trial. The overtaking lanes are not there. Motorists are being asked to put up with a fair bit, not only through Port Augusta although the new mayor tells me that it is now hardly an issue. Other road transport operators have been very tolerant. With the cooperation of the South Australian Road Transport Association and the traffic police, the trial has progressed well, in part because the Government has been so firm and nasty in terms of its refusal to tolerate speeding and other offences by A-train and other truck operators.

We have a new system which I would like to describe for the public record. For the first offence, a warning letter is sent to the vehicle owner seeking preventive action and advising of a permit cancellation should another offence occur. A vehicle inspection is also required. For a second offence, a letter is sent by my department and me advising the owner that the permit is to be cancelled for one month. It is clear from that we are not going to put up with it. For a third offence, a letter is issued to the owner advising that the permit is to be cancelled for three months. For a fourth offence, the letter is issued to the owner advising that all permits issued to that owner (and that can involve a fleet of trucks) are to be cancelled for 12 months.

Members may be interested to know that we have not simply issued that warning system; we have applied it. Thirty road train operators have received warnings and four permits have been cancelled. I do not mind naming those in this committee because I believe that it is good that they should be named. They are J & A Transport; Active Haulage; Murrim Haulage and Cleveland Freightlines. Those permits have been repealed or revoked for one vehicle only in this instance, all for a three month period. If the trial is to continue, and to continue to win the good faith of the general motoring public, it is very important that heavy vehicle operators abide by the road laws. It is equally important, and I commend the traffic police and the inspectors at the Department of Transport, that they are diligent in observing offences and cracking down on them. They have assisted the South Australian Road Transport Association immeasurably in terms of the success of the trial to date.

Mr De LAINE: Referring to Program Estimates page 286 in respect of road safety, in view of the appalling safety record of the Commercial Road at Port Noarlunga, when does the State Government propose to upgrade that piece of road?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Investigations have now been undertaken into what form of enhancement is required for Commercial Road. I remember visiting the road with the then

candidate (now member) for Kaurna, Lorraine Rosenberg. In the interim, we will be encouraging more road users from the Seaford area to use Commercial Road via Robinson Road to the traffic lights and then get on to the Main South Road. When the Southern Expressway is built, they can then use that road. The assessment is being undertaken from Robinson Road to Port Noarlunga and Saltfleet bridge at the present time. We appreciate that work must be undertaken.

Mr De LAINE: With regard to page 106 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments, in last year's capital works program, it was revealed that the State Liberal Government spent only \$118.4 million on roads, bridges and drainage of the Labor Government's 1993-94 budget allocation of \$127.9 million. That was an under-expenditure of \$9.5 million. In 1994-95, the allocated capital works budget for roads, bridges and drainage was just \$113.5 million of which \$108.8 million will be spent. That is an under-expenditure of \$4.7 million. This year's allocation for roads, bridges and drainage is \$130.7 million, a cut of \$3.2 million in real terms compared with the 1993-94 allocation. Why has the election promise not been fulfilled to increase by \$10 million a year (indexed) the level of funds allocated each year for road construction purposes?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As I indicated to the honourable member, we have allocated untied road funds from the Federal Government to road purposes. I outlined that in the opening statement. We have also made savings within the department greater than I anticipated was possible when writing the policy document for the Liberal Party. Therefore, we have been able to make the savings required internally to meet our capital works program. Therefore, we have not had to add the additional funds that we had anticipated through the fuel franchise fees prior to the election.

That is a credit to the department and the CEO, Maurice Benenista, who has been very diligent in the strategic review, and to the unions, which I and others meet regularly, for adopting a very constructive approach to the internal changes within the department. Savings have been found which have more than matched the commitments that we wish to make to road construction and maintenance purposes. Therefore, the additional money in terms of that policy commitment has not been necessary at this time.

Mr De LAINE: Will the Minister give an assurance that the 1995-96 capital works budget will not be underspent?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I would love to say yes, but I also want more rain for South Australia and for farmers generally. Whenever it rains, the department and contractors have difficulty completing their commitments. The rain delays work. The former Government had that trouble in terms of implementing the Black Spots program. I asked the honourable member very similar questions at the time and I received about the same answer that I am giving him now.

Mr CAUDELL: I refer to the SteamRanger and page 289 of the Program Estimates. Is the Department of Transport cooperating to assist SteamRanger to commence the operation of a train service from Mount Barker to Victor Harbor by early November 1995?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: SteamRanger has been a bit like the Hindmarsh Island bridge: it never seems to go away. The Government found, through the sale of land at Dry Creek, \$625 000 or \$650 000 for SteamRanger, money which I remain of the view should never have been required from State sources. However, the Federal Government, after the One Nation package and the standardisation of the line, came through with no funding for the relocation of SteamRanger.

So, \$625 000 from State sources and \$250 000 from Federal sources was spent on an intermodal Adelaide project, funds which the Federal Government had agreed to assign to this project. It is anticipated that the station and car park upgrade will be completed by October 1995. Track work external to the proposed depot building and the turntable are expected to be completed by August 1995. The construction of this track work and turntable will enable SteamRanger to operate services as anticipated from Mount Barker to Victor Harbor by early November 1995.

SteamRanger has been to see me several times telling me how vile I am because I will not give them everything they want, like \$2.1 million. They also told me that they were going to have a public relations campaign and said that I was going to be threatened by that and that they would say over the public radio that the State was not providing everything it should and that they would go to the public. I understand that the public responded to the order of about \$17 000—a long way to go.

Mr CAUDELL: Concerning the evaluation of the authorised and accredited driving instructor scheme (Program Estimates page 286), the Specific Targets/Objectives states that an evaluation of the novice driver training and licensing system in South Australia will be undertaken. What are the critical issues involved in the evaluation process?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The evaluation of this auditing process has been undertaken by Coopers and Lybrand. This scheme, which was introduced by the former Labor Government, was the first competency-based training in Australia. It is something the Liberal Party supported at the time, and in Government is something we still support. However, it is important that this assessment be made. The Coopers and Lybrand review found that the monitoring processes are a key to the success of the authorised and accredited driver instructor scheme and its credibility, especially with the scheme's users and stakeholders, notably novice drivers and driver instructors. It also found that the existing monitoring processes tended to be subjective (which is a bit of a worry) on the part of driver development officers and that it was data driven without sufficient regard to the definition and achievement of objectives. This, as I say, is a concern.

Therefore the objectives of the monitoring process have now been defined as the achievement of, first, a focused cost-effective audit and quality assurance process; secondly, improved standards and competency of instructors (there will be more training in this regard); thirdly, ongoing development of the driver development scheme; and, fourthly, the minimisation of risk of fraud and impropriety in the conduct of the scheme. Thirteen specific remedial recommendations have been acted upon as a result of this review. They range from the establishment of performance indicators, the establishment, quality and accuracy of management information, an increase in auditing of competency-based training, an improvement in the security and control of data held and used by the scheme, the development of a policy on remedial action against instructors who abuse the system (in the past, people who are not competent to get their licence and be on the roads) and also the means of establishing greater transparency of accountability by testing instructors and recording details of tests.

These remedial measures will be set in place this forthcoming financial year—the earlier the better, in my view. A scheme to evaluate the impact of improving driver performance has been developed by Mr Alan Drummond, a research-

er with extensive knowledge of young driver skills, and his work has been supported by Austroads. The department is supporting this Austroads project to a sum of \$50 000. It is a national Austroads project, because on a national basis it is interested in what South Australia is doing. I give credit to the introduction of this competency-based training by the former Government: we just have to get it right.

Mr CAUDELL: In relation to bicycle initiatives, the Government's November 1993 transport and cycling policy statements made a commitment to increase public awareness of cycling and funding for cycling initiatives. Can you inform me of the progress in regard to cycling? What funds are being made available for the 1995-96 financial year?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Bike South has been formed in the Department of Transport to coordinate the implementation of the cycling tracks in South Australia. A manager has been appointed and I think possibly five positions have been called. This is all part of the Government's aim to double cycling use by the turn of the century. Howard Holmes and Associates has been engaged to develop the strategy, and a draft will be available in August 1995.

In relation to current cycling initiatives, city to the sea, the west side stage 2 bikeway has been completed to the Brighton Road-Jetty Road intersection. In terms of country routes, the Mawson and Riesling trails—the Riesling trail being at Clare—continue to receive State Bicycle Committee funding assistance and should soon be completed and will be maintained. In the Adelaide CBD, the State Bicycle Committee subsidised the Adelaide City Council's draft strategic bicycle plan, and that has been released for comment and will soon be finalised. Bike and Ride provides for the location and management of bicycle lockers at railway stations and I hope soon at other transport interchanges such as the O-Bahn. This has been finalised in association with TransAdelaide.

A metropolitan network of bicycle routes is being identified by Dorreston and Co. With regard to the foreshore bikeway, which I am really keen to see, B.C. Tonkin has been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study on a recreational route from Outer Harbor to Marino and has also been engaged in relation to the final design of the Mitcham arterial bikeway which utilises Duthy Street.

Funding initiatives for cycling, as I mentioned in the overview statement, have increased from \$1.2 million this financial year to \$2.5 million in 1995-96. I commend not only the Department of Transport but Mr Payze, who has not been a cycling enthusiast until the past 18 months. He has been good at accommodating my whims. I might yet get him on a bike; but whether or not I can get him into a helmet is another matter, but as he has to wear one he might not get on a bike. He has been really great, as have other officers and engineers within the department.

The volunteers in the Bicycle Institute of South Australia and Cycling SA have been stunning in terms of their ideas, which we are now able and keen to implement. The safe compound that they provided at WOMAD was a tremendous success, and we are keen to see provided at the Adelaide Festival Fringe and a whole range of other events safe compounds for cycles. Bike racks on buses will be introduced this year on a trial basis, with the support of TransAdelaide, and we will be starting a safe cycling to schools pilot project, too. So, things are all go in terms of cycling.

Mr ATKINSON: The Liberal Party's passenger transport strategy, released in January 1993, says a Liberal Government will 'let contracts to provide secure parking for both cars and bicycles at railway stations and interchanges'. After two years

of a Liberal Government, what has the Minister done to fulfil that promise?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As I have just informed members under the cycling strategy, safe lock-up compounds have been provided at railway stations, and I want to see them provided at interchanges.

Mr ATKINSON: Which ones?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is the 1995-96 financial year. That is the agenda. We have had this increase in funding. That is one of the priorities; I just outlined that. I will get the plan to the honourable member. I am pleased he is so interested.

Mr ATKINSON: As a train traveller and a bike rider, I would like to know which railway stations will get these lock-ups this financial year? Have any got them yet, because if they have I have not noticed them?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think they are at Brighton, but I will get that further advice. It was because of the lack of such facilities that the Liberal Party made this undertaking, and we have found funds for them next financial year.

Mr ATKINSON: How much money is the State Government prepared to contribute to the standardisation of the Wolseley to Mount Gambier line?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That matter will be considered by Cabinet shortly in relation to not only funding options but all options.

Mr ATKINSON: Those of us who were here last year will recall that the Minister used the Estimates Committees to announce the end of the *Island Seaway* service to Kangaroo Island as of 1 April. The Minister also announced that Kangaroo Island Sealink would be subject to price control through the Prices Commission and the Prices Act. Kangaroo Island Sealink proposed to build a new larger vessel, probably at Port Adelaide. The \$5 million annual subsidy to the *Island Seaway* would be redistributed to seal 58 kilometres of the South Coast road at a cost of \$10 million to \$12 million beginning in 1995; freight subsidy of \$600 000 reducing to zero would be provided over a 10 year period through Sealink; and \$6.5 million over five years would be spent to upgrade roads between Adelaide, Cape Jervis, Penneshaw and Kingscote. What determinations have been made by the Prices Commission in relation to Sealink charges? Do these include passenger fares and private motor vehicle charges and, if not, why not?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They include both, and the Prices Commissioner has determined that it be no greater than CPI. That has been signed off by Sealink, the CEO of the department and me. Every other promise I have made I have delivered, including the \$600 000 for the subsidy, the \$2 million this financial year towards the \$12 million ceiling of the South Coast road, \$400 000, as I recall, for the \$6.5 million work on the road to Cape Jervis. The only thing I have not been able to deliver on is the second Sealink vessel. That is not my decision; it is one that the Sealink company and its investors will make.

Mr ATKINSON: The capital works program (page 40) indicates that \$2 million will be spent on the South Coast road on Kangaroo Island and \$400 000 on the Cape Jervis road in 1995-96. With the \$600 000 Sealink subsidy, this means that just \$3 million of the \$5 million saved from the *Island Seaway* will be spent as promised in 1995-96. Why has the Government failed to deliver on this promise?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We never said that we would put up the total subsidy. The expenditure that we have allocated is a much better expenditure in terms of taxpayers'

commitments to the island in transport terms. Savings have also been made. There have also been costs in terms of the sale of the *Island Seaway*, and they have been met with the shortfall that the honourable member has highlighted.

Mr VENNING: In relation to bulk handling of grain belts and gantries, I refer to Estimates of Payments (page 122). Members of the grain industry in South Australia want the Government to enter an executive arrangement to sell the bulk loading plant to the SACBH. Will this be possible, and when is it proposed that any sale will be concluded?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It will not be possible that SACBH has exclusive rights to negotiate a special deal with the Government. Any sale of Government assets requires that the Government get the best value. But there is a representative of the President of the Farmers' Federation on the task force project team. We will not agree to any sale unless there are economic development benefits for the State, and that would probably give SACBH a pretty good chance of winning it, but it will not be given exclusive rights to negotiate with the Government. The Ports Corporation General Manager, Mr Edmonds, may wish to add more.

Mr Edmonds: The timing is actually controlled by the Asset Management Task Force. The tentative schedule is for the sale to be completed in September or October this year.

Mr VENNING: Will the Ports Corporation reach its target of 100 000 TEUs through the port of Adelaide by December 1997?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Mr Edmonds can clarify this, but my latest advice is that there were 58 TEUs two years ago, or 20 equivalent units, through the container port of Adelaide. Now up to 75 000 or 80 000 TEUs are projected for this calendar year, which is our 1996 target. So, we are well ahead on the target. If Track Australia goes ahead—and the Federal Government seems keen for that to happen—and there are also third party rights to rail services in Australia, then we would anticipate the 100 000 target could be achieved in 1996—not even at that late a date. They have had a fantastic year since the Ports Corporation was established.

Mr Edmonds: Yes, we are confident that we will hit the 100 000 TEUs by the end of 1997. With the advent of Intermodal, we have some anticipation of exceeding that significantly, and the advent of Track Australia and a more positive response from National Rail on the provision of rail services in recent weeks gives us more confidence.

Mr VENNING: What progress has been made in the area of recreational jetties and the transfer of jetties and the responsibilities to local government?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will take that question on notice.

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

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

Passenger Transport Board, \$125 843 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr A. Gargett, Chief Executive.

Mr J. Damin, Director, Funding.

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

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Passenger Transport Board was established on 1 July 1994. Over the past year, it has excelled in the demanding task of establishing a new organisation and implementing the three tasks that I identified for the committee last year as being the board's priorities for its first year of operation. In respect of accreditation and licensing:

1. All 14 500 existing drivers and 2 100 existing operators have been issued with automatic accreditation.

2. The Motor Registration Division of the Department of Transport has been commissioned to issue and renew accreditations, and all necessary systems are now in place.

3. All new drivers and operators are now subject to full accreditation requirements, and existing drivers and operators will also be when their initial accreditations come up for renewal.

4. In the first stage of a new five year taxi licence strategy, 15 new taxi licences are being issued following a call for tenders.

In respect of service contracting:

1. Contracting methods have been developed following consultation with the industry.

2. The following TransAdelaide assets have been transferred to third parties in order to ensure that all future operators have equal access to State assets: the Crouzet system to the Passenger Transport Board and the buses, most depots, the Adelaide O'Bahn track and the Regency Park workshop to the Department of Transport.

3. Tenders were sought in early March 1995 for bus services in the outer northern and outer southern metropolitan areas amounting to approximately 20 per cent of the existing bus services, for which 11 companies purchased the tender documents. When tenders closed on 29 March 1995, five tenders had been received for the outer northern services and five for the outer southern services.

In respect of establishing the board:

1. The Chief Executive Officer, Mr Gargett, was appointed in September 1994, following which an organisation of approximately 60 staff based on extensive outsourcing was approved by the board.

2. An administrative unit, the Office of the Passenger Transport Board, was created under the GME Act in February 1995.

3. The seven senior management positions have been called and filled; other positions have been called.

4. Support services have been commissioned from the Department of Transport and other providers.

5. Internal management systems and procedures have been established.

6. The integrated ticketing system has been transferred to board management.

7. A tender evaluation committee has been established comprising equal numbers of board staff and independent external experts.

These are major achievements by any yardstick. However, the board has much more that it needs and wishes to do to implement the Government's passenger transport reforms. During 1995-96 it will:

- introduce new arrangements for the accreditation of volunteer drivers;
- introduce new methods, based on quality management principles, for monitoring and ensuring service standards;

- let the first major service contracts, which will commence in January 1996;
- call the next two rounds of tenders in September 1995 and March 1996;
- define new arrangements to replace the previous system of country route licences (as required under the Passenger Transport Act).

The proposed allocation to the Passenger Transport Board in 1995-96 is \$124.943 million. In addition, the board will receive \$77.855 million, which consists mainly of fare revenue for the metropolitan system, accreditation and licensing revenue and concession payments from other budget areas. The board's estimated total recurrent expenditure in 1995-96 is \$204.611 million. Of this sum, almost \$185 million or 90 per cent is payments for metropolitan passenger services. Initially at least, almost all this sum will be paid to TransAdelaide. In future, this will take the form of service contract payments. The remaining 10 per cent of expenditure will fund the board's accreditation and administrative support services as well as country town bus services and the Transport Subsidy Scheme.

An additional \$450 000 will be provided this year on a trial basis to introduce improved services for people with disabilities. This arises from the State's obligations under the Commonwealth's Disability Discrimination Act. For the first time, the board will have a capital allocation in 1995-96. This is a modest \$1.13 million for ticketing equipment and \$500 000 for some modifications needed for wheelchair access to the system. Comparisons between current year estimates and previous years are complicated by changes to allocations in 1995-96 arising from the reorganisation of the former State Transport Authority's functions between TransAdelaide, the Passenger Transport Board and the Department of Transport.

The principal effects of these changes ensure that the cost of providing regular metropolitan passenger services is clearly identified as \$184.487 million in 1995-96 instead of \$204.783 million in this financial year. The changes are made up of: savings of \$8.8 million, asset transfer adjustments of \$11.07 million; adjustments for the commercial pricing of buses, depots, ticketing and workshops of \$5.14 million; and input cost disabilities of \$14.62 million, which will be phased out over two years. So, it would be fair to say that the past year for the Passenger Transport Board, me and anyone else associated with all these activities has been demanding but very rewarding. I anticipate that there will be very little change in this respect in the forthcoming financial year.

Mr ATKINSON: On budget day, the Brown Liberal Government announced increased bus, train and tram fares for the second time in less than six months. On 5 February, multi-trip zone tickets rose from \$14.60 to \$15 (an increase of 2.7 per cent). On 23 July, the cost of these tickets will rise to \$16 (a further increase of 6.7 per cent). The Minister also announced that the 44 per cent discount on multi-trip tickets will be progressively reduced to 30 per cent, meaning an increase to at least \$18.90. This will mean an increase of 29.5 per cent since February this year and will cost regular travellers up to \$224 per year extra. When the two year freeze on single trip tickets ends, the price of a multi-trip could rise further if the 30 per cent discount target is maintained.

The Program Estimates indicate that annual public transport patronage in Adelaide will fall from 49.1 million in 1992-93 to an estimated 44 million in 1995-96, a fall of 5.1 million or 10.4 per cent in the first three years of the Brown Liberal Government. Patronage is expected to fall by

4.6 per cent in 1995-96 as a result of the Brown Liberal Government's decision to increase fares. At this rate of passenger loss, no-one will use public transport in 26 years' time. Could the Minister inform the Committee what the timetable is for the introduction of the further public transport fare rises which will follow the reduction in the discount on multi-trip fares from 44 per cent to 30 per cent?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Mr Chairman, I suspect that I am not just confined to the question and that I can respond to a number of matters in the member for Spence's—

Mr ATKINSON: No, just answer the question.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: He only wants me to answer the question, and for good reason, but I understand I can speak to the statement that was made as well. In respect of patronage, we came into government facing a situation where, over the previous 10 years of Labor, patronage had fallen by 33.3 million passenger journeys. It is not easy to turn around a situation of plummeting falls in passenger numbers. So, it should not be a surprise to anybody, although it remains a disappointment to all involved in passenger transport, including myself, that overnight I could not click my fingers, nod my head, or wave a magic wand and 10 years of Labor would be reversed in a wink of an eye. That is not the reality of the world. It is certainly not the reality of circumstances, whether it involve retail shopping trade or airline patronage. When things are going badly it takes a while to turn them around and win passenger confidence again and certainly to generate repeat business.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The honourable member mentions that we could have frozen fares. I will get onto that in a moment. I add specifically that we did. In the first 12 months of being in government there was no increase in fares. From the last increase in August 1993 to February 1995—and for all but three months of that period the Liberal Government was in office—there was no fare increase. As public transport users will recall, that was the longest period with no increase. In fact, through some years of Labor we had three increases and adjustments within the one year. So, in respect of the member for Spence, I would be a little cautious about being too holier than thou on this subject.

It is interesting to note, in terms of the analysis of the passenger fall and forecasts, that the 4.5 per cent to which the honourable member refers comprises 3.7 per cent which we have suffered as a result of a decision by another Minister, but collectively, in terms of Cabinet solidarity, by Government regarding the schoolcard. When that was removed we saw a 3.7 per cent drop in transport use. If you take that away the drop has been .8, which, while not fantastic over almost a two year period, is a reversal of the steep declines that have been experienced in the past. So, it is heartening news for transport planners, as I have been advised.

In terms of the fare strategy, it was very important in my view—and I was pleased that this view was shared by the office of the Passenger Transport Board and the board itself—that we should start to develop a coherent rational approach to this whole issue of fares. Over recent times we have had some scatterbrained schemes and some random approaches which have helped to undermine the confidence of public transport users. We are entering a whole new system for the delivery of public transport services. In future, our contracts will have an incentive for operators to go out and win business. They will be rewarded on the number of people who travel on that system. They will therefore be

encouraged to adopt, plan and implement new services, and this is exactly what passengers want. But, if they are to plan and adopt new services, they should have some sound base on which to develop those services, confident in the knowledge of what the Government will do in terms of transport fares in future. That is why we have developed this strategy.

We also wanted to make sure that the member for Spence, and others, did not continue to frighten the public by suggesting that distance fares would be reintroduced. He is not above scaring people for his own ends, but without little thought for the consequences. Therefore, it was important for the public to know that distance fares will not be introduced—and I repeat that—under this fare strategy: we will be keeping the flat fare structure. However, we will be addressing a number of other anomalies in the system. First, in terms of the discount, which is 44 per cent for the all-times multi-trip ticket and by far the most generous in Australia, it will be progressively reduced to 30 per cent, as the honourable member has noted. As part of that strategy it will increase by \$1 from 23 July. There will be, as I understand it—it is not my decision; it is Passenger Transport's decision under the Act, which we all passed that the board makes—

Mr ATKINSON: A Government Bill.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A Government Bill and supported unanimously after a conference in—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, after a conference. That is part of the parliamentary procedure. There is nothing odd with that. I recall the contribution of the member for Spence on the Passenger Transport Bill—it lasted about five seconds and two sentences. It was not an honourable effort.

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is a point of order, Minister. What is the point of order?

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister seems to be purporting to reveal the contents of a joint conference of the two Houses.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, I am referring—

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mr ATKINSON: The point of order is that it is contrary to Standing Orders to reveal the proceedings of a joint conference of managers of the two Houses.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Mr Chairman, I was referring to his second reading speech which I said lasted about two seconds and two paragraphs.

The CHAIRMAN: That is what I thought. There is no point of order.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister has the floor. Every member will have a turn to make a statement and ask questions. You can either behave yourselves or we will terminate the session.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, I do not wish to terminate the session because there is a lot of good news to broadcast. I indicate that in the Passenger Transport Act, passed unanimously by this Parliament after conference, there is a specific provision that not I but the board sets fares. It will be the board's recommendation in terms of reducing the discount on multi-trip tickets. But certainly I will ask the board, on behalf of the honourable member, if there is advice that it can provide this Parliament at this time. As part of this strategy, it is worth knowing that there will be no increase in the price of student concession tickets. It is important to know, too, that, while some statistics can look a bit alarming, the reality is that the discount on the regular all-time multitrip ticket has been reduced from 44 to 41 per cent—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The discount is being reduced. That will lead to an increase in fares.

Mr ATKINSON: It is not an increase?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I do not know where the honourable member is confused. We are reducing the discount, which leads to an increase in the fare. There is no hiding that fact. The increase in the ticket by \$1 to \$16 is 10¢ per journey. For the concession all-time multitrip ticket, the rise in price is 50¢ from \$7.50 to \$8, which is 5¢ per journey. For the regular interpeak multitrip ticket, the rise in price will be 40¢, from \$9.60 to \$10, which is 4¢ per journey. The concession multitrip interpeak ticket will rise by 20¢ from \$4.80 to \$5, which is 2¢ per journey. As I indicated, student fares will not change, single trip concessions will not change and there will be no change in the price of single trip tickets. It is in this area where we have seen the strongest fall in passenger transport journeys over recent times, and we are keen to see growth in that area.

Mr ATKINSON: I am reluctant to ask a supplementary after such an extensive reply, but I shall, anyway.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I was responding to the honourable member's extensive explanation.

Mr ATKINSON: What is the estimated loss of patronage caused by the fare increases that flow from the reduction of discounts for multitrip fares? The Minister will have received a briefing from the PTB.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: 0.7 per cent.

Mr ATKINSON: Was a family impact statement prepared on these fare increases promised in the Liberal Party policy? Did Cabinet seriously consider the impact on families arising from these increases?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A thorough family impact statement was attached to the Cabinet submission. Cabinet considered it and recognised that there was no change to student fares, to single trip concession fares and to single trip tickets over a three year period. Cabinet noted that there was a change to the discount for multitrip tickets, and it noted that, in terms of families, this discount is the most generous in Australia. If we reduce the discount to 30 per cent, it remains the most generous in Australia.

Mr ATKINSON: In her budget press statement, the Minister announced that the eligibility criteria and benefits from the transport subsidy scheme are being reviewed. Why is this review being held, who is conducting it, what are the terms of reference, and will the Minister rule out any reduction in benefits to seniors and the disadvantaged as a result of the review?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I was distracted, and did not hear all the honourable member's questions.

Mr ATKINSON: Why is the review being held, who is conducting it, what are its terms of reference, and will the Minister be able to rule out any reduction in benefits to seniors and the disadvantaged arising from the review?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is being held because it was considered timely. The scheme has been in existence since 1987. It has enjoyed enormous growth since that time—15 per cent per annum. We are providing another \$500 000 this coming financial year to address that growth factor, but we believe that, with additional demands through the natural ageing of the population, it is time we looked generally at all the criteria of eligibility for the scheme. We also considered issues that people in wheelchairs, particularly those who are employed, asked us to address. They do not find that the current rigid system of 60 vouchers for six months fits their

lifestyle at all. They consider that they are heavily disadvantaged compared with other people in the work force, not only because of their physical disadvantage but because of the way in which the scheme is structured. It is for those various reasons that we have decided that the scheme will be reviewed. I understand that the report in draft form, if not in final form, has already been presented to the board, and it is to come to me shortly. The review has been undertaken by Dr Ian Radbone, a consultant from the University of South Australia, who was used extensively by the former Government for work in the taxi area. We have also seen fit to use his services because of his experience and, some would say, his compassion.

Mr ATKINSON: I point out to the Minister that I now have the *Hansard* for Wednesday 20 April 1994, which contains the debate in the House of Assembly on the Passenger Transport Bill. My speech to that Bill runs to two full pages of *Hansard* and is longer than that of any Government member on that Bill.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am sorry, I just expected much more and perhaps I remember it as being light on.

Mr ATKINSON: Why were the details of the public transport fare increases, which were announced in a separate press release on budget day, not included in any of the budget papers or in the Minister's budget press release?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Because, as I indicated, they have to be endorsed by the Passenger Transport Board, and that board had a regular meeting that same day. I did not know whether the board would approve the work prepared by its officers and considered by others, but that is what is required under the Act. Increases are recommended by the PTB. The board was meeting that day and I did not see that it was appropriate to presume until the board had considered.

Mr ATKINSON: Who initiated these fare increases, the Brown Liberal Government or the PTB?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I understand it was the board. No, I asked for a passenger transport strategy in general discussion with the board, and the office of the Passenger Transport Board prepared the work. It was considered by the board, by me and by Cabinet. It had to be considered by the board. That is the way it works. The board was meeting that day. There is nothing funny about it.

Mr ATKINSON: It just happened to come in about three hours after the budget was delivered?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, the board was meeting that day. I did not orchestrate a regular board meeting. That is as it happened.

Mr CAUDELL: My question deals with competitive tender contracts for the bus service operations (Program Estimates, page 309, 'Passenger transport development'). How quickly and in what sequence does the Government intend to let metropolitan bus service contracts? I remind the Minister that the seat of Mitchell could do with some east-west transport, and I understand that a number of operators are looking forward to being involved in the tender process.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As I indicated in my opening remarks, the two areas already put out to tender—the outer north and the outer south—attracted the initial interest of 11 operators who sought the tender documents. In the end, there were five submitted tenders in the outer north and four in the outer south. The schedule from here on end is as follows: the outer north-east which will consist of 85 buses and the tendering date will be September 1995; in relation to some transit link services, 3TL5 and service 560, there will be 25 buses and the date will also be September 1995. Those

services are interesting because they cannot be packaged into neat areas for servicing because they go across the metropolitan area. Therefore we consider that they can be tendered as a cross-suburban link service. It also provides a smaller parcel of buses in the contract package, and that may be of interest to operators which have traditionally operated in South Australia and which tend to be smaller operators.

The third tender call will be for the inner north, which will have 52 buses and the inner south, which will have 76 buses. The tender date for both of those will be March 1996. Proposed after that will be the fourth tender call, and that will relate to the east, which will have 66 buses; the north-west, 75 buses; the Le Fevre Peninsula, 10 buses, the south-west, 73 buses; the Circle Line, 18 buses; and the Port/Marino area, 10 buses. The tender dates for those will be September, 1996. Then we are looking at a renewal in terms of the outer north and outer south areas.

The timetable has been set by a number of factors, one of which is a provision in the Act as a result of an amendment moved by the Hon. Barbara Wiese, which I was happy to accept, because it was in line with statements I had been making at the time that we did not want huge operators to come in and just take over the Adelaide metropolitan bus system. We had seen that happen in Victoria and I thought it was detestable and that passengers' interests were not being given the highest priority. Therefore, we have a limit of 100 buses in any package.

That will cause us a bit of trouble, on reflection, because, although I have seen none of the tenders submitted, I understand from earlier discussions with a number of operators that, for instance, where there are 78 buses in the outer north they may want to operate 25 mini-buses as well, but that would put the number over 100, which is the limit provided for in the Act. So we may have to exercise some judgment in terms of the ministerial exemptions provided in the Act because, although I would not intend that that provision ever be abused, it may have to be used to provide some flexibility to encourage innovation in service delivery.

The other restriction in the Act is the March 1997 deadline. That highlights the fact that, until March 1997, TransAdelaide must be given the opportunity to cover at least 50 per cent of services measured in terms of total journeys carried out by the then State Transport Authority in 1993. Contracts may be on an area basis; that is, as a franchise, a route service or a mixture of these. The location and availability of depots will be taken into account in terms of these contracts. The services in the outer suburban areas generally operate fairly independently of services in other areas and therefore have been easier to separate into parcels in contracting in these initial stages. It is a very exciting future for public transport, looking at the number of contractors—including to TransAdelaide—that have submitted tenders at this stage.

Mr CAUDELL: I have a supplementary question.

The CHAIRMAN: The last member asked several supplementary questions and we will never get anywhere if it continues. I might have to go back to allowing only three questions per member. I will allow a supplementary question on this occasion but I ask that in future members be more careful in asking their questions.

Mr CAUDELL: I mentioned two things: first, I asked about services in the southern area around Marion, and I assume that tenders will be called in March 1996. Also, in relation to recent articles in the press which drew attention to the prospects of large multinational companies controlling

large parts of the State's education and health services, I take it from the answer that the Minister just gave that that will not occur with the tendering out of bus contracts in Adelaide?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is so in terms of that assurance. I have heard from a number of people that they are generally worried about South Australian assets being sold off to foreign ownership or that services, such as health, education and public transport, will be taken over by companies either interstate or overseas that have no real commitment to the State. I can assure the honourable member that the contracts to be signed by the Passenger Transport Board require very strict service standards. This is not a deregulation system as in New Zealand or the United Kingdom. In South Australia contractors will be given exclusive right to their service area and will have to abide by minimum conditions. The smaller nature of the contract sizes will discourage any large takeover from interstate operators, if it is feared that the whole system will be taken over. I can also indicate that considerable effort has been made by TransAdelaide—which matter we might explore later in Committee—to win this work, and that is South Australian owned and operated.

The evaluation panel was carefully selected. It is headed by Mr Tom Sheridan, a former Auditor-General for South Australia, and it has an equal number of staff from the Passenger Transport Board and from the community. Its criteria in terms of assessing these tenders is not just price. So if some operator from outside was interested in just giving a rock bottom price, we would not be interested, because it must meet service provisions stipulated in the contract. It is stated quite clearly in the tender documents—and Mr Sheridan and others on the evaluation committee are well aware of this—that the State is not interested unless we benefit in relation to whole-of-transport or whole-of-Government costs. So there is a two stage evaluation process, and that is important in terms of looking at the initial cost and this whole-of-Government cost and economic development factor. So, I do not think there is any reason for fear. I hear from some contractors that they fear that TransAdelaide will win the lot. It is hard to win in this business, but I wish all parties well.

Mr CAUDELL: Dealing with service frequencies and bus service contracts, I refer to the Program Estimates, page 308. What will the Government do to ensure that the service frequencies are maintained or improved when contracts are let? In particular, what will the Government do to ensure that bus vehicle standards do not decline?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Those questions are asked of me regularly. The Passenger Transport Board will be responsible for overseeing the contracts once let. In respect to service frequencies, incentives will exist in the funding methods for contractors to seek extra patronage. Instead of merely being paid, as TransAdelaide now is paid, whether it carries a bus full of people or no people, in future part of the operator's payment will be based on the number of passengers carried and the passenger kilometres travelled. It will be in the contractor's interest to provide the best possible frequency of service when balancing the cost of providing the service with the potential patronage. Thus, where an operator feels that he or she can gain more patronage and thereby earn revenue greater than the marginal cost of the extra services, that operator will have the incentive to provide an improved frequency of service. An operator who reduces services will lose patronage, which we know happened to STA under the former Government. There were reduced services, the effect

on weekend night services and lost patronage, with the resultant loss of income and the taxpayers having to pay more. Every survey taken in terms of passenger transport indicates that it is the frequency of service that passengers want if we are to win them back and get repeat business. Passenger transport business is no different from a tourism business. The whole thing is to get repeat business, so you have to provide a good service in the first place. You have to tempt them to come and give them reason to stay.

With these contracts there will be a safety net through the setting of minimum service standards. This will ensure that at least a minimum service is provided, even where there is low patronage. This will include service frequency standards. Operators winning contracts will have to abide by these standards and take the cost of providing these minimum levels of service into account when preparing tenders. These minimum standards are being set to an equivalent of the current average service standards.

There has been worry about bus vehicle standards because we have put on the buses a maximum age limit of 25 years. Generally we have put an age of 20 years in terms of the new contracts being let. That is older than the average age of the bus fleet now. The age limits we have set, plus the average age, are a little higher than the TransAdelaide standards at the moment, but we have to remember that TransAdelaide is blessed with a whole issue of new buses and therefore that has dropped those factors in recent years, so it is in a better position than it has been for a long time in terms of judging those bus standards.

Also, operators seeking contracts to provide bus services to Adelaide will be able to lease current TransAdelaide vehicles. That will help them use those new vehicles. Part of the existing fleet has already been transferred in ownership to the Department of Transport and this will help create a level playing field between TransAdelaide and private operators in tendering and avoid the need for incoming operators to buy or lease a large fleet of buses, a process which would take a considerable period of time.

In the current tender process a conforming tender requires the operators to use the Department of Transport fleet and depot. This does not, however, prevent tenderers from submitting non-conforming tenders which could include the introduction of a new bus fleet.

Mr CAUDELL: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 309, relating to passenger transport development. In particular I refer to public transport and the Southern Expressway. As a southern member of Parliament we look forward to the commencement of building of the Southern Expressway, improved transport in that area and the reduction of vehicle emissions that will result. We will see an improved opportunity for jobs in the area. What will the Government do to ensure that the provision for public transport is made in the design of the Southern Expressway?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The commitment to the Southern Expressway specifically provided for public transport. That was part of our policy initiative prior to the last election. Following the election and this announcement it remained a key part of the Southern Expressway initiative. It is not intended that a major public transport facility would be constructed along the expressway in the foreseeable future for a variety of reasons. First, buses from the outer southern suburbs access Main South Road from Flagstaff Hill, Chandlers Hill Road and Panatalinga Road. Beyond Reynella the Southern Expressway veers towards the west into an area from which many public transport commuters already use the

Noarlunga centre railway. That railway provides journey times to the city of 30 to 40 minutes, times which could not be beaten in the foreseeable future by a bus using the Southern Expressway and Main South Road.

To a large degree a special public transport facility on the expressway would duplicate the railway. I am keen to see dedicated bus corridors and bus lanes. They ensure, unlike light rail or other fixed corridor forms of transport, that we can gather from a wide collection area. That is important in terms of the southern suburbs, which are different from the north eastern suburbs and the Gawler area because, in the southern suburbs, when commuters get to O'Halloran Hill they spread widely throughout the metropolitan area. Only about 18 to 23 per cent of people come to the city once they have used that road link from the south. That is very different from travel patterns in other areas of the State. The buses provide the fanning in from both areas in terms of collection and deposit of people using the public transport system. It is certainly better designed for the travel patterns of people in the south. The fact that the buses could travel at 100 km/h on the expressway also has some appeal.

Mr ATKINSON: In response to my last question, the Minister said that the PTB made a proposal for fare increases which then went to someone else, presumably the Brown Liberal Government, and back to the PTB before returning to the Government on budget day. Was the first PTB proposal for fare increases different from the proposal that was eventually issued as a press release on budget day?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No.

Mr ATKINSON: Then why was it necessary for the proposal to go back and forth in the way the Minister described in her last answer?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Because it was important in my view that the Passenger Transport Board registered that Cabinet had considered its opinion. The honourable member may shake his head—

Mr ATKINSON: I didn't, actually.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I thought that the honourable member sighed, but perhaps it was just a general yawn. It seemed to me that what Cabinet had done had to be ratified and noted. The Cabinet submission went forward on the basis that the matter had been prepared by the officers and with the board being consulted. It was pretty relaxed and harmonious. That is why it went back to the board that day.

Mr ATKINSON: As a supplementary, can the Minister assure the Committee that, so far as the recent public transport fare increases were concerned, the PTB and the Brown Liberal Government were at all times and at all stages of the process of one mind?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure what the honourable member is getting at. There are a few things under the Act of which the honourable member should be aware. If I give a direction, it must be in writing. No direction in respect of these passenger transport fares was required to be in writing or in any other way. It involved a discussion that we would have on a regular basis about the development of a fare strategy and the benefits that that would have for our customers and the operators in future. That was the basis for the development of the strategy.

The matter was considered by the Passenger Transport Board. I wanted Cabinet to note the considerations of the board. The matter went back after Cabinet to the board on the day of the budget (the board meets at 2 p.m. regularly on Thursdays) so that it was signed, sealed and delivered in

terms of sighting Cabinet noting. It is simply a matter of courtesy between professionals.

Mr ATKINSON: Can we tie this point down?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I do not know what the point is.

Mr ATKINSON: Who proposed these public transport fare increases? Was it Cabinet or the PTB?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was not proposed by Cabinet, but it was considered as part of overall transport objectives and it was part of the budget discussion involving the Treasury, myself and departmental officers. That is how it works. When you have your budget targets and the rest, the board considers what is required in terms of revenue and expenditure and if there is to be a fare increase. The other matters about strategy were considered at the same time.

Mr ATKINSON: So you did not issue a written direction in accordance with the Act?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, there was no need during that time for a written direction to be given.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we have dealt with that matter pretty well. We had one question and four supplementaries.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not too sure what the honourable member is trying to get at, but he can continue asking questions and digging. I do not know whether he wants to waste time, but I am prepared to continue to talk about the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: I call the honourable member for Spence to ask his second question.

Mr ATKINSON: Thank you, Mr Chairman, you are the fount of justice. When will the Government adopt a formula, publicly announced and understood by all parts of the taxi trade, for the issue of new plates?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have issued a strategy in terms of taxi plates. It has been decided that there should be 15 this year and 15 for the next three years after which the matter will be reconsidered. In terms of the formula, the board has let a contract to the Transport Systems Centre to provide a statistical base on which to generate a formula for future licence issues. That, together with daily work cards and the results of the first year's on-road audits, will in future establish the formula for the on-going basis for the issue of licences. I have said that we have been looking at 15. The honourable member will be aware from discussions within his own Party and from questions on the floor of this place, that there is some considerable division within his Party on whether there should be no licences—

Mr ATKINSON: No.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Was not the Hon. Terry Cameron advocating at least 100 licences to be issued straight away and did that not make the member for Spence so nervous that, I notice from *The Taxi* magazine, he quickly wrote to the Taxi Association disowning his honourable friend? With all due respect, I would have done the same if one of my colleagues had advocated such a scheme. However, my colleagues would not have done that because they would have had a more responsible attitude towards the taxi industry.

Mr ATKINSON: Again with your indulgence, Mr Chairman, I have a supplementary to round that out. I take it that the Minister's latest increases of 15 plates a year for three years is not in accordance with any formula and that we still await a formula.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was a continuation of what the Labor Party did in Government: that is 15 licences over three years.

Mr ATKINSON: Which Labor Government was that? Was it the Walsh Government?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was the Bannon/Arnold Labor Governments. It started with Mr Blevins as Minister for Transport. He decided that there would be 45 licences over three years—15 each year. That was during pretty depressing times in South Australia. My Party and I are determined that the State is coming into the home straight, as the Treasurer said. There will certainly be more opportunities, through contracting out, for the taxi industry. There is a division of opinion in the taxi industry about the number of licences required. It was considered that the industry could cope with more licences as there was more work if taxi drivers really wanted to get it. That was the basis on which the 15 were issued initially. The Transport System Centre, let by the PTB, will consider the matter further. I am not sure whether the Chief Executive would like to add more to that, but most of us keep our mouths shut when it comes to taxis.

Mr ATKINSON: Has the PTB received complaints that taxi drivers risk their privacy being invaded by the requirement for them to include their driver's licence number on the new accredited taxi driver card displayed on taxi dashboards? Was allocation of a PTB number to each taxi driver to be included on the card instead of the driver's licence number considered? If so, why was that not done?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This was a Question on Notice which I have answered, but the member may not as yet have received the answer. The answer is in the system. Mr Gargett may wish to respond with further details.

Mr Gargett: The use of a driver's licence number was negotiated with the taxi industry, and we have not had any complaints about the use of it.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

Mr Gargett: With representatives of various companies, including a representative of SATA. I am not saying that it is a unanimous decision, but it was negotiated with them all. In the end, it was recognised that there was no loss of personal security for the driver with the use of that driver's licence because the personal information is not accessible. So, if you have the driver's licence number you still cannot get the personal information from the Motor Registration Division.

Membership:

Mr Rossi substituted for Mr Caudell.

Mr VENNING: In relation to country bus route licences (page 308 of the Program Estimates), I notice that the Passenger Transport Board gains revenue from country route licences. What measures are being taken under the Passenger Transport Act to ensure that these services are provided as efficiently and effectively as possible?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Our passenger transport strategy, which was released prior to the election, promised a review of the regulatory regime governing the provision of country bus route services to see if improvements could be made to the existing arrangements. Existing arrangements have exclusive rights to provide bus services, and they are tendered on a periodic basis. A previous investigation—and I think that previous investigation was undertaken by Dr Radbone—noted that while fares on such services were cheap by comparison with equivalent fares interstate there was a disturbing lack of competition in the competitive process for these licences.

In common with metropolitan services, country services using fixed routes and schedules require service contracts with the Passenger Transport Board when the existing licences expire. It is hoped that the healthy competition that we have experienced in tendering for metropolitan services will also occur in country services in the future, although some country operators that now hold exclusive licences may not welcome such competition in the tendering process.

The Passenger Transport Board has established a standing committee on non-metropolitan passenger transport services which is undertaking the review that was promised under our passenger transport strategy. This review is all the more pertinent given our commitments under the national competition policy, the Hilmer report, to ensure that any restrictions on competition imposed by Government regulation are justified in the public interest.

The committee is taking a broad approach to its investigations, looking at the results of the removal of exclusive rights over routes such as has taken place elsewhere in the nation—New South Wales—as well as ways in which the tendering process can be made more competitive. This investigation should be completed in the next few months. All licences for country route services are due for renewal in June 1996, so this review must be completed and the basis for seeking new route service licences determined by that time.

Mr VENNING: In relation to the transport brokerage scheme, page 308 of the Program Estimates indicates that the Government has funded the transport brokerage schemes in the Barossa Valley and the Fleurieu Peninsula since 1992. Could the Minister indicate whether the efficiency and effectiveness of these schemes have been evaluated and, if so, what was the result? What is the future of these two schemes?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know that the member has taken a considerable interest in this area because the Barossa brokerage scheme is in his electorate. The office of the Passenger Transport Board carried out a detailed study of the performance of both these schemes from their inception until the end of 1994. The findings of the study and recommendations were presented as a report to the Passenger Transport Board in April this year. The report found that both schemes had met their objectives—which is good news for the Barossa—and were meeting the essential travel needs of the most transport disadvantaged groups in their respective communities. The schemes were providing passenger transport services in a cost-effective manner in low density, scattered communities where more conventional forms of public passenger transport could not operate effectively.

Those conditions which I have just outlined—low density, scattered communities—apply to a whole range of outer metropolitan areas and near country areas, and I am very keen to see this transport brokerage scheme extended, whether that be to Willunga or elsewhere. All schemes would have to enjoy strong community support, as do these two schemes which have community support in the Barossa and Fleurieu Peninsula. This is reflected in a joint funding arrangement between the participating councils, the Home and Community Care (HACC) organisation and the office of the PTB. Strong support from a wide spectrum of human services was expressed during these studies.

The report also found that the schemes improved the effectiveness of service delivery of other agencies, as well as from the transport perspective. Red Cross estimated a direct monetary saving to the major Adelaide public hospitals of \$164 000 in 1993-94, which gives me an idea of where we

might be able to get more money for this scheme in the future!

The office of the Passenger Transport Board has budgeted \$50 000 this coming financial year for transport brokerage schemes. We would like it to be more. Given the joint funding arrangements, it is expected that this amount will provide ongoing support for both existing schemes and some funding to assist in the establishment of new schemes in other areas experiencing rural isolation that have significant unmet travel needs. I have asked Mr Gargett, the General Manager of the PTB, to work with the Women's Advisory Council. The advisory council was in the Eyre Peninsula, Ceduna and Lock regions a couple of months ago, and subsequently went to the Riverland. It has further meetings in the South-East. Transport and access thereto is a major issue for women in these country areas, and I am very keen to see the Women's Advisory Council and the PTB work together on an extension of transport brokerage schemes, whether it be the type that operate in the Barossa or Fleurieu or some other type of scheme to meet the transport needs of women and families in rural areas. Many of the women in these areas in rural South Australia today are ageing. Younger family members have left the towns. They have more medical demands than they would have had in the past. We have to do better than we are in helping them remain in their communities.

Mrs PENFOLD: With reference to page 307 of the Program Estimates, \$500 000 has been allowed for accessible transport implementation and a further \$450 000 for wheelchair accessible bus trials. Can the Minister elaborate on the need for this expenditure and explain the difference in purpose of these two amounts?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This expenditure is a necessary part of the Government's commitment to supply a transport system that provides accessibility to needed services, especially to people with disadvantages in terms of travel. Parliament made it a statutory function of the Passenger Transport Board to facilitate the use of passenger transport services by people with disabilities. As I said, it is a statutory function.

In turn, in its public transport policy the Government promised that it would trial wheelchair accessible buses with ramps on selected routes. This commitment was reiterated when we negotiated the conciliated agreement as a result of the Disability Discrimination Act case before the court last October. The design and construction of the next batch of buses on the TransAdelaide order for new buses is well under way, and all these buses have a new low floor, with a kneeling capacity. The front half of all these new buses will also have a very low floor, which is flat across the whole width of the bus. In turn, this will be equipped with a retractable ramp of German manufacture, and that will be located beneath the door in the centre of the bus. This ramp can be deployed at bus stops when people in wheelchairs wish to board or alight from the bus. Investigations are also under way to ensure that we trial not just this German manufactured ramp but one of our own South Australian designs. I have seen both ramps in mock-ups down at PMC, and other members might like to see them. It is exciting to think what we will be able to deliver for people with wheelchairs in terms of bus travel in the future. So I will write to members and invite them to come with me in the future or they can go separately.

The number of low level wheelchair accessible buses in service in metropolitan areas is likely to increase across Australia in the future, as all States are assessing strategies

and standards for services for people with disabilities. The low floor kneeling buses are of benefit to a large and growing number of older people in our community, people who are aged or infirm and who have difficulty climbing steps, as well as men and women who are doing more shopping, pushing prams or the like. It is very exciting to think that in South Australia we are well ahead of any other State in introducing these low floor buses with ramps. If we can develop this South Australian technology for a retractable ramp, it will be a fantastic export industry for South Australia, and we will have others coming to South Australia to see what we doing.

To make the most effective use of this investment in accessible buses, we need to ensure that interchanges and street bus stops can accommodate the low floor buses and wheelchair ramps. Therefore, we are starting to work on how to improve access at interchanges and street bus stops. Until we start the trials, we are not sure how many stops will need upgrading, although we do know of a number already which will need work, such as the stop opposite the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

The \$500 000 for accessible transport implementation is capital expenditure, which has been budgeted for the upgrading and modification of these interchanges and stops. The expenditure will not be confined to modifications just to suit wheelchairs; for instance, tactile tiles to aid the vision impaired will be included in the modifications if justified.

The expenditure that the honourable member has questioned complements the \$500 000 allowed for in the capital budget for TransAdelaide for a continuation of a program of upgrading stations. These upgrades address the issue of improved access to people with disability, reducing step heights into railcars, safe platform surfaces, adequate lighting—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Adequate lighting is really important—and alternative access to that provided by subways which are gradually being faded out. A further amount of \$450 000—and these are big sums to these new initiatives—has been budgeted for recurrent expenditure for the PTB. This is to cover the cost of trials of wheelchair accessible buses. There is not much point ordering all these buses with all these ramps and not putting them on the road and into business.

We will be introducing two trials: the first will be a new bus loop within the city of Adelaide, connecting with the Adelaide Railway Station. It will go along North Terrace, so it will link up with the cultural institutions along North Terrace, the Adelaide Hospital, and the busy east end of Adelaide. We would look probably at Grenfell Street—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Not with wheelchair accessible ramps and low floors. This is really important, because a lot of people who are in wheelchairs get really agitated. They get 60 vouchers of up to \$30 in value for a six-month period. They can use one voucher to go from Gawler to Noarlunga, but they can use the same voucher for \$4 on a short trip in the city. If it is raining or really hot and a person in a wheelchair gets off at the Adelaide Railway Station and they just want to go somewhere along North Terrace or up to King William Street, and they do not want to push themselves there, they would catch a taxi. They might catch a taxi after that appointment somewhere else to another appointment, and they would have used up their vouchers. This accessible low floor retractable ramped bus, and buses that we are ordering,

used on this new city loop, will ensure that we solve that problem in the future, and I am really excited about that.

We are also looking at a further north-south route, probably in the Unley area to Northfield. These trials will probably be from four to six months duration. The buses are delivered from July, and the pilot services will go until after Christmas and the New Year, as that is such a busy period for everybody. So, Mr Atkinson, if that is a direction to the board, I had better put it in writing!

Mr ATKINSON: As the Minister would know, I have never driven a motor vehicle, and I use cabs every week. The Minister and I are supporters of cab drivers wearing uniforms. However, many non-operator drivers work with two or more radio companies. A cabbie might work for Independent on Friday nights, United Yellow on Saturday afternoon and Diamonds on Sunday night. Your regulations would compel him to keep three sets of uniforms, one for each radio company, each with the company name embroidered on the breast pocket. I am told that these uniforms can be bought from one location only. These drivers ask why the regulations cannot be amended to allow them to wear a clean shirt of a prescribed design and colour and a badge of the radio company for which they are working on that day. When will you reply to my letter of February on behalf of cabbies putting that proposal?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was discussed at the meetings of the Taxi Industry Advisory Panel. The Passenger Transport Board decided not to get involved because the way it wanted to position itself was really a matter of company policy—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, that they have to wear a uniform—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That's right.

Mr ATKINSON: You're making them do it.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know. I am just saying that the company decided that it wanted its own logo and own way of presenting drivers. For instance, Adelaide Independent drivers wear red T-shirts. Other drivers have told me that they could not bear to wear a red T-shirt or to have their company identified in that way. They want to wear a shirt with epaulettes. That is how the drivers want to present themselves as well. I understand that you are arguing that the regulations should stipulate one uniform, such as a marle jacket, for every driver in South Australia. That is what you would like the Passenger Transport Board to say.

Mr ATKINSON: No. My proposal is for a clean shirt of a particular colour and design, but if you are driving for a particular radio company, in order to give that radio company market differentiation, you should wear the company's badge clipped to your pocket. What is wrong with that?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not up to me to decide how companies in this very competitive business should present themselves. Whilst we control the number of licences, there is competition between the companies. I will take up the honourable member's suggestion with drivers and operators: it is a point worthy of further discussion.

Mr ATKINSON: With respect, I think the Minister is missing the point. While radio companies want their drivers to wear their embroidered shirt and not a removable badge, it is the Minister's Government through the regulations or a law which compels them to wear the embroidered garment of the radio company.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not misunderstood at all. All regulations that relate to taxis and buses were developed with industry groups. So they are not mine or the Government's regulations other than in a technical sense; they are actually owned by those who developed them—the industry body in each instance. Nevertheless, I am happy to take the honourable member's suggestion back to the Taxi Industry Advisory Committee and the new drivers' representative committee, because it is a matter for the whole industry not just one section.

Mr ATKINSON: When will I receive a reply to my letter of 24 February in which I informed the Minister that a cabbie, who has been paying for radio services and wants to return to ranking and dispense with radio services, is prohibited from doing so by PTB regulations? In principle, why prohibit a cabbie who pays for radio services from dispensing with those services unless he then takes radio services from another company?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I do not recall the honourable member's letter, but February is a long time ago and it should have been answered by now. I will address the matter immediately, and I apologise to both the honourable member and the driver concerned for the delay.

Mr ATKINSON: When will the Minister report the findings of the Minister's investigation into dangerous overcrowding on country school buses which she announced in her reply to my question on notice No. 176 of 7 March 1995? The Minister may recall that I raised with her the question of school children standing in aisles on buses travelling in country areas at high speeds.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think that I received correspondence from the honourable member and also from every school in South Australia on this subject. Country and metropolitan bus services remain the responsibility of the Minister for Education and Children's Services; therefore, we have worked with officers of his department. I recall that the department issued a survey, the results of which have been compiled and are now being assessed by that department's evaluation committee. I will ascertain the latest position, but it is anticipated that those assessments will be finished in June or July.

Mr ATKINSON: I ask a supplementary question.

Mr VENNING: Mr Chairman, on what line is the member for Spence asking his questions? At the beginning of the day, you stipulated that we had to quote the line.

The CHAIRMAN: The questions come within the budget line which we are dealing with at the moment of \$125 843 000.

Mr ATKINSON: I note that the member for Custance sought to suppress questioning on country school buses. My supplementary question is: what percentage of school bus services in country areas is expected to remain with the Education Department at the end of this parliamentary term? How many of those services will be privatised?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: At this stage, those services are being progressively undertaken by the private sector rather than the Department for Education and Children's Services. As at 30 June 1994, which is the latest figure that we have (this is not our direct area of responsibility but that of the Department for Education and Children's Services), DECS owned and operated 365 buses and contracted 297 buses. It is Liberal Party policy that this whole area of school bus services be undertaken by the Passenger Transport Board, but in more recent times we have had to do quite a bit ourselves without taking on this area, so we are not pushing

to take it over quickly, but I anticipate that it will happen at some stage. Generally, if it is seen as economically defensible and if it is supported by the local community—it is Education Department policy, a Labor Party policy that has been continued by the Liberal Government—progressively these services will be contracted out. This can be seen in the trend lines. I did a lot of work on this when I was developing the passenger transport strategy. Trend lines under the former Government have not changed in terms of the progressive transfer to contracted services.

Mr ROSSI: I refer to page 114 of the Program Estimates. What amount of stock of all forms of public transport tickets is held by the board, and how long will they last—six months, two years or more?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The whole ticketing responsibility has transferred from TransAdelaide to the PTB, and I am advised that approximately six to 12 months of tickets are in stock. I hope that so many more people will use public transport that it will be only six not 12 months in stock.

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

TransAdelaide, \$33 212 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr K. Benger, General Manager, TransAdelaide.

Mr W. Fairlie, Manager, Corporate Treasury.

Mr R. Seaman, Group Manager, Finance and Information.

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

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Government has created a new era for public transport in Adelaide. TransAdelaide, formed from the old STA on 1 July 1994, is now able to focus all its efforts on the provision of quality public transport services as the policy and planning functions, which at times have been in conflict with operational goals. These planning and policy functions are now the responsibility of the Passenger Transport Board. In March 1995 the first tenders for public transport services were issued by the Passenger Transport Board and TransAdelaide is facing tough competition from private operators for the provision of these services. As the Passenger Transport Act provides for 50 per cent of public transport services in Adelaide to be tendered by March 1997, TransAdelaide has the opportunity to show that it has the capacity to be a very progressive and customer responsive provider of public transport.

A new competitive team spirit has developed within the people who work at TransAdelaide and I am heartened to see how this human potential has been unleashed and channelled into providing better, more cost effective services to the people of Adelaide. Some of the noteworthy achievements by TransAdelaide in the 1994-95 financial year are:

1. The launch of TransAdelaide on July 1994, which incorporated a week of events that involved a large section of the community and created a positive environment for this new organisation facing the challenges and opportunities of a different and exciting new environment.

2. In December 1994 the first of TransAdelaide's new passenger service assistants were introduced on the metropolitan rail system.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is good to see your endorsement at last.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, you did not think that initially, but I am glad you have changed your mind and I admire you for it. Anyway, I do not believe you could have done anything else. This 'human face' has reduced the levels of fare evasion which were rife under the previous arrangements. In addition, the occurrences of graffiti, vandalism and antisocial behaviour have decreased since the introduction of these well trained and helpful people. The overall effect on the rail system has been a more cost-effective, safer and more pleasant travelling environment for the people of Adelaide, including the member for Spence.

3. Major service changes were implemented in May 1995, including new services to Regent Gardens and Athelstone, plus extensions to services and more frequent services. All the changes responded to employee and customer suggestions and all were introduced without additional cost to the overall budget.

4. Discussions were held during the year on making available Government owned infrastructure and buses to all tenderers for the new passenger transport contracts so that there are no barriers to enter the market. Subsequently, agreement has been reached by all organisations involved, including Treasury and the Auditor-General, on the transfer of the majority of bus related assets from TransAdelaide to the Department of Transport and the Passenger Transport Board. These assets include buses, bus depots, the Crouzet ticketing system and the Regency Park workshop facilities.

5. In June 1995, TransAdelaide successfully negotiated new work site agreements with the Lonsdale and Elizabeth depot bus operators. These are the two depots affected by the first competitive tenders let by the Passenger Transport Board. With the new arrangements at these locations TransAdelaide employees have achieved a competitive position with private sector competitors by lowering their cost structure. These new work site agreements support the Government's policy of reducing the cost of public transport services and improving the levels of service provision.

6. A 'best practice' program has been introduced, which includes a large employee participation element. This program, supported by managers, unions and employees, reflects my request for a new way of doing business involving employees and customers to ensure TransAdelaide is a first class organisation. I do commend them for their efforts to date. It has been really exciting to work with TransAdelaide.

I am pleased to advise that estimates of financial results for 1994-95 show that TransAdelaide will come in on budget. This was not the usual practice during the days of the old STA, and I congratulate management and all TransAdelaide employees for their efforts. This position reflects the achievement of a \$12.2 million net savings target that was set by the Government and the result was achieved prior to tenders being let, prior to new services being added, prior to passenger service assistants being introduced and prior to a number of outstanding issues being cleaned up. So, it is a mighty result.

In line with the Government's direction of reducing costs associated with public transport, additional savings of \$8.8 million are sought from TransAdelaide in 1995-96. I am confident with the ongoing improvements within TransAdelaide, and together with the lower costs that are

expected to result from the introduction of competitive tendering, that these savings will be achieved without compromising the level of services provided to all Adelaide people who wish to use them—and I wish more did. The Government fully supports a strong customer driven TransAdelaide and I wish the agency well in future tenders and the evaluation process being presently conducted for the outer southern and northern regions.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Spence, do you wish to make a brief statement before asking questions?

Mr ATKINSON: Just a brief statement. I do congratulate the Minister on introducing the passenger service assistants to Adelaide trains. It is the single best thing she has done since she has been the Minister. The passenger service assistants have had a tremendously good effect on the trains, both in preventing fare evasion and improving behaviour of some passengers on the trains. Furthermore, I would like to congratulate the passenger service assistants on the fortitude which they display sometimes when confronted by unruly youths. I am particularly impressed by their restraint, but their firmness in dealing with these situations. I would, however, remind the Minister that when the passenger service assistants were first introduced, the Minister did not give them authority to check tickets. It was only after an exchange between the Minister and I on radio 5AA that the Minister then relented and instructed the passenger service assistants to check tickets, and I congratulate her for making that decision.

Does the Deputy Premier's statement of 24 May 1995 in the *Eastern Courier Messenger* that the closure of Clapham, Hawthorn and Millwood stations was 'the end of the series' mean that there will be no further TransAdelaide station closures for the term of this Parliament, or does it mean just that there will be no further closures on the Belair line? Can the Minister assure the Committee that neither Ovingham station nor Chidda station, both on the Gawler line, will be closed in the life of this Parliament?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is a question on notice that I have answered, too.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have answered it and signed it off. They have to go through some system and apparently the system is not clearing them very quickly, so I apologise for that. The answer was that for the life of the Parliament there are no further closures envisaged or planned by me, or the Passenger Transport Board, or TransAdelaide. That is what I said in the letter that you have not yet received. In terms of the three stations that were closed, this has not been a pleasant task but it was one that we should get into perspective. Having gone through background information, the dockets, some of which have restricted stamps on and things so they cannot be all released, it is apparent that the former Minister, Barbara Wiese, endorsed the plan. I am privately prepared to show you these documents. Because they have restricted stamps on them it is difficult to table them and release them widely.

The former Minister endorsed the plan in terms of arrangements between TransAdelaide and National Rail and the Federal Government's One Nation agreement. That plan envisaged the closure of stations. That endorsement was given on 22 January 1992 and was confirmed a month later. Those dates relate to a time long before I became Minister for Transport, so I was carrying out what had been agreed to by the former Minister. That circumstance did not make it any

easier for anyone, but it is important that it goes on the record.

Mr ATKINSON: When I was travelling on the Belair line from Mitcham station to the city, a Passenger Service Assistant of my acquaintance, Mr Hung, handed me a leaflet with the Minister's photograph on it entitled, 'Passenger Bulletin April 1995 Special: Belair Line'. The Minister is quoted as saying, "'To say that this decision was made without past community feedback or the knowledge of the Opposition is absolutely untrue,'" Ms Laidlaw said. Does the Minister think it is proper that public servants hand out material refuting Opposition statements which, at that stage, had not been made?

Mr VENNING: I take a point of order. There is no reference to this in any of the lines in the budget papers.

The CHAIRMAN: It is a publication put out by the Minister's department. There is no point of order.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not seen the publication. Is it signed by me? There is a photograph of me and of Blackwood station, but the statement is not signed by me and it was not written by me. Officers may have taken it from a press release that I prepared in terms of general information.

Mr ATKINSON: On that theme, is the Minister telling me that people under Mr Benger's authority put out this political propaganda under the logo of TransAdelaide without the Minister's even knowing about it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not political propaganda. It has quoted me, so that is hardly propaganda. It is a statement that I have clearly made in a press release or in this place, and I think it is quite proper for TransAdelaide, in terms of explaining the position, if it so chooses, to use statements I have made on the subject.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister is rather missing the point. Is it appropriate for a Government department—

Mr ROSSI: I have a point of order.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think it is appropriate—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! A point of order has been called. What is the point of order?

Mr ROSSI: The member for Spence is saying that public servants cannot give out political material.

Mr ATKINSON: Yes, I am saying that.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mr ROSSI: He is contradicting himself because—

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr ATKINSON: I am interested in this point of order. I should like to hear it fully made out.

The CHAIRMAN: I have just ruled that there is no point of order. I am not here to have an argument with the member for Spence or with anyone else. We are here to deal with the budget estimates of TransAdelaide, \$33 212 000, and that covers all sorts of administrative issues as far as its operations are concerned. The member for Spence has asked one question and three supplementaries. I advise him that there is no provision for supplementary questions. Each member is entitled to three questions, so the honourable member is really pushing the limit.

Mr ATKINSON: You have been most indulgent, Sir, and I am grateful for that. What the Minister appears to be saying is that she had no knowledge of this passenger bulletin, but public servants, namely, Passenger Service Assistants, under Mr Benger's direction, issued a leaflet to all passengers travelling on trains on the Belair line, putting that the position of the Opposition, namely, the parliamentary Labor Party, was entirely untrue.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, it is not untrue. I have explained about the dockets and other material that I cannot circulate because, for some reason, the Labor Party put a restricted stamp on them. It did not want anyone to see that it had agreed three years ago to close certain stations. I am not sure who has got what to hide, but it seems to me that the Hon. Barbara Wiese was not too keen for the Labor Party's part in this to be known. As part of the protocol of my position, I have not circulated those documents, but it is important in terms of the historical record that that point is made.

Mr ATKINSON: When are you going to explain this?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member asked a question of me and I am answering it. That is the protocol of this system, although protocol does not seem to matter too much. As I have indicated, I do not have anything to hide. I do not think that Mr Bengier has anything to hide, but he can certainly speak for himself when I have finished answering this question. My view is that the statement that I made in putting out the Government's position and explaining the circumstances of the closure of the line was repeated in a bulletin. If I had authorised that statement for a press release or I had made the statement in Parliament, it is entirely appropriate for it to be used by other parties. I do not care whether it was used by public servants, the honourable member or whoever. It is on the public record and it can be used as the public wishes. It is fact, as I have indicated, whether the Hon. Barbara Wiese wanted it advertised or not, that she endorsed the closure of railway stations on the Belair line on 22 January 1992, so there is no argument with the statement I made, and that statement has been repeated in this bulletin. Mr Bengier may wish to comment, but I do not care if he does not.

Mr Bengier: The matter that the honourable member has raised is really between the Minister and me. If the Minister is unhappy with that bulletin, that is for her to take up with me.

Mr ATKINSON: Does the Minister and, in particular, Mr Bengier, regard it as appropriate for a Government department such as TransAdelaide to have its employees handing out to passengers leaflets taking sides in a dispute within Parliament between the Government and the Opposition? Is it licit action for TransAdelaide, without so much as consulting with the Minister, on the Minister's version of events, to put out a leaflet to the public saying that, "To say that this decision was made without past community feedback or without the knowledge of the Opposition is absolutely untrue," Ms Laidlaw said? If I had made a parliamentary statement on the closure of those three stations, would TransAdelaide put out a leaflet saying what I, the member for Spence, Mick Atkinson, said, and have Passenger Service Assistants give it to passengers under the logo, 'TransAdelaide'?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I suspect not, because so many of the statements made in this context have not been factually based.

Mr ATKINSON: Is that the only reason why not?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This one is, and it was a statement of the Government's position, which TransAdelaide employees, PSAs, and the public were entitled to know.

Mr ATKINSON: Were they ordered as part of their job description to hand them out? This is published by Mr Bengier's department.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member has asked his question.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Ordered? I do not think that was the case. A whole lot of passenger bulletins are handed out on a regular basis and it is part of the information service that PSAs provide to customers.

Mr ATKINSON: How soon will TransAdelaide ensure that the one remaining entrance to Belair Railway Station, off Sheoak Road at the eastern end of the station, is lit, paved and the pedestrians separated from vehicles by the construction of a footpath? As the Minister has said that she has inspected the site to which I refer, will she explain to the Committee how the hundreds of residents living south of the railway line will now obtain access to Belair Railway Station?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am waiting for National Rail to complete the work on the standardisation of that line and related issues. We have invited local people to look at the lighting to see whether it is adequate, and we have offered that, if they do not deem it to be adequate, it will be improved. I believe that National Rail will finish all its work in relation to this project, including Belair, at the end of this month or early July. So, it will be completed. The southern access is part of the rectification work to be undertaken by TransAdelaide and that will be completed promptly.

Mr ATKINSON: Could the Minister answer the second part of my question: how do you obtain access?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is a responsibility for TransAdelaide and it will have to be addressed. As I indicated, it will be addressed promptly.

Mr ATKINSON: Does Mr Bengier have any ideas on that? At the moment it is very hard for the majority of people living in Belair to get into the station.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Mr Bengier can speak for himself, but that was the advice as I understood it, and Mr Bengier has just confirmed it.

Mr ROSSI: I refer to Program Estimates (page 319) relating to passenger service attendants. The move to employ passenger service attendants on trains has been welcomed by passengers generally and the member for Spence has concurred with that considering that, while his Government was in power, graffiti was painted on the outside of trains, seats were marked, windows on trains were engraved, there was smoking on some trains as well as drinking and eating and passengers placing their feet on the seats. I have noticed these things during the short 18 months I have been in Parliament and I have reported these offences to the Minister.

There still seems to be some confusion as to the specific role of officers, particularly in relation to revenue protection. Will the Minister outline the role of officers, particularly in relation to the field supervisors and transit police? I have noticed that some of these attendants sometimes check tickets and encourage passengers to go to the machines and pay for the tickets, but I feel that they should be able to issue on-the-spot fines. What is the Minister's opinion about that?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Forty-four PSAs have been employed in the system since they were first introduced in November 1994.

Mr ATKINSON: You promised 70.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, I promised 60, never 70. In relation to the difference of 16 we are looking at the employment of either further PSAs or more field supervisors, and that assessment is being made currently. However, the 44 are additional positions. I indicated initially that we would build up to 60 but we might look at another proposition in terms of field supervisors. I am very pleased, as I think all TransAdelaide employees would be, to receive the endorse-

ment from both Mr Atkinson and the member for Lee, Mr Rossi, in respect of their function and role.

It is true that PSAs have been terrific in assisting customers with service information and attending to customer needs, checking the validation of tickets, assisting special needs, assisting customers to board and alight safely and deterring vandalism and other antisocial behaviour. There has been debate in the community about whether PSAs should have additional powers in terms of being able to issue on-the-spot fines, and the member for Lee shares such an opinion. I suspect that the member for Spence does also. This was a bit of a tricky issue between the transit police, field supervisors and PSAs when first proposed. TransAdelaide management and I decided that it was best to go ahead with the PSAs without giving them the additional powers which some, including the member for Lee, may have thought were required.

Since then, a very good relationship has been built up between the transit police, the field supervisors and the PSAs. The suspicion of members of the field supervisors and the transit police has dissipated. I have a copy of the transit police division/PSA information bulletin which was issued on 4 June and authorised by J.W. Powell, Senior Sergeant, and which is glowing in relation to the support that PSAs provided police during the month of May. Transit police received 44 calls for assistance from PSAs about various trouble spots that they had noted on the system, whether they be in the trains, in car parks, at interchanges or on platforms, and it is interesting to look at the number of people that the PSAs noted who have since been arrested for other offences or for warrants that were outstanding. So the police have found that the PSAs have been extraordinarily helpful, not only in the immediate vicinity of PSA's work but in the wider context of police work.

The PSAs and the field supervisors are working closely together now for revenue protection purposes. They are working as teams, both on the trains and at the Adelaide railway station and others. That is all part of the blitz that we undertake on a regular basis to tackle this issue of fare fraud or fare evasion. PSAs do not have statutory power to issue transit infringement notices and, because of the way the system is working at present, I am not going to push that issue. We may engage more field supervisors but, as I said earlier, that is still to be determined. PSAs and field supervisors working together as teams have checked 48 000 passengers in January, 78 000 in February and 134 000 in March, so that is a small indication of the way in which we are stepping up the system.

I will explain why we work in teams, and Mr Benger might explain this in more detail. As I understand it, if a PSA, for instance, is suspicious about a person's ticket they can call over the field supervisor, but it takes that person some time to issue the TIN notice, work out the address and a whole range of other things. Also we have noticed that when a field supervisor works alone there can be other trouble on the train and they are distracted or they are deliberately distracted. However, if they work in teams, the PSA can go through and indicate where they think there is difficulty, and the field supervisor can deal with that matter. That way they really maximise their effort rather than having the PSAs monopolised dealing with one person, as that may take a lot more time filling out the TIN notice, and so on. This way they can move quite freely throughout the train, forgetting the majority of passengers who are honest, fare-paying passengers and addressing only the others.

Mr VENNING: The Barossa Valley tourist railway is referred to on page 319 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister elaborate on the issue? I have spent much time on this issue. The late Mr John McAvaney had a dream. He passed away a few weeks ago and he wanted to see the service reinstated. A lot of work has been done. I have seen the expression of interest notice in the media, but how long will it be before we can get it back on the rails?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am very keen to see this initiative start—certainly before the Barossa Music Festival—so that we have weekend and, hopefully, weekday tourist-based trips to the Barossa Music Festival. On other occasions it may be appropriate only on the weekends, but that is a matter for anyone putting in a submission of interest to operate the service to determine with TransAdelaide and Australian National. The two rail agencies have been working together as a working party, which was established in March.

As the honourable member noted, expressions of interest have been sought from suitably qualified and experienced third parties to operate this service. We have received two expressions of interest to date. They closed on Friday 16 June, having opened on 27 May. Those two are being assessed at the moment. You only need two to bid and two to make good competition, so we are fortunate to have that number. The successful tenderer will be selected at the latest by October 1995, which will provide time to start for the Barossa Music Festival.

Mr VENNING: I refer to the use of the Series 2 000 rail cars. Could the service be extended on the other line from Gawler through to Kapunda for its festivals?

Mr Benger: Yes, they could be. We are currently looking at doing a market survey to ascertain the interest. It is on our program of things to look at in the coming year.

Mr VENNING: I understand that the railway line is upgraded to do that now?

Mr Benger: That is correct.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to page 319 of the Program Estimates. Has AUSTRICS been successful over the past year in filling interstate and/or overseas scheduled software and, if so, why is the Government considering the sale of this high-tech enterprise?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: AUSTRICS has been successful with both sales and/or expressions of interest in such sales. Mr Benger can answer the question about the success of AUSTRICS, and I will talk about whether or not it is for sale.

Mr Benger: AUSTRICS has continued to be exhibited overseas, and the latest instance was at the CeBIT exhibition in Hanover, Germany, in March where Australian technology was presented to over 150 exhibitors. The primary goal in attending the exhibition was to promote to potential worldwide distributors the leading edge technology developed by AUSTRICS. The response to our exhibition was overwhelming and many new prospective contacts have been made in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and Holland. AUSTRICS has continued to promote the scheduling software in its target markets of Europe, the United Kingdom, Malaysia and Australia.

Currently Grampian Regional Transport in Aberdeen, Scotland—the site of AUSTRICS' first international sale—acquired five bus companies during the 1994-95 financial year and has already indicated that it intends to discuss the installation of our scheduling system in each of the subsidiaries. More recently the GRT Bus Group merged with the Badgerline Group in the United Kingdom to form a company

called FirstBus. FirstBus will have a total of 14 400 staff and 5 600 vehicles and will be second only in size to the Stagecoach Group in the United Kingdom.

AUSTRICS has begun negotiations with this company with a view to installing the system in all its subsidiaries. Negotiations are continuing with the RATP in Paris, the AGIR Group in France, representing approximately 10 cities, and a group known as CGEA (part of the Generale des Eaux Group), representing 30 cities. The RATP released an expression of interest in the scheduling system and AUSTRICS, through its European agent TDE Transdata, has responded. The tender document is expected to be released early in the 1995-96 financial year.

The AGIR Group has been evaluating scheduling systems worldwide for some time, and various cities within the group have indicated that they are close to making a final decision on purchasing a scheduling system. These decisions will be known within the next three months and the remainder of the group are likely to following soon after. The CGEA Group represents an enormous potential for AUSTRICS. The group has a turnover of approximately (Aus)\$750 million in transport alone, with further potential throughout Europe.

The city of Le Havre will trial our software during May, and the results of this trial will determine the future of our software within this group. AUSTRICS has also completed trials for a bus company known as Intrakota in Kuala Lumpur, and negotiations are continuing through our Malaysian agent. Intrakota has been awarded the mini-bus operating licence and recently acquired the licence from the Sri Jaya consortium to operate one of the long distance licences.

Within Australia AUSTRICS continues to negotiate with the Darwin Bus Service, the National Bus Company in Victoria, the Bus Proprietors Association in Victoria and various other companies.

They are the major things in which AUSTRICS is currently involved. We have eight external contracted clients—Darwin, Hobart, Launceston, Burnie, Benders in Geelong, Ventura in South Oakleigh and Grampian Transport. AUSTRICS is currently pursuing 16 prospective clients.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: One of the strengths of this AUSTRICS package is the fact that it is tied to an operator—TransAdelaide—and therefore it is unique to any other similar scheduling package, of which there are a number in the world, because people can actually see it applied. Therefore, in terms of sales we are look at joint ventures, and the Economic Development Authority is working with us to seek joint venture partners for this so that we can get more capital and do not carry the whole risk as TransAdelaide. It would mean that any other operators that may come into the system through competitive tendering would also have access to the same scheduling software.

Mr ATKINSON: I have been advised that TransAdelaide sought recently to tender out its signalling and it found that no-one else could do it as cheaply as the public employees. How much did that attempt to tender cost? What else has been tried to be tendered out only to find that TransAdelaide employees were cheaper than outsourcing?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: On 11 June 1994, TransAdelaide called for registrations of interest from suitably qualified signalling contractors capable of carrying out, as a total package, the planned and breakdown maintenance of TransAdelaide's metropolitan rail signalling system. The closing date for registration was 23 June 1994. That did

not give them very long. Ten companies registered an interest in carrying out the work. Only four companies were considered capable of supporting the Adelaide metropolitan signalling system. ABB Services, GHD Transmark, GEC Alstom and Ventura Projects were invited to supply quotations for the maintenance of TransAdelaide signalling and tramline traction systems.

Quotations were received to undertake that work by contract. An independent financial economic analysis was then undertaken by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (DTT) to evaluate the benefits and disadvantages of undertaking that work by contract. So often you cannot assess such things in terms of whole of Government costs until you have at least received quotes from others about the contract costs.

In their report to TransAdelaide and to me, DTT said that they believed that there was significant justification for retaining the in-house signal and power services maintenance function. The assessment was made not by TransAdelaide but by an independent and respected source.

Mr ATKINSON: How much did it cost?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am getting to that. The assessment was based on value added services and a variety of other benefits which could only be offered in-house. DTT suggested to TransAdelaide and to me that a high risk was involved in the outsourcing of this function. They also established that there was a significant cost benefit in retaining the signal and power services maintenance unit in-house.

It is the case that with all these contracts and asset sales outsourcing the Government would not proceed on price alone. We would always want to look at the whole of Government costs. Having looked at the whole of Government costs in this matter, and having considered the general safety issues, it was determined that it should not proceed. That was the recommendation to me. We discussed it with the management of TransAdelaide, and I approved the decision that we should not proceed. I made that decision on 19 February. I do not have the cost available. I will provide that advice to the honourable member by 7 July.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister will recall that I also asked how many other areas had tried to be tendered out in respect of which the tendering was abandoned, as it was with the signalling.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There are no comparable instances as big as signalling. If there are smaller ones, we will investigate further and inform the honourable member by 7 July. Nothing comes to mind.

Mr ATKINSON: My next question is about TransAdelaide services to Aldinga and Sellicks. As the Minister will be aware, there are no public bus services available at night, weekends or on public holidays to the Aldinga and Sellicks area. The Liberal member for that area, Mrs Rosenberg, is quoted as saying:

I am not advocating a full-on TransAdelaide service. No one in their right mind would. But the PTB has had various options put to it and at this stage has not accepted any.

That statement was published in May this year. What is the Liberal Government proposing to do by way of public transport services for Aldinga and Sellicks Beach?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They are important services. I am not being fussy, but that question could possibly have been better asked under the PTB because TransAdelaide is a subsidised Government system and does not operate beyond Noarlunga. We do not have insurance for our buses to do that. They do not operate further south than Maslin Beach. There

will be no further extensions to subsidised services in the area until we have found savings through the competitive tendering of services.

That was the advice to the Aldinga community and to the local member, then candidate, prior to the last election. It remains the case. We will be able to explore various options beforehand if the PTB is not doing that adequately in the honourable member's view or that of the local member. I will certainly address that issue. However, there is no ability to extend subsidised services to that region.

If an operator thought that there was a sufficient market and a sufficient number of people to use a paid service, certainly such a service could be established now. It is clearly a case like those highlighted in the Barossa Valley and the Fleurieu Peninsula which, as I said earlier, might be more appropriately addressed by the PTB under a transport brokerage system or a variation of such a system. It may not be necessary to have HACC funding. Other funding sources may be available.

There is no reason why all the options should not be considered now, and I will encourage the PTB to do that. Until we make savings through competitive tendering of services in the outer south, the area that we are seeking to address, with the outer north, I cannot provide subsidised services to that area.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister referred earlier to the AUSTRICS rostering system and how it had been developed and used by TransAdelaide and how it had been so successful in rostering efficiencies and cost savings that it was being marketed overseas. If the AUSTRICS rostering system has been so absolutely successful, will future savings in TransAdelaide be made from workers' conditions and wages?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No. Workers' conditions and wages are not the only basis for expense within the TransAdelaide system. There are quite a number of other areas. For example, just a few months ago we addressed the issue of what to do with STA House, which was built when the former management of the STA did not care much about costs or the impact on taxpayers or their organisation.

Mr ATKINSON: Like your ministerial office and the cost of that.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure how that is relevant. The ministerial office is very intensely occupied and is good value for money in terms of the allocation of space. When you consider that the former General Manager used to sit up there in blessed isolation behind locked doors with one secretary and a receptionist, it is interesting to see the activity, productivity and value for money that the taxpayers now get from that office.

If you speak to the former Treasurer and Minister for Transport, the Hon. Frank Blevins, he will tell you that he was pretty cross about the way the STA went about getting approval for funds to erect this building and how it negotiated costs generally. It is an extraordinarily expensive building and is not one of the highest standard by any yardstick. It was a badly negotiated deal. It has been a very expensive exercise for TransAdelaide to meet all the commitments in relation to that building.

Cabinet has now agreed that the Office Accommodation Division of the Department for Building Management will become the lessee for the financial lease held by the South Australian Superannuation Fund Investment Trust and the South Australian Police Pensions Fund, which will be represented by Treasury from 1 July this year. This lease will protect the investment funds for the construction of STA

House in 1986-87 and will show TransAdelaide as the lessee. This is an important move—to get this building off TransAdelaide's books so that this extraordinarily expensive piece of infrastructure does not provide an unnecessary costly burden when assessing its costs for competitive tendering. It is also important in terms of this argument—and I hear it from time to time—that bus operators alone are making the moves or the adjustments in order to win work for TransAdelaide in the future.

Mr ATKINSON: Bearing the cuts, are they?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Or bearing the cuts. There is a new organisational structure within TransAdelaide. It has been flattened out enormously, as it had to be by any standard. Effectively, a layer of management has been eliminated and the number of executive officers have been halved to four where previously there were eight. These four group managers now coordinate a wider span of responsibilities. Reporting to these group managers are employees who have a greater responsibility to achieve goals and objectives at the work site. Not only has there been a significant reduction in senior management but considerable numbers of staff have taken advantage of TSPs and TVSPs. Some 314 staff left during 1993-94. Further, from 1 July 1994 to 31 May 1995, an additional 210 employees have taken the TVSP package. So, that is a total of 524 employees, yet we are offering more services than Labor did when Labor left office. That is a remarkable effort. It also highlights that not all the—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is a remarkable effort. If you are going to be nasty, when I became Minister, one of the first things I inherited was Labor's promise of new services in southern marginal seats—\$2 million of new services, which it had introduced but had not provided funding for. One of the first things I had to do was provide funding for what you could term a 'corrupt' move to provide services and not fund them. That was one of the first things the Liberal Government did. We did not withdraw the services: we continued them, but we had to put some of our own commitments on hold or put them off altogether.

The very fact that 524 employees have left the system yet we are providing more services than we did in the past is a reflection that not only are services being provided more efficiently but that people have left a lot of other positions other than bus operating positions. It would not have been possible for all those positions to go and for us to continue to provide a greater level of service. Since July 1993 to June 1996, TransAdelaide expected to reduce support staff by 50 per cent, to 120. I think that that is the right number for an organisation the size of TransAdelaide which maintains the stance it does and operates as such a good corporate citizen. Nevertheless, we are continuing to examine all areas of the work force to achieve greater efficiency and a competitive position in the marketplace, and that work has been undertaken across all levels of the organisation.

Mr ROSSI: Page 319 of the Program Estimates addresses bicycles on buses and trains. I believe that the previous Government took away the security at railway stations by removing station masters, space on trains with regard to luggage compartments and space in front of buses with regard to shopping bags and pushers. What is the situation regarding the bicycle initiatives on buses and trains? Is this providing more service to passengers and are we listening to the passengers?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This will partly answer a question for which I indicated I would provide an answer to the member for Spence. TransAdelaide currently provides bicycle facilities for about 100 bicycles. These facilities vary from communal bicycle compounds at the Noarlunga Centre to individual bicycle lockers at Brighton, Dudley Park, Klemzig, Paradise and Modbury interchanges, and bicycle racks at the Salisbury and Elizabeth stations. Secure parking of a bicycle in an outer suburban station is clearly a major concern for dual mode travellers, and this is a traveller that we are keen to encourage in the future. A recent report on bicycle dual mode transport in Adelaide by D. Hemmings and others, published in January 1995, indicated that 52 per cent of Gawler rail passengers who cycled regularly would use bicycle storage facilities if available. In Perth some 200 bicycle lockers are located at a number of suburban stations. These lockers are hired out to cyclists by a variety of organisations including the Lions Club, social clubs and even the Museum of Western Australia.

These organisations are responsible for the day-to-day management of it and any other major repairs carried out by Government authorities. Occupancy is estimated to be between 30 per cent and 50 per cent, depending on the station at which they are located. The cost of hiring a locker ranges from \$10 to \$15 per month. Following the Perth example, in conjunction with the Department of Transport Bike South, TransAdelaide plans to install some new style bicycle lockers at suburban stations. This is essentially the answer to a question the honourable member asked earlier. A two-tier system of management of lockers will be trialled. Community groups and/or local businesses will be approached for the day-to-day management of these lockers, and they will retain the revenue from such management. TransAdelaide will oversee the advertising of such lockers as part of its marketing strategy and may provide additional lockers if the trial is successful. The location of these lockers is still to be decided, but I suspect we would be very happy to consult with the honourable member about that. The cost of these lockers is approximately \$400 per locker. They are based on an American design, but are produced locally. These lockers are particularly suitable because the bicycle is totally enclosed and the contents are not visible to passers by. Bike South is prepared to pay for the cost and installation of such lockers, and that is through the Department of Transport. Several other local groups have been involved in the issue of bicycle lockers, including Bike Plan in the Noarlunga and Salisbury areas, and the State Bicycle Committee.

With regard to bicycle signs on railcars, TransAdelaide is currently ensuring that all railcars with bicycle storage facilities are clearly marked, because at the moment nobody has any idea whether a train has bicycle storage facilities. This marking will ensure that passengers with bicycles join the train at the appropriate carriage. A concessional fare is charged by TransAdelaide for the taking of a bicycle on the rail system at present. The peak fare is \$1.30, and 80¢ during the inter-peak. As we stated in our policy, I am aware that interstate, on country rail lines in particular from Melbourne, Victoria, people can take their bikes free of charge in inter-peak periods. In relation to bicycle racks on buses, TransAdelaide has received a bicycle rack based on the design of those currently used across many States in the United States of America. The rack has been fitted on a bus at one of TransAdelaide's depots, and a trial is currently being undertaken to assess its viability. The cost of fitting such racks to all TransAdelaide's bus fleet is estimated to be

in the order of \$500 000 to \$700 000. A trial to see whether they will ever be used is important to undertake in the first instance.

Mr VENNING: I refer to page 320 of the Program Estimates. In relation to the order placed in 1991 for 307 new buses, how many have been delivered to date? Will TransAdelaide continue to own all these buses in the future, plus all the buses yet to be supplied? Also, I understand that a lot of these buses were gas powered, both LPG and CMG gas. What is the Minister's appraisal of that—gas versus diesel?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: With regard to the contract linked to MAN Automotive in April 1991 for the supply of the 307 new buses, to date we have received 108, and deliveries are continuing at the rate of four new buses per month. It is anticipated the contract will run until the first half of 1999. To date, the buses delivered under the contract are all full-sized rigid buses as follows: 25 standard floor height diesel buses; four low floor height diesel buses; and 79 standard floor height natural gas buses. The following buses are currently on firm order but are yet to be delivered: 21 standard floor height natural gas buses, and 50 low floor height diesel midi-buses, with accommodation for wheelchair passengers. Firm details of the remaining 128 buses to be supplied on the contract have not yet been established. The anticipated overall cost of the project has been revised downwards from \$119 million originally estimated to \$112 million, which is good news.

In terms of the gas bus operation, I am able to provide the following details that have been provided to me by Mr Wally Zenkeler, who is associated with the Technical Services branch of TransAdelaide. Eighty-two new MAN gas powered buses are now in service in the Adelaide metropolitan area. The buses were initially equipped with an electronically controlled gas induction and engine management system manufactured by Borg Warner. This system was a new innovation on gas buses, and it was designed to minimise fuel consumption and exhaust emissions and maximise power output. Service operators of the buses have shown that the Borg Warner system had a number of weaknesses and these revealed themselves from time to time in a rather intermittent and unpredictable way, causing widespread breakdowns in services. The manufacturer has worked hard to correct the problems and has conducted a number of major upgrade programs on the buses, although the programs carried out so far have proved to be of a limited value in improving the reliability of the vehicles.

The call out rate, an indication of the number of faults the buses sustain in operation, has now been reduced to about the average level for the whole of our fleet, which is good news. However, these faults are often more serious and result in the vehicle being towed back to the depot, and that is not good. A herculean effort by maintenance staff at Morphettville depot has also increased continued significantly in faults and resulting inconvenience to our customers. MAN Automotive has now commenced a new modification program on each bus which includes the following: first, fitting of an upgraded Herion gas control valve; secondly, the fitting of an upgraded gas regulator; and, thirdly, a replacement engine control computer. Everybody in TransAdelaide—and I certainly share the same view—are hopeful this work will reduce further both the number and the severity of the gas bus problems.

Mr VENNING: Has the Minister any news in relation to new 3000 series railcars? When will we get them and how many?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The number of railcars delivered to TransAdelaide as at 21 April 1995—and that is the latest delivery we received—is 32, of the 50 railcar contract. The last railcar of the contract is scheduled for delivery in October 1996. The anticipated cost of the railcar project is expected to be about \$126 million. This anticipated cost is well under initial estimates. It certainly is, because I remember asking questions about the very high initial estimates for this program. I am not too sure to whom we should attribute the success; perhaps it is even the change in the dollar or interest rates.

Mr VENNING: I ask a supplementary question. These new railcars will be diesel-electric. Has any consideration been given to gas powered railcars?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I understand that tests have been done with gas powered railcars interstate, but as we are having enough problems with buses at the moment I think someone else can do that if they wish—it will not be us.

Membership:

Mr Caudell substituted for Mr Rossi.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to page 320 of the Program Estimates regarding customer awareness. What is TransAdelaide's strategy in relation to women for 1995-96?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: TransAdelaide is spending a lot of time analysing its customer base as it becomes a 'customer first' organisation. It is apparent that the vast majority (64 per cent) of our passengers are women; therefore, we need to spend more time on addressing their specific needs, as indeed we seek to address the needs of all our passengers. Having identified our passenger base, in November 1994 TransAdelaide hosted one of the first conferences in Australia to look at women and public transport as part of its contribution to the Women's Suffrage Centenary Year. This inaugural conference addressed many controversial issues relating to women and public transport and set the scene for a conference that will be held later this year, which all members of Parliament are invited to attend.

Issues that affect women as employees and users were debated, and there was a general call for transport authorities to develop programs for both groups. TransAdelaide has since developed a women's network program, which provides forums for discussions on issues such as stress management, personal safety and career path planning. TransAdelaide has committed itself to convening women on the move. A second national conference to debate the issues that affect women in public transport will be held in October at the Adelaide Town Hall. Whilst TransAdelaide will host the event, it is actively seeking major sponsorship investment to support the conference. This will help to ensure that the conference is cost neutral, and that is important if we are to get many customers to attend, because generally women are not amongst the wealthiest in the community. They are certainly not if they are dependent on public transport rather than travel on it by choice.

TransAdelaide's investment in this conference will be \$10 000 to \$12 000, and the Office of the Status of Women will help as will the Flinders Institute of Public Policy and Management. The Australian newspapers have also indicated that they are prepared to help with a national feature. What is even more interesting than the focus that TransAdelaide

has on women employees and passengers is the fact that, as part of a national project that is being developed by the Office of the Status of Women, all Ministers for the Office of Status of Women—not all of whom are women: in Tasmania, a man is Minister—are keen to see progress on a project called 'Women as customers', and to look at organisations from that basis.

It is apparent from the preliminary work that has been done at the national level that TransAdelaide is more advanced than any public service agency in Australia in the way in which it is looking at women customers, and I think that is a tremendous compliment to TransAdelaide and those who are driving this program. We have learnt a lot about what our women customers want, and even if there may not be real security fears at night many women will not use public transport at night because they have to alight some distance from their home and they are afraid of being followed or simply do not like the environment at a railway station. So, lighting is critical. Security cameras deter trouble at stations. This year, progressively through a sponsorship program, we will introduce telephones on buses and trains so that passengers can call their family, a friend or a taxi to meet them at their destination. Those are just some of the things that are being developed by TransAdelaide as a result of feedback from women customers. Passenger service attendants have been endorsed 100 per cent by women customers as a good initiative—they would like to have them on every train, but that is not practicable at this time.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister will recall that, before 1974 when the then Labor Government nationalised metropolitan bus services, private bus services tended to operate from a suburb to the central business district and then return to the suburb it started from. Now that we are to have private contractors—that is, people other than TransAdelaide providing public transport—will there be a need for extra buses in TransAdelaide to maintain through running, that is, buses travelling from one side of the city to the other, because surely it would be more efficient for a bus to go from a suburb on one side of the city to the CBD and then to a suburb on the other side of the city, as TransAdelaide and its predecessor, the State Transport Authority, arranged its buses?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I understand the honourable member's concern. We have had recent discussions with the PTB in contracting terms. As I indicated earlier, in terms of the schedule of contracts, a number of single line operations will be contracted out. For example, TL3 and TL10 will be contracted out exactly for that reason, as will the circle line. In terms of the north-east and the inner north-east, initially it was thought they would be contracted out at separate times. They will probably be contracted out together with some regions to the west just for that purpose. That is why tender call three will involve inner north and inner south at the same time and we will be calling them in March 1996, for the reasons that the honourable member outlines. Even so, it may lead to more buses. It may not necessarily be TransAdelaide buses. I would hope that there will be cause for more buses, particularly minibuses and the like, arising from innovations that will come from the competitive tendering process.

Mr ATKINSON: When the Liberal Party first announced the tendering out of bus routes there was an expectation among many small private operators that they could have a share of the action. As I understand it, although these private operators can lease buses from the Department of Transport, they will need a minimum of 70 buses to do the kind of work

that TransAdelaide is tendering out. At one time the Minister had expressed the hope that former employees of the STA, or TransAdelaide, would form companies to tender for contracts, as stated in her party strategy document of 1993. Bearing in mind the large size of the contracts being offered, what is the Minister's expectation in this matter?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The next contract in terms of tender call two will be some of the single line operations, for example, TL3, TL10 and the 560 bus service. That means there is a package of 25 buses. Later we will see, in terms of Le Fevre Peninsula, 10 buses; 18 buses for the circle line; and 10 buses at the Port, Marino area. Because of the size of the area and the number of buses it is quite reasonable, in my view, for a group to club together, whether they are ex employees of TransAdelaide or any other bus operation. They may also decide, because that is the size of the bus fleet now serving that area, that they may not wish to operate all the services by the current size bus. They may decide that in the evenings minibuses, or even taxis, would be a good idea or a bigger organisation may subcontract out some part of its contract or, if not contract it out, do it in a partnership, for example, having someone else responsible for that part in the evening or the interpeak services and those sorts of things. There always have been and still are a variety of configurations or options and I hope there always will be a variety of interest.

Mr ATKINSON: It is reported in the financial statement that TransAdelaide will retain ownership of a fleet of about 300 buses and that it will initially have a requirement to lease 400 buses from the Department of Transport. Does this indicate that TransAdelaide is expected to win less than half of the tendered services and, if not, why has the 300, 400 split in ownership of buses been devised?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not related at all to whether or not TransAdelaide wins services. It is important that TransAdelaide did not maintain ownership of all these buses because then, if it was to lease them out to other operators, that would not have been reasonable in a competitive sense. For instance, NR was charging other service providers wanting to use its system or its locomotives exorbitant rates. The majority of buses—some of them new, but none with the compressed natural gas—have all gone across to the Department of Transport. TransAdelaide has kept, as the member for Spence has indicated, some 300 buses. That is due to the personal effort of Mr Bengier initially to make sure that TransAdelaide had some equity as an organisation.

Therefore, in looking at this whole issue the Asset Transfer Steering Committee, which was delegated with the responsibility of proposing the future of these assets, took into account three important Government policy principles: first, the value of the assets that must be maintained at the highest level possible; secondly, that assets such as buses and bus depots must be available to new entrants to the public transport market in order to increase contestability; and, thirdly, TransAdelaide should be established with an assets structure that is similar to its potential competitors. That is the rationale. There was no speculation on anybody's part. If Mr Bengier and TransAdelaide have their way they plan to win every tender and they would wish to own every bus. So, it is not a speculation about how much TransAdelaide may or may not win.

Mr CAUDELL: In relation to the Adelaide Railway Station clock's western face on North Terrace, it has had a

piece of white paper over the dial for years. Now it has a sign that says 'Out of order'.

Mr ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Chairman. I thought we were moving to arts at 5.15.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is a heritage clock.

Mr CAUDELL: I can understand that the sign on it saying 'Out of order' might have been very relevant to the Government prior to 1993, but it is not relevant to the current situation. What is being done to bring that clock back into order?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, I will personally undertake, as a special favour to the Chairman, to investigate the matter and see that this clock is brought back to order within reasonable time and within reasonable budget.

The CHAIRMAN: The agreed time was 5.15 p.m. to deal with the proposed payments, TransAdelaide \$33 212 000. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Arts and Cultural Development, \$61 066 000

Membership:

Mr Brindal substituted for Ms Penfold.

Mr Wade substituted for Mr Venning.

Mr Rann substituted for Mr Atkinson.

Departmental Advisers:

Winnie Pelz, Chief Executive Officer.

Debra Contala, Director, Planning and Resources.

Gerrie King, Manager, Financial Services.

Jeff Bettcher, Manager, Program Services, Arts Development.

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

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Thank you, Sir. Before I start, I would like to inform the committee that Miss Carol Treloar, Director of Arts Development, is in hospital with a bad back. Otherwise, she would be here with us today.

The Arts and Cultural Development budget for 1995-96 reflects the high priority this Government places on maintaining South Australia's reputation for quality artistic and cultural activities which also contribute significantly to the State's economic development. This is demonstrated by world-class events such as the Festival of Arts, Fringe, WOMAD and Barossa Music Festival, all of which play a major role in this State's cultural tourism.

Recurrent grants to arts organisations will be increased in 1995-96. A major component of this is an additional \$1 million for the 1996 Adelaide Festival, which will now have a major contribution from the Government amounting to \$3.5 million. Pending the outcome of Mr Peter Alexander's report on possible models and the delivery of opera and orchestral services, an amount of \$200 000 has been allocated towards the restructuring of orchestral services, with a further \$100 000 advanced to State Opera for preliminary work associated with the staging of Wagner's masterpiece *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, also known as *The Ring*, in 1998. An additional amount of \$200 000 has been set aside to ensure that the 1996 Fringe is not disadvantaged by the loss of the

StarClub venue due to new work at the University of South Australia.

The budget for 1995-96 includes \$6.1 million for the completion of major extensions to the Art Gallery of South Australia, stages 1, 2 and 3. These extensions, which will double the exhibition space of the gallery, will be opened in time for the 1996 Festival. An additional sum of \$554 000 has been provided for staff and operating costs associated with the larger gallery. Capital funds will also be provided to complete feasibility and design work for a major redevelopment of the South Australian Museum—the National Gallery of Aboriginal Cultures. This development will provide a showcase for South Australia's significant collection of Aboriginal cultural material, and this project will become one of the State's most important cultural tourism attractions.

Also in accord with the 1994 task force report, further work will be undertaken to develop the contemporary music industry, raise the profile of South Australian crafts in the international arena, establish new literature awards and promote innovative new programming. In that regard, I am particularly keen to see new work in the performing arts. The budget includes funding of \$830 000 from the Economic Development Program for the promotion of South Australia as a production location for the South Australian Film Corporation. This demonstrates the strong alliance which the arts has developed with the Economic Development Authority and which is also reflected in a number of other cooperative projects.

Meanwhile, a new six-year lease agreement has secured the Hendon studios as a base for the resurgence of the film industry in South Australia. An amount of \$150 000 has also been provided as a contribution to South Australia's bid to the Commonwealth Government for a cooperative multimedia centre to be established here in Adelaide. The establishment of these centres was announced in the Federal Government's Creative Nation statement.

The new initiatives that I have just outlined have been funded in a climate which has demanded that the arts contribute to the Government's debt reduction strategy. For the most part, the savings will be achieved with a minimal impact on grants allocations and services. Savings of \$1.425 million have been made primarily through reduction in central office costs, restructuring of State History Centre outreach services, improved commercial returns of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, and ceasing some grants to areas that are not deemed under the Arts and Cultural Development Task Force report to be priority areas at this time. Despite these requirements, the budget for the arts is, for the reasons that I have outlined, extremely positive. Most areas of the arts have had their budgets maintained or boosted.

I thank Winnie Pelz and all officers in the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development for their care and professionalism in dealing with the Arts budget issues at this time and for our relative success compared with some other agencies in terms of budget negotiations and the general maintenance of our budgets.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Leader of the Opposition have an opening statement?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Yes. Over the years we have tried to have a bipartisan attitude towards the arts, usually successfully but not always so. I concur that we have an outstanding international Arts Festival. As Minister for Tourism, I was pleased to put in money to help secure and underwrite WOMAD and also to give \$1 million to the Motor

Museum, because the History Trust is so important in our cultural development.

I was also pleased to assist, with the EDA, the South Australian Film Corporation and to work in conjunction with the former Minister for the Arts (Hon. Anne Levy) to show the importance of the arts to tourism in this State and to our economic development.

The Minister mentioned the Barossa Music Festival, which is an outstanding achievement and which is growing in stature internationally. We also have organisations such as the Meryl Tankard Dance Theatre, which has a huge reputation on virtually every continent, and smaller organisations such as the Unley Youth Theatre, of which I am a board member and which I think is the pre-eminent youth theatre in Australia.

With Tandanya, the Aboriginal Cultural Institute, which needs to be constantly reinforced to become an outstanding living symbol of a range of activities, including performing arts, I certainly concur that a great deal has been achieved over the years.

The Festival Fringe has come into its own over the past few years to reach a pre-eminence in world terms with respect to what is offered during that event. The Minister may wish to take this on notice, because I should like to know what arrangements the Government has made to assist the Festival and the Fringe if they exceed their budgets. I should also like the Minister to report to the Committee in writing or verbally on the progress of the temporary re-siting of the 1996 Fringe.

However, areas of concern where I think that bipartisanship certainly is not currently enjoyed relate to community radio and Old Parliament House. This year the Minister cut all community radio grants from her budget—all of the \$132 000 which they received previously—and now, after a strong campaign by the South Australian Community Broadcasters Association and by individual community radio stations, she seems to have done a partial backflip. However, it is clear that the Government's agenda is merely a stay of execution with a savage mauling delivered in the interim.

We want to know what are the radio stations facing in the future because it is quite clear that the message on the steps of Parliament today from the Minister is that this is the thin edge of the wedge; they have been served notice. I understand that the Minister has said that she does not regard community radio as a *bona fide* art form, even though I am advised that only 10 months ago the Minister said that she would continue to fund the sector. Furthermore, I am advised that the cuts have not been recommended by the Community Cultural Development Advisory Committee, which provides peer group assessment of such applications.

I also understand that, in terms of the Minister's concerns about community radio not being a *bona fide* art form and that the money previously was being used mainly for equipment and salaries, she expressed this concern despite the fact that applicants had been advised by departmental officers to specify equipment and such needs in their applications for funding. In the Estimates Committee last year the Minister said:

You can have all the big companies you like, but they can easily fall into a comfort zone unless you have the pressure, innovation and excitement coming from below.

I want to ask the Minister a number of questions relating to this. Is this the beginning of the abolition of peer group assessment as a principle in arts funding?

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: One of the members from the Government side says that it is, so perhaps the Minister can concur?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am surprised at the question, because it has no relevance to the explanation.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I think it does.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Perhaps you can put it together and show me how.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Haven't you had a smoke or something? Do you want to be offensive from the start or shall we get stuck in right now?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I asked whether this is the beginning of the abolition of peer group assessment in terms of arts.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: If the answer is 'No', why did you not say so?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I didn't know—

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Come on—the less we have to say. So the answer is 'No.' All right, we will go on to the next question. As about 3 000 people are involved in providing community radio across the State and it has an audience of about 400 000 people, how can the Minister say that community radio does not have a community development role as well as not being a *bona fide* art form?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have never said either.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Did you tell the group 10 months ago that you would continue funding the sector?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is right, and in my letter to the groups I indicated that, while we would not be continuing to fund in terms of the general purpose payments for community radio, they could certainly continue to apply for equipment under the Community Facilities Development Program. So community radio has never been cut out of arts funding; they were free to apply for equipment.

The commitment made 10 months ago was given before the arts budget and all other budgets had to look again at their outlays arising from interest rate pressures on the general budget and also wage pressures. So, reluctantly I had to reconsider my statement made 10 months ago, but I did not cut public radio out of the arts budget altogether. They were still able to apply if they wished for equipment grants under another line.

However, I do not consider that we should be funding equipment under the line of general purpose payments to arts organisations. If they wish to apply for arts related programs for new work in music, new work in literature, new work in poetry or writing of plays, work by current or established artists or work that has been around for a long time, they should apply for arts funding for related projects under grants to the arts line. That is what every other arts organisation that applies for funds must do and I have no less expectation of community radio.

To put a little bit of perspective into this, from what has occurred one would think that the decision to ask community arts—if they are arts organisations—to work on the same basis as all other arts organisations in seeking funds through the arts for arts related purposes presented them with a challenge that was impossible to meet; yet the argument that all the community radio stations have presented to me in the past few weeks is the one that I have always supported. However, when they applied for funds they never applied for that purpose: they applied for equipment purposes. So there is a contradiction between what publicly was being stated as

their purpose and what was reflected in their applications for arts funding. And that was the basis for the decision to cease general purpose arts grants for equipment purposes.

When I learnt that there had been an acceptance—not a stipulation, as some have suggested—by the department of the practice of community radio stations directing funding applications for equipment purposes I was prepared to consider the basis of my earlier decision to cease funding for 1996 and to provide a different basis for funding, which is the arts program basis, and that reflects the Government's directions in art funding. I cannot stress enough that I am not asking any more of community radio than I am asking for any other organisation in the broad arts sector that seeks to apply for general arts grants. They must be for arts related purposes.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: What is missing is a bit of support from Government members. By way of supplementary, I should state that the Minister has also stated that her original decision to abolish community radio funding was because community television was not being funded. On such reasoning, the Minister could abolish funding for the State Opera because Co-Opera was not funded, or cut Mainstreet Theatre and Doppio Teatro because the Adelaide Repertory Company was not funded. I am not suggesting that that should occur but, after using the same logic as the Minister, one can see that her decision has no credibility at all.

I understand that earlier today the Minister was unable to report to the committee what was the cost of establishing the radio broadcasts on the benefits of the Southern Expressway, something that the Minister is very eager to fund with its Party political messages. However, she was able to report that the consultants engaged had walked out of employment in the Premier's office and into the consultancy. Can the Minister confirm that the cost of that propaganda exercise exceeded the amount cut from the community radio grants?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have been accused of using no logic. I find it difficult to follow the logic or the rationale of the Leader.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Do you want me to spell it out to you?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not too sure whether the Leader has had a bad day, but through every other area, from Mr Atkinson, Mr De Laine and Ms Geraghty, we have had a very accommodating day. In terms of starting, you asked to start at 5.15 p.m. You asked me last night to change the whole program and said that you would commend the officers for changing the times and accommodating—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Leader has asked the question.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw:—Your personal relations. My officers and I have been pleased to do so. I hope that wherever he goes tonight he is in a better mood than he is before this Committee, although I guess he will not make much positive impact, so he might as well go, anyway; he will only help the Government.

In terms of the Party political messages, the consultancy in relation to radio station FM88 was a consultancy let by the department, having considered other expressions of interest to run that program. It was a part of a package to sell an initiative which this Government promised and was able to provide within the first year of Government. Mr Rann is probably upset because he was around for a long time advising the former Government, which kept on promising but could never deliver. I am not surprised that he is upset

and uptight. I am not sure what was the point of the rest of the question.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I want to know, by way of supplementary question—

Mr BRINDAL: On a point of order, the examination of payments and receipts under the Department of Transport has been completed and I would like to know whether, in asking questions on the arts, there is any relevance or it is proper to ask questions which pertain to the Department of Transport.

The CHAIRMAN: I took it that it is being used as an example. We are dealing with community radio, and that was given as an example. The Minister is quite capable of handling and answering the question from that viewpoint. We like to stick to the budget before us, but I believe it was an example.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is no direct comparison. I thank the member for Unley for his interest in this matter. FM88 is a radio signal. The Leader of the Opposition is getting signals muddled up with stations. There is no comparison.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I will put it on notice separately. What is the cost of the radio station for the Southern Expressway and can we compare that to the cost of the cuts?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not a radio station, it is a radio signal. We were licensed—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not being smart. We are licensed for a signal and have said it is a signal. If it is a station its reach would have been much wider than just O'Halloran Hill, to which it is confined.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Radio DDD is among radio stations that will be hit hard by cuts to their grants. Radio DDD plays about 40 per cent South Australian produced music and plays a vital role in assisting and merging contemporary music artists who do not get a look in on commercial radio. I assume that the Minister followed the advice of her consultant, Mr John Schumann, on contemporary music in making her decision to remove their grant, but if not what was her consultant's advice?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The range of grants that had been approved in the past ranged from \$5 000 to \$13 000 for Radio 5UV, which was the highest. The Community Association, which we are continuing to fund, is \$21 500. They are grants essentially used for equipment purposes. I announced yesterday that \$100 000 will be provided for arts-related purposes. If DDD wish to apply for funding under that line—and I am aware that they are strong supporters of South Australian music—I suspect they would be eligible if its application is judged to be such.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: As a supplementary question, would you be prepared to release Mr Schumann's advice or will we seek it on FOI?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I did not seek it.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: So you would be happy for us to seek it on FOI?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I did not seek advice.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I understood that he did give you advice.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: He has not received advice before the decision was made.

Mr BRINDAL: I endorse the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. The arts has always had something of a bipartisan approach in the Parliament, but I have been asked on behalf of the backbenchers of the Liberal Party to congratulate the Minister on what is an excellent arts budget in a

difficult year. A lot of credit goes to the Minister and her officers for what is happening in the arts in South Australia because there is a refocussing. Unless that be thought to be partisan and not bipartisan, I draw the Minister's attention to the comments of the Hon. Don Dunstan in the latest *Adelaide Review*. He is hardly a noted Liberal supporter, but said 'Give credit where credit is due' and congratulated the Minister on some of what she was doing in the arts portfolio.

My first question is about Liberal Party policy, since the Liberal Party is now in Government. The arts policy stated that a Liberal Government would streamline the department's bureaucratic infrastructure. The Minister, prior to the election, was most concerned that too much arts money was going out of an arts budget and being spent on bureaucrats. What action has been taken to implement this commitment? I refer to the line on support services at page 336 of the Program Estimates.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There had been a general view in the arts industry for some time, but increasingly during the latter years of the Labor Government, that the bureaucracy in the Arts Department had become top heavy, so it was not just the manner in which decisions were being made and the pulling to itself of power within the arts community but also the sheer number of people within the Department for the Arts and Cultural Heritage, as it was at that stage. I remember Len Amadio at his farewell recently at Edmund Wright House making public and private comment to the department regarding its growth in size and influence in the arts sector over a period. He was the first director and had not liked those trends for some time. It is not something the Liberal Government supported. It is a credit to the administrators within the department today that they have looked very critically at the role and function in relation to the whole arts community, their reason for being and their future area for effort. Within the department over the past year in the central office alone 10 positions have gone, representing a 20 per cent reduction.

The total savings from the Central Office budget over the past two financial years alone amounts to \$350 000. In 1994-95, there will be savings of a further \$175 000. In 1995-96, there is a combination of salaries and general operating costs. The Central Office has certainly made a strong contribution to the challenge that we have all faced in terms of maximising dollars in certain activities which have been deemed to be important for the future position of the State and for the quality of the artistic product. There has been a 20 per cent reduction.

We have eliminated duplication and we have streamlined finances and the area of general grants administration. Information technology support has been contracted out. A strategic planning and industry development unit has been established from existing staff with officers reassigned to focus on initiatives which will assist the arts and the cultural industry in the State to develop sustainable activities and contribute to the social and economic development of the State.

Project staff in the department are focusing on industrial development and they are enjoying the new challenges provided to extend their expertise and to work with the industry with a much broader focus than they were encouraged to do in the past. I was pleased to see that happen on a personal level, and for the officers concerned, and I was pleased at the response received within the community.

Mr BRINDAL: Just to be sure I understand it, does that mean that you and the officers in your department have

already effectively achieved savings of more than \$500 000 which now are not going into administration, but directly into arts and arts organisations?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is right.

Mr BRINDAL: That is very good.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member is better at selling the achievements of the department than I am.

Mr CAUDELL: I have a question for the Minister in relation to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra with regard to Program Estimates, page 328. The Minister recently received a petition of more than 12 000 signatures supporting the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra seeking increased South Australian funding in the next financial year. I presented that petition to the House of Assembly on the Minister's behalf. What funding does the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra receive from the State Government? Will any additional funding be provided next year?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The State Government gives \$490 000 annually to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra of which \$240 000 is specifically dedicated to the purchase of services by the State Opera of South Australia for its seasons of operas in Adelaide. It has been a source of agitation and upset for some years among Friends of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, musicians and the wider community interested in music in South Australia that the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra has seemed to be under-funded. It is certainly under-resourced in terms of players. We have 54 musicians which is well undersize for the kind of symphony orchestra that one would wish for a city of Adelaide's status.

The State Government has been under pressure for some years. Labor did not respond. The situation came to a head with the Prime Minister's cultural Creative Nation statement which placed the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in some jeopardy as it is one of the smaller Australian orchestras. However, that issue has essentially now been resolved. With the recent decision to establish the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as a subsidiary company of the ABC, funded by the Commonwealth through the Major Organisations Board of the Australian Council, the funding for ABC symphony orchestras has now been assured until 1997. However, for a period, the uncertainty led to the petition to which the honourable member referred and in the Arts Department, in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the State Opera and in my office, it led us all to believe that the issue had come to a head and we had to consider seriously what the State could do. If we were able to find additional funds, should we allocate them without conditions or should we consider how to model the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the State Opera in such a way that we could attract more musicians into the orchestra and find a way to ensure that both organisations were structurally and artistically sound and excelling for many years to come?

Mr Peter Alexander, who used to head the Arts Finance Committee, agreed to undertake a consultancy to consider models for future funding of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the State Opera from a State perspective. I received his report a few weeks ago and I would like to outline some of Mr Alexander's findings because they are relevant to the funding decisions that we have made. He found that the State Opera of South Australia and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra have been experiencing operating difficulties for several years and, while managing to maintain high artistic and professional standards, the operating viability of both organisations is a matter of

considerable concern notwithstanding the fact that, artistically, both organisations have been doing well so far.

Mr BRINDAL: They have both been starved because of the State organisations.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: In part, but they have been starved from State funds. However, it is also interesting to note the hypocrisy of the Federal Government in funding opera. For example, when the Australian Opera or the Australian Ballet come to Adelaide, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra is required to perform and we pay. However, they have their own orchestras which are funded by the Federal Government when they play in other States—

Mr Brindal: The Prime Minister is not a member of the Sydney Opera is he?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure whether he is a member or not, but it has made it very difficult for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to perform not only for State Opera but for other operas when they come here, and to perform for the ballet and also to undertake their own program of works. With a small number of people, they have been working extraordinarily hard. Workers compensation is a real issue for violinists and others. The orchestra has been under considerable pressure. Notwithstanding that pressure, standards have remained particularly high to date.

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

Membership:

Ms Stevens substituted for the Hon. M.D. Rann.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Venning): The Minister for the Arts.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I was talking about some of the results that have been reached by Peter Alexander in his research in relation to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and State Opera. I indicated that he had highlighted that both had been experiencing difficulties for several years and, while managing to maintain high artistic and professional standards, there is reason to have some concern about managing both companies in the future. He pointed out that there are few, if any, models for a merged delivery of the services in Australia but highlighted that there are successful models overseas for the delivery of opera and orchestral services. He said such models are common in Europe, in Florence in particular, and in Northern England and Scotland. He highlighted that advantages with respect to such models include the quality of artistic product, both in music and ballet and/or opera, because of the close associations and relationships between artists and their participation in substantial programs.

There are advantages for the quality of opportunities for musicians because they are working closely with opera interests, which are a part of the same company. There is also greater effectiveness in the management of such organisations, particularly in sales, marketing, personnel and financial management. While initially overall economies may not be large, Mr Alexander said that overseas experience indicates that, because of the larger critical mass of the merged organisation and its range of interests and contacts locally, nationally and internationally, it has the opportunity to generate more significant sponsorship and also greater support from the community. Most merged models are well placed to undertake major events. Mr Alexander's conclusion suggests that such models could be feasible in relation to opera and orchestral services in South Australia and that

improved opportunities could exist for the State Opera and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to work together, particularly in relation to major events of common interest.

A single organisation could also create opportunities for flexibility in the annual opera and orchestral program, as is the case in many European cities. Mr Alexander has identified a range of options for models and corporate structures and has given his findings on this first stage. Therefore, I have engaged him to undertake further research. The terms of reference for his work—and he will complete this by July 1995—are as follows:

1. to further investigate and develop a possible organisational structure for the joint delivery of opera and orchestral services in South Australia, arising from the options proposed by phase 1 of the consultant's study and in the context of current directions at the Commonwealth level and in other States;

2. to identify and analyse the key policy factors and any obstacles pertaining to possible future models which would require formal discussion and negotiation with the boards of current orchestra and opera services, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Federal Government and the South Australian Government, including the corporate structure, accountability (both formal and local), ownership, board and equity structure, funding processes and industrial issues;

3. to develop possible terms and conditions for consideration as the basis for negotiations; and

4. in doing so, to consult with parties including the board and management of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the board and management of the State Opera of South Australia, the foundation and management of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and other relevant individuals and organisations.

Pending the outcome of Mr Alexander's further report and my discussions with the Federal Minister, as I indicated earlier provision has been made in the State budget for an additional \$200 000 to be allocated in 1995-96 towards the restructuring of orchestral services. This sum would present a substantial 41 per cent increase in State funds for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and provide a welcome increase in funds after years of representation by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and supporters of orchestral music in general. In my view, it is also important that the State takes the initiative in this area. We should not be just sitting back, waiting for the Federal Government to determine the fate of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra when it suits the Federal Government. It is far too important for Adelaide as a whole, as well as its contribution to the arts. Mr Alexander will continue to work with a reference team, made up of the representatives of the board of State Opera of South Australia, the foundation of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development. Meanwhile, I will be canvassing Mr Alexander's initial findings with the Federal Minister for Communications and the Arts, Hon. Michael Lee.

Finally, I remind members of the statement by the Premier of 19 May that in 1998 State Opera, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Australian Major Events will collaborate to stage Richard Wagner's *The Ring* cycle, at a cost of \$6.4 million. It is this form of major event that Mr Alexander said would benefit considerably from a single organisation representing the State's interests. I am inclined to support that view. Overall, Mr Alexander advocates change in the interests of maintaining a significant local opera orchestral resource that has the potential to grow, not just to survive,

and he makes that point very strongly in his initial report. On that basis, in this climate and with the encouragement of the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development, the Government is prepared to help both opera and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to grow and not just survive.

Mr CAUDELL: As a supplementary question: what progress has been made on the concert hall feasibility study that is being undertaken by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The proposal for a feasibility study for a concert hall that might boost the artistic and economic performance of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra arose from a report in August 1994 by the Arts and Cultural Development Task Force. The task force supported the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in its quest to build audiences, but believed that a proper assessment of market requirements and alternative venues should be undertaken before any capital project would be considered. A steering committee was then established by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to conduct a pre-feasibility exercise.

The steering committee includes representation from the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development. Following a thorough tendering process, a consultancy firm (Ernst and Young) was engaged on behalf of a consortium of firms, including McGregor Marketing Pty Ltd, Bassets Pty Ltd and Greenway International Pty Ltd. All have been engaged to undertake a vigorous assessment of actual versus projected demand for a concert hall, its potential usage throughout the year and the commercial viability of such a project. The assessments will also explore the use and conversion of existing venues. The work is nearing completion, and a report is anticipated to be available for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the Government by the end of July 1995. It would be premature at this stage to comment ahead of the findings of the study. I would say, however, that any concert hall, even if it were found to be a viable business proposition, may well be some time off, but stage one of a feasibility study to gauge demand is a very important start in looking at this matter, and we are, of course, following up the recommendations of the Arts and Cultural Development Task Force. The Department for the Arts and Cultural Development has contributed \$15 000 to this study.

Mr CAUDELL: As a further supplementary question: is any possible site highlighted at this stage?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not aware of that. I have not received the report and I will not receive it until July, but I understand that the committee is looking at new sites. However, as I indicated, it is exploring the use or conversion of existing venues.

Mr BRINDAL: There are some nice venues in Unley.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I encourage the honourable member to make contact with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and propose any sites. It would welcome such interest.

Mr WADE: I refer to page 118 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments. Will the Minister explain why funds have been cut to some organisations when the total departmental application of funds for recurrent payments has been increased by \$3.967 million?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The arts budget is complicated this year, because there has been a lot of change within budget lines in the light of the recommendations of the Arts and Cultural Development Task Force and Government policy, in some instances. As I said in my opening statement, I am pleased that funding has been maintained. I think that

it is great news for the arts and a credit to the status of the arts in South Australia that the Government is prepared to make that decision at this time. Not all portfolios receive such reasonable treatment or earn such kudos. I say 'reasonable treatment'; other Ministers would say 'generous treatment'.

Additional appropriation has been provided in terms of an increase in funding of \$1 million to the 1996 Adelaide Festival, which will make the Government's total contribution \$3.5 million. Additional recurrent funds of about \$600 000 have been provided in relation to the extension of the Art Gallery and the recurrent funds that we need to engage people from about October prior to the opening in February. A further contribution has been made to the Adelaide Fringe, because a decision by the former Government in terms of the University of South Australia meant that the Fringe lost much of its space, which is important to it to enable it to stage successful Fringe activities. So the Fringe as an incorporated organisation is working with the department to confirm a base for its activities in 1996, and the Government will provide \$200 000 as its contribution to that new location.

As I mentioned, \$200 000 will be provided to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and \$100 000 initial funding to the State Opera for work to be undertaken to secure contracts and get things going in terms of *The Ring*. There are recurrent appropriation increases in terms of: a Government wage offer (\$500 000), increased debt servicing due to higher interest rates (\$400 000), and to establish a South Australian multimedia centre (\$200 000).

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I hope that the honourable member will explore the South Australian multimedia centre in further questions, because it is exciting and it is certainly a new direction within the Arts Department. The total financing associated with the production of films, particularly *Shine*, is an important contribution in terms of allocations for the department this year. *Shine* is the first film in South Australia to receive what is called a revolving fund where funds are provided earlier than required for production in order to help the producer over the initial costs. If this revolving fund arrangement had not been provided, Scott Hicks, the Emmy Award winner for documentaries, would almost certainly have directed this film in New South Wales, and Jane Scott would not have had any opportunity other than to go to New South Wales. So that is an important part of the funding arrangements. There is also, of course, the \$800 000 through the EDA lines.

This funding in addition to the arts budget is offset by the department's contribution to the Government's overall saving strategy of \$1.4 million. These savings have primarily been found through a reduction in central office costs, which I highlighted earlier, restructuring of the State history centre services and improved commercial returns from the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust. I heard over the radio this morning that the trust was getting good publicity on the ABC for *Hello Dolly* and other productions. I think it is proposing to raise \$750 000 through productions this year.

Mr BRINDAL: And *Miss Saigon*.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, they have been doing amazing work on the set at Dry Creek in terms of the workshops. They have been involved in *Me and My Girl*, and *South Pacific* is now in Chiang Mai. So, they are a success story. But there have had to be adjustments also to some other grants within the arts budget. Generally, that identifies the balance of funds.

Ms STEVENS: In relation to the Program Estimates, page 333, the Minister announced on 11 May that Old Parliament House Museum is to close on 30 June, a few days away. This act of cultural vandalism has been denounced by many prominent citizens and even described by the *Advertiser* as a bad decision and the destruction of an admirable institution. The *Advertiser* described the Minister as 'the Minister for closing things' and as 'the museum crusher'. Never before has a South Australian Government closed a major museum, one with a proven record as a tourist attraction and a major educational resource used by 250 000 South Australian school children and one million people altogether since it was opened. To say the space is needed by Parliament is laughable. We all know it is not. It is the parliamentary committees which are supposed to use the building and they are currently perfectly well housed in the Riverside Building, where a lot of money has been spent making their accommodation suitable for their needs, as you know.

Mr Caudell interjecting:

Ms STEVENS: As I know, too. There is not sufficient space for them in Old Parliament House and, anyway, a further \$600 000 will need to be spent before they can move in—as admitted by the Minister for Industrial Affairs. And that is not counting the unknown cost of providing the bridge from Parliament House, which is rumoured to be in the order of \$800 000.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I beg your pardon? Could I correct the honourable member—it is \$38 000.

Ms STEVENS: I guess that would happen in the answer, anyway. Shall I continue with my question? Then the Minister will have a chance to answer.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Continue on, please. I remind members that Standing Orders do apply.

Ms STEVENS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. About \$1.4 million of taxpayers' money is to be spent for no good purpose on top of the \$13 million being spent to upgrade this Parliament House to an acceptable standard, but which will then adequately accommodate all our requirements. I understand that the presiding members of parliamentary committees have written to the Premier expressing their concern with arrangements for the committees. I realise that the Adelaide Festival needs accommodation outside the Festival Theatre complex, but it does not have to be in the parliamentary committees' area of the Riverside Building, as there is plenty of vacant accommodation in the city, and the History Trust and the State History Centre can be relocated to Edmund Wright House from the Institute Building without destroying Old Parliament House Museum.

I was taken by a number of messages left by visitors to the Old Parliament House Museum, but I think this one sums it up. It states:

The museum is part of our culture. Please leave it alone and place the offices somewhere else—offices can be anywhere but this museum is an intrinsic part of our heritage as a State and its people. (signed V. Kelly)

An honourable member interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Unley is out of order.

Ms STEVENS: As the Federal Government is to provide generous grants for civics education at a time when she proposes closing the outstanding—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am sorry, it is very hard with the cross discussion to hear what the honourable member is saying.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! Will members on both sides please observe Standing Orders? I ask the member for Elizabeth please to ask her question.

Ms STEVENS: As the Federal Government is to provide generous grants for civics education at a time when she proposes closing the outstanding civics education centre in Adelaide, will she reconsider her decision to close Old Parliament House Museum and try to work with the Federal Government to enhance the civics education which Old Parliament House Museum provides?

Mr CAUDELL: I rise on a point of order. If Standing Orders apply, then obviously the terminology 'she' is an unacceptable terminology by the member for Elizabeth.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. The Minister can answer the question.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will answer the question but, without reflecting on the Chair, I respect the point that has been made by the honourable member. The first answer is that, no, the decision will not change in respect of the closure of the public and temporary exhibition program that is conducted by the History Trust through the State History Centre. It is a program which the History Trust Board has had under consideration for some time. The honourable member may recall that the former Government in 1988 introduced fees for the history—

Mr BRINDAL: That was an act of cultural vandalism.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, many people did describe it as such, and the History Trust did, too. That has meant that the attendance fell to 30 000 last year. The former Government also introduced the State History Centre, so more of the area that was used for public exhibition was taken over for office space. The History Trust Board has confirmed to me that, notwithstanding the valiant efforts of the board, management and directors of Old Parliament House, it has not been able to build the audience base nor attract the sponsorship for upgrading and presenting some of the exhibitions in the manner that it would like. It has also had to refuse other exhibitions that it would have liked to offer because of the small rooms available and the problem of trying to bring in exhibits because the doorways are not aligned. So, it has been frustrated in a number of efforts to properly show off the building and display the exhibits.

I do not doubt that those involved are sad about the decision. They have made that quite clear to me and essentially I share those views. However, there are things that are of concern in terms of displaying our history to a wider section of the community, and we are pursuing options to do that at the present time.

The Festival may or may not move into the Riverside Centre—that is up to the Festival. It is a matter for the department involved with building accommodation. It is also a matter for the Parliament to determine, if and when the committees move out. I do know that if the Parliament wishes to use Old Parliament House it must find \$150 000. It does not own the building but will be leasing it, and that is the price.

One of the best ways of looking at this is to consider the very expensive accommodation at the Riverside Building—and that lease is due to expire in May next year—at some \$240 000. At the present time Old Parliament House is very reasonably priced by comparison. It is a very sad reflection on the way honourable members perceive the Parliament to think that the Parliament, and committees in particular, operating from Old Parliament House is not a proper and special use of Old Parliament House. It is the original use of

that building, and we should be celebrating the fact that the public can see Parliament functioning through its committee structure in that building. In my view and in the Government's view, that is a proper use.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is difficult to assemble school tour groups and to explain about this building. There will be a special place for such groups, whether they be older people, young people or students, in what was the original library. I am not sure where the \$800 000 figure for the bridge link came from, since it is double what the honourable member suggested the other alterations to the building might come to, which is about \$600 000.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure how it was proposed. A figure like that rather clouds the credibility of other statements made by the honourable member. The assessment of the cost to re-establish the link between the two buildings was \$38 000, and I thought that was expensive.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I have sought advice on my last ruling. If use of the pronoun 'she' is directed through the Chair, it is quite acceptable, but use of the word 'you' is not. The Minister was referred to in the third person and it was not used in a derogatory or personal manner, and I so rule.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Unley is out of order.

Ms STEVENS: Where will Speaker's Corner be relocated? When will it be allowed to accept new bookings? When and where will the Duryea Panorama be made available to the public? How can a half-time education officer in Parliament House be expected to undertake all her current duties as well as those of the displaced full-time education officer of Old Parliament House?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There are a number of options for Speaker's Corner, and the Government has undertaken without qualification that that initiative will continue in the future. It may remain where it is or it may return to its original, better site in Old Parliament House rather than be squashed in a part-passageway, as it is at the moment. It might go to the State Library, the Adelaide City Lending Service or to Edmund Wright House. There have been plenty of offers and the History Trust is considering them.

It is possible that the panorama will be accommodated in the History Trust's new accommodation. Again, a decision is to be made, and that issue will be resolved very shortly. In the meantime, another venue is under negotiation in a high profile city location where there would be a large amount of public use.

Ms STEVENS: When will Speaker's Corner be able to accept new bookings?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As soon as a decision is made about its location. I wish that this matter had been resolved by this stage for the benefit of the Committee. I have not been able to do that because of some other factors on which I am waiting for information. I hope that this matter is resolved before 7 July, when I must return answers to this Committee, but, for the sake of the staff and the public, I hope that it is resolved well before then.

Ms STEVENS: My last question related to the half-time education officer in Parliament House who may be expected to undertake both sets of duties.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is part of the Education portfolio, but I expect that this segment will continue. That is certainly the nod that I have received from the

Minister for Education and Children's Services. However, he is not prepared to confirm the fate of that officer without confirming overall what is to happen following this review.

Ms STEVENS: The issue was how she could undertake all her current activities plus those of the displaced full-time education officer at Old Parliament House.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The first thing is to ensure that, as part of the review, the officer remains on secondment, and that is the priority. I am quite confident that we will be able to secure that, but we have to wait for the outcome of the review. If Parliament sees it as an important service, which it no doubt does, it will have to negotiate with the Minister. It is not a direct responsibility of mine.

Mr BRINDAL: I have a point of order. For the sake of future questioning, it should be pointed out that the Minister for the Arts is not responsible for the Education portfolio, nor are we examining it. I ask you, Sir, to rule whether questions concerning an education officer who is paid for under Education lines are within the province of this Committee. I contend that it is out of order.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I believe the Minister made that point in a passing reference. However, the honourable member's point is taken.

Ms STEVENS: At present, the old House of Assembly Chamber is open 363 days a year. How many days a year will the Chamber be open to the public in future? Will it be open at weekends and when Parliament is not sitting? What security arrangements will be required? What are the additional cost implications of keeping the Chamber open?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Those matters will be partly negotiated between the History Trust and Parliament, not directly with me, although, as I indicated in my second reading explanation to the Bill that I have introduced, there will be conditions that I will have to approve. Public access is an important condition to maintain in any future lease of that building, as is a display or interpretation of our constitutional history. These matters will be a critical part of negotiations, which I hope will be successfully concluded between the History Trust and the Parliament once the Bill is through the two Houses.

Mr BRINDAL: I should like to get away from this furphy about how we are destroying the Constitutional Museum. I do not understand that line of questioning. I should like to ask the Minister a question relating to page 328 under the title 'Development of the arts'. My question concerns the much more exciting proposition of *The Ring* cycle being performed in South Australia. My question is this—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! It is difficult to hear the member for Unley, who has the floor.

Mr BRINDAL: I was deferring to my colleague on the other side. She was trying to think, and as that is a new innovation—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest that the honourable member get on with his question.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I have a point of order. The member for Unley has overstepped the mark of decency. He could offer me an apology. I might accept it.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. I urge the member for Unley to continue asking his question.

Mr BRINDAL: I would apologise, if suggesting that she was thinking was offensive to her. Recently the Premier announced a major artistic coup for South Australia with State Opera, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Australian Major Events collaborating to stage the full cycle

of Wagner's *The Ring* in 1998. The Minister has already referred to that tonight.

What are the proposed administrative and financial arrangements for undertaking this major production? Does the Minister have any idea what the significant cultural, financial and other gains might be to this State because of this wonderful initiative?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The administrative structure has been taxing a number of people. We have sought advice from the Crown Solicitor, who has indicated that an appropriate organisational structure to administer the production is to establish a subsidiary company of the State Opera of South Australia. Such a subsidiary would provide a focus to the activity; would act as a contracting vehicle; would enable the directors outside of the State Opera Board to be appointed; and would also place clear obligations on directors and provide them with personal indemnity providing that they act in a reasonable manner.

The provisions of the Public Corporations Act 1993 provide for the incorporation of such a subsidiary. It is proposed that the board of management would be approved by the Minister but appointed by the State Opera of South Australia. The board should consist of the eight members of the current State Opera Board. Rather than deciding that some should sit on the new subsidiary board and some should not, it is considered that all current members of the State Opera Board should be invited to participate but that there should be some additional representation from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Major Events Board, the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development and also I am working to have a community representative.

This matter is to be considered shortly by Cabinet. While it may seem rather alarming that there will be up to 11 members, I can assure members that the members of the board would not be paid. The production of this event will enhance and reinforce the State's image as a principal centre for arts development and arts festivals in Australia. Both the interstate and the local reception for this initiative has been phenomenal. Inquiries about tickets are coming nationally and internationally already. It is projected in terms of income that there would be box office sales of \$2.5 million; corporate sponsorship of \$500 000; a contribution from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the ABC Orchestra in terms of special support of \$500 000; underwriting of \$1.5 million by Australian Major Events; and a grant of \$1.458 million from the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development to State Opera in 1998. The total income is expected to be \$6.458 million and estimated expenditure is \$6 437 250, so you can see that a lot of effort has been undertaken to date to finetune those expenditure and income sources. The economic development repercussions for the State are judged to be some \$15 million, so any investment by the State will be handsomely repaid, and also there is goodwill on which you cannot put a value.

Mr BRINDAL: In view of the importance of *The Ring* cycle would the Minister give any consideration to inviting either a musicologist or a music academic of Australian stature to be on the board and perhaps someone of national stature that may be associated with the ABC? I am only saying that because the value of this production to South Australia can only be enhanced and increased by people of Australian stature taking a small, if peripheral, role in the planning and preparation.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A lot of thought has gone into the additional members to be appointed on top of the State

Opera Board. The ABC representative would be an interstate individual.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Of that stature? I am not sure. Are they around today?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr CAUDELL: After listening to the answer to that question it makes one wonder why some people in this Chamber tonight have grizzled over \$100 000, when you are talking about bringing developments of such magnitude to this State. I refer to Estimates of Receipts and Payments (page 119) and, in particular, the Adelaide Festival of Arts. Why has the 1996 Adelaide Festival of Arts received an additional \$1 million in funding?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member will recall the loss of some \$365 000 after the last Festival of Arts, which was a lot of money but admittedly less than first forecast. After that loss it was recommended by a working party of the Arts and Cultural Development Task Force that this additional fund was required for the festival. It was to be additional recurrent funding, untied. The report also recommended a further \$500 000 in contingency funds or underwriting and provision for that has been made within the arts budget this financial year. This handsome increase is required for the festival to maintain its prominence as the major arts festival not only in Australia but also internationally. In fact, like any great festival, its position must be continually reinforced.

The Adelaide Festival Board of Management has now been established; it is an exciting, energetic board which has attracted fantastic people in terms of new management skills and enthusiasm. We have supported the recommendations of the working party and the emphasis now will be on a much greater marketing effort. We will also be encouraging more performance opportunities and exhibit opportunities for South Australians, as has been possible over recent festivals. This money will be an investment in marketing and in South Australia so that we can show our own. It is estimated that box office income will increase from \$1.695 million in 1994 to \$2.995 million in 1996, and its sponsorship will also increase from \$986 615 to \$1.462 million. So on every count the additional Government investment will be giving encouragement in terms of income and sponsorship and that is important.

Based on this substantial support being offered by the media and the corporate sector, as well as the encouraging pre-season ticket sales, it would appear that these estimates for income, box office and sponsorship are quite realistic and that the income overall for the festival will increase from \$5.5 million to \$6.5 million. All of this, together with the expertise of Barrie Kosky and the diligence of the festival staff, makes the festival look better. We are not necessarily after something bigger, but we are after something better—a better position artistically and financially. It is expected that the total direct expenditure by the festival will be some \$14 million and that this will realise some \$27 million in economic benefit to South Australia. So, a \$27 million investment from a \$3.5 million contribution from the State is good value in anybody's terms.

Mr CAUDELL: By way of supplementary question, local artists are concerned that there are too few employment opportunities in South Australia, especially on a regular basis. What can be done to ensure that our performers have reason to stay in South Australia and not consider that their only future lies interstate?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This problem has been around for some time and has worried me for ages. I have spent a considerable amount of time this year thinking about and speaking to South Australians about how we address this issue. It seemed crazy that we were investing so heavily as a State in the Helpmann Academy, ensuring that we have some of the best training opportunities in the performance and visual arts for South Australians and Australians anywhere in this country, and hopefully aspiring to go anywhere in the world, and yet not having the performance opportunities for those individuals once they graduate from the Helpmann Academy. We have to do something about it.

We call ourselves the Festival State and invest heavily, and have for many years, in the performing arts both through statutory companies and a lot of smaller but very valuable performing arts companies. I could name so many, for example, Red Shed, Vital Statistics, *Doppio Teatro*, and even Unley Youth Theatre, of which the Leader of the Opposition is a member of the board. We invest heavily in the performing arts, yet none of the companies seem to be satisfying the need for regular work for performing artists. So something is wrong at the moment. I have spoken to Stephen Spence, Secretary of the Arts/Media Entertainment Alliance. We have discussed this issue over some period. We met again a few months ago. He has agreed to participate with others in the community to look at the issue on a think-tank basis rather than a review basis. Why are we not providing these opportunities for the investment in the State that the taxpayers make in the performing arts? There is criticism of the Government, as there was criticism of the former Government in this area. We have to find ways to address it. I am pleased that Mr Spence and others will work with the Government to address this issue because we certainly have to do better than we are doing now. We cannot let people think that their only future in the performing arts is only interstate and not in South Australia.

Mr WADE: The Minister referred to a number of artistic enterprises that were receiving Government funding and/or support. I also note that significant upgrades have been made to the studios in the complex of the South Australian Film Corporation. Will the Minister advise whether any major films are currently in production or planned for production at the Hendon studios?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know that the honourable member is keen on the arts generally. I think he has performed in the past, not only in this place but in the theatre and possibly on film. People in the film industry will be keen to know that he has continued this interest. As the honourable member knows, it has been a very busy year for the film industry in South Australia and for the corporation studios in particular at Hendon. I congratulate the new General Manager, Judith McCann, who has devoted hours beyond the call of duty using personal contacts and a whole range of amazing skills to secure productions for South Australia. She and the board, with the assistance of the department, convinced local film makers and others that we were very determined to resurrect the film industry, that we thought it had a future and that one easy way to demonstrate it was to secure a six-year contract on the Hendon studios. So, up to the year 2 000 we can say, 'Hey, no more reviews, sick of that, had enough, that's Labor Party, that's the past, we will go ahead, we have the studios, get on with it and get the productions here.' That is the way Judith McCann and the board have approached the whole issue.

I mentioned the revolving fund. It was instrumental in securing the feature film *Shine* in Adelaide, directed by Scott Hicks. I understand that filming has just concluded. It is being produced by Jane Scott and stars Geoffrey Rush, whom many people would know from State Theatre Company days. It was also shot in London with Lynn Redgrave and Sir John Gielgud. *Shine* has brought South Australian cinematographer Geoffrey Simpson back to Adelaide following his success with *Little Women*. It is the largest feature film to be shot here for many years. It is financed with investment from the Australian Film Finance Corporation, the South Australian Film Corporation, Film Victoria and the BBC. We have provided as a Government the loan facility, secured against pre-sale.

We have also just seen filming of *Lust and Revenge* by Australia's most prolific director, Paul Cox. Mr Cox has used South Australian Film Corporation sound mix and facilities for many of his films, but it is the first time he has produced entirely in South Australia. The experience has been such a positive one that he has promised to return again. This production is also financed by the Australian Film Finance Corporation and the South Australian Film Corporation, with Adelaide's own distribution company Adfilm.

There have been investments from other sales agencies. Other productions in various stages include *The Big Question*. The writer and subject is Paul Davies and producer is Mike Piper. The host for this production will be Phillip Adams. *Napoleon* by Mario Andreacchio, whilst filmed some time ago, is still being worked on with sound mixes for international and Australian distribution. *Epsilon* post production finished recently, just in time for the director and producer Rolf de Heer to get it to Cannes. Miramax from the United States has brought the rights to show the film in the United States, which is a real coup.

The corporation also has committed investment to *Parklands*, which is a one hour drama being financed by the Australian Film Commission, and *Women of Drovers Run* will be a tele-feature. Both are interstate productions that will contribute to the overall benefit of the State's film and television industry. What is happening in film in South Australia presently is terrific news, and not before time.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I was enthralled by that answer. The State Theatre Company has an excellent reputation across the nation for supplying quality theatre to patrons in South Australia. I have some questions for the Minister and, if she cannot answer them now, it would be fine if she put them in writing.

Mr Caudell interjecting:

Mrs GERAGHTY: If the honourable member would listen for once, he might learn something. What do the Government subsidies to the State Theatre Company over the past year work out to in terms of subsidy per seat at performances? What funding does the State Theatre receive from the Federal Labor Government? How many people are on the free and complimentary ticket list for the State Theatre Company? Who was on the list over the past 12 months? Incorporated with that question is how many staff are employed by the State Theatre Company and—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! Is this one question? Can the Minister cope?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is a series of questions which I will take on notice. I do not know how many complimentary tickets were given out. For this season at least, I have subscriptions.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! If the Minister is prepared to take those questions on notice, the honourable member can continue.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I was asking the Minister how many staff are employed by the State Theatre Company and, of them, how many are full-time, how many part-time and how many casual. What is the salary package of the director of the State Theatre Company?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will take all those questions on notice.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Thank you, Minister, because they are together.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You might tell your leader how reasonable the Minister is.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I am sure that the Leader would have been here to ask the Minister those questions himself this evening, but unfortunately—

Mr CAUDELL: He has another engagement.

Mrs GERAGHTY: No, it is true to say that he is attending an official function this evening. It is most unfair of members opposite to imply anything other than that.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I presume that that accounts for the three questions from the member for Torrens?

Mrs GERAGHTY: No, that was the first question.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Actually, there were seven questions. With regard to the questions on notice, I indicate that the Commonwealth grant to the State Theatre Company was \$397 000 in the past financial year. The State grant is \$1 510 000. That is a considerable grant. We are all pleased for the State Theatre Company that it has been accepted by the Australian Council as one of the two South Australian organisations to receive funding in future from the Major Organisations Board.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I will call the honourable member for Torrens, but she is pushing the Chair a little. I will allow two more questions, but she must make them precise. I am in a good mood.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Tandanya is playing a crucial role in the development of contemporary Aboriginal artistic activity and it has the potential to be a major tourist attraction for Adelaide. It is unique in Australia and it is winning recognition throughout the nation and gaining cooperation from Aboriginal communities in all States and Territories. It had financial problems a few years ago, but was assisted by the State Government and an agreement was reached for it to repay a loan over a number of years. It has just repaid the last instalment of its loan and, at this present time, it is debt free.

Tandanya has a new director and is ready to take off with a new direction, new energy and a new and imaginative programs. It is also proving hugely successful in improving its self-generated income. However, this year, the State Government cut its funding by \$100 000 in nominal terms, or by almost \$120 000 in real terms. That was a cut of 20 per cent. At that point, I note that last year's funding included \$100 000 from Foundation SA, a special project which I support greatly. Funding from the Minister's department has been cut by about 10 per cent in real terms. Despite the Minister referring at great length to the need to improve and increase Adelaide's tourist attractions, why has she chosen at this time to cut Tandanya's grant by 10 per cent? What message is that sending out to our Aboriginal communities?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Essentially, the 1994-95 grant was \$590 000. We have reduced the allocation to Tandanya in 1995-96 to \$550 000. That represents a reduction of

\$40 000 on actual funds. I suppose that that is a reduction of \$100 000 from a nominal base only of \$650 000 because, as the honourable member indicated, Tandanya repaid last year the final instalment of \$60 000 on a five-year loan provided by the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development. I understand that, while State funds have been cut by \$40 000, ATSC's funding has increased by \$50 000. In budget terms, Tandanya will essentially be the same.

Mr BRINDAL: It will be \$10 000 better off.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As the member for Unley says, it is a \$10 000 increase. That is not directly my responsibility. However, it was interesting that the honourable member for Torrens referred to Tandanya's 'potential' to be a major tourist attraction. That requires the board to be much more focused on what it can do and what the organisation can do well. That will be a challenge overall because the board has recently carried out several assessments of its key objectives, vision and corporate plan. It has engaged various consultants to work through those issues. So far as I am aware, they are about to start again.

With the new director, I hope that these issues can be resolved and that, with determination and purpose, they can fulfil that potential which the member for Torrens mentioned and in which I strongly believe in respect of Tandanya. The potential is beyond question. It is a matter of how they channel that potential into projects which will realise the gains which the Aboriginal community deserves, and which we as a community are so keen to see.

Tandanya is working closely now with the Tourism Commission and the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development in developing cultural tourism initiatives. I am keen for those efforts to expand in future. They must work out what they do well and how they can do that better in the community. They must not try to be everything to everybody in the white community, their own community and for local people and for tourists. They should do some things particularly well and get scores on the board. They must win further community confidence and I do not think they will ever look back. It is simply that their focus has been wide and dispersed for a long time. I have every confidence that the new director will help them focus their efforts.

Mrs GERAGHTY: The Minister talked about their focusing more on their own community and not trying to be everything to everyone.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am asking them to work that out. I am not giving any direction.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I understood the point the Minister was making. Why has the Minister refused to confirm Katrina Power as Chair of Tandanya (as I understand it, she would be the first woman Chair), despite the fact that she was democratically elected to that position some six months ago?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: She has to be democratically elected; that is in the powers of association. It is also in the powers of association that the Minister can choose to endorse that appointment. It is paternalistic, maternalistic, or whatever the term is. An incorporated association should be able to appoint its own Chair. I refer, for instance, to the Jam Factory. I did there, because it has a different situation with an executive Chair. I did not go around endorsing the appointment of the Chair of the Australian Dance Theatre, Ms Beasley. I do not go around endorsing the Chair of Doppio Teatro, Vital Statistics or any of the other incorporated associations. To do so for an Aboriginal organisation is humiliating to that organisation and unnecessary, and I do not see why a distinction should be made.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Are you accepting that she is the Chair of that organisation?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Of course, I work with her as the Chair. I write to her as the Chair. We work and we talk as she is the Chair. For me to make a distinction because it is an Aboriginal organisation is nineteenth century at its worst, and I do not accept it.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is what the former Government agreed. Ms Levy also felt a need to endorse the Chair; I do not. They can do their own thing, as long as they keep achieving.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Given the large amount that the Government is putting into the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery at the South Australian Museum, what assistance will the Government provide to Tandanya to assist it with vitally needed capital improvements, including air-conditioning?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The State Government does not own the building. It is occupied by Tandanya and is owned by the Aboriginal Land Trust, which also occupies part of that building. The State Government owns the South Australian Museum, and the former Government should have invested in the redevelopment of that museum. This Government certainly will. In fact, Governments over time have not done so, but the former Government deferred for 10 years a redevelopment initiative that the Tonkin Government had started. It was a disgrace. Notwithstanding the budgets we inherited from Labor, we will try to make up for lost time, lost cultural tourism opportunity and certainly opportunity for the Aboriginal communities to show their work and their heritage.

Mr Bettcher: The quote from the Department for Building Management to actually air-condition Tandanya is \$850 000, which members would agree is a sizeable amount. To do the gallery portion, which is probably more essential from the art works point of view, is \$350 000. So it is a very expensive proposition.

Mrs GERAGHTY: However, money well spent, I would say.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The land owner, which is the Aboriginal Land Trust, may well agree with you that it would be money well spent. It is not a Government building.

Mr BRINDAL: I have an absolute fascination with the political correctness of the Opposition. The Aboriginals recently had a centenary of Aboriginal art, and not one member of the Opposition, Upper or Lower House, bothered to go to it; and that was at Tandanya, I believe. I would like to draw the Minister's attention to the more important issue of Aboriginal culture and heritage which is the wonderful world class collection of Aboriginal cultural items that are present in our museum. It is a world class exhibition, and Opposition members are going on about Tandanya. It is just appalling. When does the Minister expect the museum's Aboriginal Cultures Gallery design and documentation study to be completed, and what are the expected outcomes? Why is only 2 per cent of the world's best exhibition of Aboriginal artefacts, especially desert Aboriginal artefacts, currently on display? I put those questions on notice.

Mr CAUDELL: I was at that centenary of Aboriginal art at Tandanya, and not one member of the Opposition was present, Upper or Lower House. It is outrageous that members in here grandstand on Aboriginal causes and do not have any intention of turning up to the functions in the first place.

I refer to Program Estimates (page 329), under the heading 'Provision of State library services'. What evidence does the Minister have that the transfer of film and video services to the PLAIN central services and the State Library are proving effective?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A lot of evidence.

Mr WADE: Artlab is currently negotiating with a company in Malaysia to export its services. What type of services does Artlab intend to export? Are these services internationally competitive?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am pleased that there will be an opportunity for those questions to go on the public record.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to Program Estimates (page 324). How successful was the Good Friday opening of the Art Gallery? How many people attended compared with the average for a public holiday? What was the total cost of opening the Art Gallery on Good Friday, including all the costs of advertising?

Mrs GERAGHTY: The operating grant for the Australian Festival Trust Centre has been cut by some \$250 000. This line now has to include the insurance and risk management amount of \$146 000, previously allocated separately. In effect, this is a cut of some \$396 000 to the AFCT in recurrent resources, nearly \$400 000 in nominal terms or approaching \$500 000 in real terms. Furthermore, the urgent upgrading of the Adelaide Festival Centre has had funding cuts from \$1.2 million to \$.5 million, a cut of some \$750 000.

The Minister would certainly be aware of the need for capital upgrading at the Adelaide Festival Centre. A report a few years ago indicated that \$10 million was required, The Minister complained bitterly at that stage, when the ALP Government allocated \$1 million a year to start the upgrading, that it was insufficient. The Minister promised that a Liberal Government would do much more. Unfortunately, now the Minister has cut both recurrent and upgrading funds by a total of \$1 146 000 in nominal terms alone. We know at this stage that—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mrs GERAGHTY: I am just about to ask my questions. I need to put this preamble before asking them.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: These are questions on notice.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Yes. I think it is fair, considering some of the allegations. If you would bear with me, Mr Acting Chairman, for one moment.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think the questions should be put on notice without explanation. They should be able to stand alone.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Yes. I ask the honourable member to ask her questions please.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Very well, Sir. I put these questions on notice. How does the Minister expect the AFCT to cope with such reduced funding without compromising artistic standards and putting on only safe productions which never provide any artistic challenge? What sort of upgrading is expected to be achieved with the \$500 000 allocation, and will the AFCT slip behind its interstate equivalents in state-of-the-art technical facilities, thus limiting its ability to attract and put on some of the big modern productions? Is it merely coincidence that funding for the AFCT has been cut by \$1 million, which is the extra amount provided to the Adelaide Festival, despite the Premier's statement that extra resources for the Festival would not be at the expense of other art bodies?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I draw the attention of the honourable member to the fact that she is taking too much time. Has the honourable member concluded her questions?

Mrs GERAGHTY: No, Sir.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I rule that the honourable member has. The member for Price.

Mr De LAINE: I put on notice the following questions to the Minister: how many staff positions and at what level are to be cut from the arts development section of the department, and why has the Minister done a backflip on the relative importance of arts development and corporate services staff and left the ladder with a far higher staff allocation than arts development (\$1.053 million compared to \$885 000)?

Secondly, Will the Minister provide a list of all consultancies undertaken in the 1994-95 financial year with the name of each chief consultant and the cost of each, and will she also indicate which were awarded as a result of the calling for tenders and why no tenders were called for the others?

My final question relates to WorkCover, and is as follows: as well as experiencing a significant real cut, is the central office of the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development now required to manage its own workers' compensation cases; and, if so, what is the estimated cost?

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

Membership:

Mr Leggett substituted for Mr Brindal.

Mrs Penfold substituted for Mr Wade.

Mr Clarke substituted Mr De Laine.

Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts
and Minister for the Status of Women—Other Payments,
\$1 679 000

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination, and invite the Minister to make a brief opening statement if she so desires.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Government is committed to enhancing the status of women. We are giving women a greater say in the decisions that affect them, their families and their lives generally, and the opportunity to participate fully and equally in all spheres of our society.

Government policies and programs are designed, first, to courage women to contribute to the growth of our economy and to ensure that women enjoy the benefits of economic recovery and a safe environment; secondly, to value the contribution of work undertaken by women in the home, in child-rearing, caring for older family members and in voluntary community activities; thirdly, to eliminate discrimination against women; and, fourthly, to ensure that a fair allocation of resources is devoted to women's needs.

The budget for the Office for the Status of Women is \$1.099 million. This covers expenditure for the Office of the Status of Women and the Women's Information Switchboard. The Government has put in place a number of key initiatives, and these will continue to be pursued vigorously over the next year. They include the Women's Advisory Council, the Breakthrough Register for women who are willing to sit on

Government boards and committees, and a joint benchmarking study being undertaken by the Office for the Status of Women and the Department of Treasury and Finance to develop a process to upgrade the reporting of budget initiatives for women across Government.

The joint Parliamentary Committee on Women in Parliament which was established last year as a Government initiative enjoyed tripartisan support. It is examining the extent of any impediments to women standing for Parliament and what measures should be taken to facilitate the entry of women to Parliament. The committee has brought down an interim report recommending that Parliament examine the establishment of a family room at Parliament House and access to child-care facilities. I will be pursuing these recommendations. The committee is still investigating impediments to women entering Parliament, such as parliamentary performance and sitting hours, and will bring down a final report towards the end of this year.

The Office for the Status of Women will be active in the forthcoming financial year (1995-96) in developing strategic partnerships with other agencies. I nominate, for instance, an inter-agency committee on policy initiatives for women which is being established with members drawn from agencies across Government. The committee will identify best practices, act as a forum for the exchange of information and facilitate the development of inter-agency initiatives.

The office is working cooperatively with the Employee Ombudsman to arrange a seminar on women in enterprise bargaining. The seminar will be aimed at members of the single bargaining centres across Government. A feasibility study with respect to a video on women and enterprise bargaining is also being assessed.

The Office for the Status of Women is working cooperatively with the Office for Families to ensure that the status of care is enhanced in line with the Government's caregivers' policy. The Office for the Status of Women is participating closely in the National Study on Women as Customers, which is a project proceeding under the auspices of the Commonwealth-State Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women. The study is developing a resource kit for use with agencies to implement a 'women as customers' approach in their business.

I also highlight that the Information Seminar on Gender Issues in the Karpin report is being arranged with Professor Tricia Vilkanas at the International School of Management, University of South Australia. This year a production has been issued to coincide with the budget papers describing the highlights of Government achievements in the provision of services for women. I understand, from advice by the Chairman earlier in the day, that I am able to provide to you, Mr Acting Chairman, a copy of this publication which you are able to circulate to members of the committee but that I am not able to table it for general purposes. I am keen to do that. Through the work of the Government, the women of South Australia are being given the opportunity to play a much greater role in decision making and consequently to have a greater influence on the future of South Australia.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Ms Carmel O'Loughlin, Director, Office of the Status of Women.

Ms Julie Baker, Assistant Director, Office of the Status of Women.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Does the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wish to make a statement?

Mr CLARKE: I shall make a brief opening statement. I am sure that more than 50 per cent of the population of South Australian women are underwhelmed by the Government's concern for women in the work force in particular, given that 50 minutes has been allocated in which to discuss this budget item and the Government's proposals with respect to the same.

Women are affected by every item in the budget. After all, women are the main users of public services, they are the primary care givers, and the public sector is a major employer of women. When Labor was in Government it made clear its commitment to women by producing a women's budget. It provided a straightforward reference point for women concerned about the services available to them.

Unfortunately, the Liberal Government and the Minister have not chosen to continue that policy, hence there is no incentive for Ministers to focus on the disadvantages that are often experienced by women in our community, and there is a developing trend for women's funding to be absorbed into general budget lines and general programs. That suggests that the current Minister is unable to effectively advocate for women in the Cabinet.

The Minister and her office have the task of raising the status of women in South Australia, but what has she done? She says that she has created the break-through register, which in fact was set up under a Labor Government and was called the women's register. She has established a women's advisory committee, which was achieved only by deducting funds from the Working Women's Centre. That reinforces the Minister's reputation as the Minister for Women of Status rather than the Minister for the Status of Women.

The Opposition, when previously in Government, acted to protect women from violence in the home, to alleviate the difficulties of single parenthood and to target health assistance for women. We demonstrated our commitment to women's issues, particularly as they concern the women who are most vulnerable in our society. I also draw attention to the speech that was given by a great former Labor Premier, Don Dunstan, which was known as his Newcastle speech given at Newcastle University in 1978.

Mr Caudell interjecting:

Mr CLARKE: I note the interjection by the member for Mitchell. When the history of South Australia is finally written, his contribution will not even amount to a full stop on any page of that history. At Newcastle University in 1978, when he spoke of the challenge of the 1980s, Don Dunstan said:

To treat women as lesser beings, in law, education or employment, is to diminish us as a society. Quite simply, we are wasting a huge proportion of Australia's most valuable resource, its people.

The reality is, however, that Australian women are still discriminated against in most aspects of their lives. That discrimination may not be enshrined in law but is certainly entrenched in attitudes.

I believe that women in Australia are still too often seen by men as being primarily sex objects or mother figures—stereotypes instead of individuals, dependents instead of equals.

Don Dunstan's words, of course, remind us that we still have a long way to go as we approach a new millennium. Again, Labor is leading the way. We have embraced a 35 per cent quota for women candidates for winnable seats. Already the South Australian Labor Party has better than one-third of women in its State parliamentary ranks.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You could not get Carmen Lawrence—

Mr CLARKE: You wait, Minister. We have better than one-third of women in State parliamentary ranks, with Labor women winning the past three State by-elections. But we must not rest until we achieve at least 50 per cent of women legislators in Parliaments across Australia, and that is the commitment of the Labor Party, the Leader of the Labor Party, myself, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Carolyn Pickles.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Why are you leading for the Opposition? You cannot even put a woman up—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The Committee will please come to order. The member for Ross Smith has the floor.

Mr CLARKE: Thank you for your protection, Mr Acting Chairman. I am not used to the rough handling that one gets in the Legislative Council. What intrigues me is the rather pig-headed observation by the Minister when she questioned why I lead for the Opposition. I happen to be the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party in this State. For the Minister's information, I should have thought that the fact that the Deputy Leader of a major political Party in this State addresses such issues of concern to women would have been regarded as a mark of respect and a sign that the Labor Party has a higher regard than the Liberal Party for women in Australia. It is simply no more or no less with respect to that matter, and in particular my own personal attitudes and commitment to the raising of the status of women in our society. But without any further ado, and if the Minister will cease her provocations, I will go to the questions.

I refer the Minister to page 337 of the Program Estimates—and as these questions are statistical in nature I would ask the Minister to take them on notice, unless she can reel the statistics off straight away—where encouragement of positive outcomes for women from Government services is listed as a broad objective. What specific budget allocations have been made across all Government—departmental and agencies—for programs specifically benefiting women? I could list them all, but I am sure the Minister will not need me to read them out in detail. They are all Government departments and agencies. The Minister for the Status of Women has in my view, once again, neglected to prepare what was known under the previous Government as the women's budget. The women's budget highlighted the range of Government programs which directly or indirectly improved women's welfare or status. It was a useful document which encouraged each department to fully consider the impact of Government programs and services upon women.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, I will look at the question when I have received it and the list of agencies, but it is not a whim of mine, it was a deliberate decision. I took note of the Federal Labor Government that decided to get rid of its women's budget and I understand that each State is also assessing the value of the women's budget. It is a bit like many of the Labor policies of the past: they started off as good initiatives but they got tired and did not keep up with the times—

Mrs GERAGHTY: The Federal Government has not got rid of the women's budget.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister has the floor. The member for Torrens will have her chance in a minute.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That was a decision of a review. It may have looked at introducing it again this year, but it certainly got rid of it the year before and we would be—

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That was a recommendation of the review of the Office for the Status of Women. It may not have been proceeded with, but the analysis was sound and it is one that has been received across Government as a whole from the State basis. It was found in South Australia that there was no analysis of programs. There was a list of things that were undertaken by various departments, but without some analysis one did not really have an anchor on which to make judgments about the effectiveness of those programs. Certainly, an assessment that was made showed that there was little practical regard for the initiative within Government. We have decided, and, as I say, it was a deliberate decision of the Government, to work with the Office for the Status of Women and Treasury to do the benchmarking assessment of various Government departments and to look in detail at those projects. I see no reason why women, in terms of being taken equally seriously in Government as customers but also as an agency of Government, should not be part of the same benchmarking process that is happening, whether it is in industrial relations or in health, or whatever, to assess the value and quality of programs that we are delivering. That initiative is not a token gesture to women, as was the women's budget, but it will have sound, practical, long-term benefits.

Mr CLARKE: Is that a yes or a no? I know I risk another five minutes of nothing being said, but will the Minister supply that information or not?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think the Deputy Leader said the question was on notice, and when I have had an opportunity to look at it I will make up my mind.

Mr CLARKE: So it is a maybe?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is exactly what I said: when I have seen the question, we will look at what is involved.

Mr CLARKE: In relation to the budget allocations for programs specifically benefiting women, in respect of which departments and agencies is the Minister satisfied that those budget allocations are adequate to meet women's needs? And, in relation to the budget allocations for programs specifically benefiting women, in respect of which departments and agencies is the Women's Advisory Council satisfied that those budget allocations are adequate to meet women's needs?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Women's Advisory Council is meeting progressively with Ministers and the Premier to address programs generally, but in the nature of the benchmarking arrangements I have outlined. The Deputy Leader is back in the old days of this State and the way things were done then. Things are being done differently today; there is more in-depth assessment of the value of programs, and not simply seeing how much money is spent. A different arrangement is in place, and the Office for the Status of Women, the Women's Advisory Council and I have been involved in discussions and assessments with all agencies.

If the Deputy Leader wishes me to provide more information without dismissing the time or effort, I will provide such information. The Government requires accountability by departments for their activities in implementing appropriate policies for women. I indicated earlier it was decided not to proceed with the women's budget in its earlier form. We are undertaking this joint study to develop and improve the reporting process. This study is being developed with individual agencies to improve the financial analysis of Government spending on women's services and programs, rather than having an *ad hoc* list of projects.

An invitation has been extended to key agencies, including human services and infrastructure departments to participate with the Office for the Status of Women in the development of this new approach. Officers of the Department of Treasury and Finance are contributing to the revised arrangements. It is intended that the upgraded arrangements will be complementary to other initiatives under way across Government, including the review of Commonwealth and State service provisions, which is proceeding as part of the reform process of the Council of Australian Governments. It is that COAG response that has seen all Governments look at the way in which they will assess and publish these programs in the future. This project will be completed by late 1995, so there will be time to prepare more detailed financial reporting on the whole of Government performance on the Status of Women budget in respect of the 1996-97 financial year.

Mr CLARKE: I have a supplementary question. At the risk of further regurgitation from the teleprompter, is the Minister saying that she has already had qualitative analysis done on Government programs and their impact on women, and will she provide that information?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I indicated that this study is developing such approaches. We are working with various departments. It is not ready, otherwise I would have produced it for this Committee.

Mr CLARKE: And you will produce it when it is ready?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: If the honourable member would listen rather than grandstand, he would know that I indicated that it would be completed by late 1995.

Mr CLARKE: The recurrent funding for the Working Women's Centre under the Labor Government was \$265 000 per annum. When the centre was transferred to the Department for Industrial Affairs from the Minister for the Status of Women, the annual budget was cut back to \$215 000, so the Minister will have \$50 000 in annual funding for the Women's Advisory Council. Meanwhile a review of the Working Women's Centre has made clear that an annual budget of the order of \$285 000 would be optimal funding for that centre. Will the Office for the Status of Women be returning the \$50 000 worth of recurrent funding to the Working Women's Centre, which was deducted from its budget when the centre was moved to Industrial Affairs? What was the rationale for cutting the budget of the Working Women's Centre? What is the social background of the clients of the Working Women's Centre?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A basic assumption has to be corrected here. The honourable member said that the Working Women's Centre received \$265 000 per annum. It has received \$215 000 for many years. It received an extra \$50 000 as a political gesture by a desperate Labor Government just before the 1993 election. I have seen the correspondence from the former Treasurer (Hon. Frank Blevins) providing this election boost of \$50 000. In no way can it be said that the centre received \$265 000 per annum. That year—

Mr CLARKE: They got it last year, too, under your lot.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Not from the Office for the Status of Women. They received \$215 000. The Working Women's Centre received a further \$50 000 from the Treasurer just before the 1993 election. For that half year period the centre's allocation, voted through Parliament and through the office, was \$215 000. It received \$215 000 from the Office for the Status of Women budget last financial year, and they will receive it this financial year. In this current financial year, the centre will receive a \$50 000 boost, not

from the budget of the Office for the Status of Women but from the Department for Industrial Affairs. The centre has been given prop-up funds by Ministers who wished to do it from time to time for various purposes. One time the money came from the Hon. Frank Blevins before an election, and most recently the funds have come from the Hon. Graham Ingerson, for reasons that he can explain. It is not money that I voted or agreed to. The amount of money that has consistently come from the Office for the Status of Women has been \$215 000. There has been no difference in this Government's allocation to the Working Women's Centre through the Office for the Status of Women than there was in the allocation of the former Labor Government. There is no difference at all.

Mr CLARKE: The fact of the matter is that the Working Women's Centre is \$50 000 short. The centre actually does things for women. Overwhelmingly they are from a non-English speaking background, they are non-unionists, and they work in a power relationship in which there is absolutely no equality or bargaining power with their employers. The Working Women's Centre has produced a number of booklets, and the Minister attended various launches in her time in Opposition, which have done a positive amount of good for working women in this State.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have no quarrel with any of that.

Mr CLARKE: How can you, as Minister for the Status of Women, sit at a Cabinet table, cop a situation and so easily roll over when a centre which is actually doing things, not sitting around a table exchanging notes or pleasantries, has \$50 000 taken away from it. If you were worth your salt as a Minister, it would have had its funding restored to at least the level of last year. What will the Minister do about it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have done exactly as did the former Minister who was responsible to the Premier for the Office for the Status of Women and who had the budget responsibility or who made the recommendations, that is, in providing \$215 000 through the Office for the Status of Women. I have done exactly what the former Minister did for exactly the same reasons as the honourable member just outlined, because those programs are important and the funding from the Office for the Status of Women has not been cut: it is exactly the same. I do not know what you are panicking about or what you are doing.

Mr CLARKE: There is 1.5 staff who cannot be employed and a lot of valuable work that cannot be done for working women.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure whether the honourable member was in Parliament at the time, but I remind him that it was the former Labor Government that left a little bit of a problem for this State to deal with. It has meant that some budgets have had to be cut quite severely by some millions of dollars. This incorporated association has continued to be funded at the same level by the Office for the Status of Women as it was funded by the former Premier. I see no reason to apologise. I think the Office for the Status of Women and I should be congratulated for maintaining the funding level, notwithstanding the pressures we inherited from the Labor Government.

This money was negotiated and moved from the Premier and Cabinet lines to my responsibility. There were discussions with the Department of Industrial Affairs so that for last year and for next financial year the money will come through the Office for the Status of Women and go to the Department of Industrial Affairs. When all that was negotiated, the

Director on 11 April wrote to me indicating that there had been discussions with the management of the Working Women's Centre. It was agreed that the base grant for next financial year (1994-95) would be \$215 000, because that was the level of funding to which the Liberal Party had made a commitment prior to the State election. Any further submissions could be made by the centre for an increase in funding. It agreed to the base level of grant of \$215 000. We provided that base level of grant, and it was the same base level that the Premier, as the Minister for the Status of Women, had provided. I see no reason for a fuss. As I said, the organisation should be jolly relieved that the Office for the Status of Women has been able to maintain its commitment as it has in the past.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of the Committee to the time. I ask members to refrain from the use of supplementary questions unless really necessary.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not quite finished my answer, Mr Chairman. It should be known that, while the Office for the Status of Women has maintained its funding at \$215 000 (the same level as when we came into government), an extra \$50 000 was provided by Frank Blevins as Treasurer before the last election. A further \$50 000 was provided to match that sum by the Minister for Industrial Affairs for this financial year.

In terms of next financial year, it is a matter for the Working Women's Centre to again negotiate with the Department for Industrial Affairs. In the meantime, members should be aware that special payments in 1993-94 from the Government included a one-off grant of \$100 000, on top of the \$50 000 it received as an election perk to assist in the relocation of its premises to Norwich Centre—and we are talking about an incorporated association.

Mr CLARKE: Your Minister was quite happy to open it. Are you suggesting—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not arguing; I am just highlighting the fact—

Mr CLARKE: Don't say it is a bribe then. You are offensive all the time.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The \$50 000 was no doubt an election bribe. If the honourable member would like to see the Treasurer's correspondence I can provide it to him. I am sure he would find it illuminating. Further to those amounts of \$50 000, \$100 000 and \$215 000 the Government agreed to pay for the lease of the Norwich Centre office and this Government has continued to pay that also. There is no back-down on that. In October 1993 the Government provided a private plated vehicle to replace the existing vehicle. So, the Government and taxpayers have been particularly generous and there has been no diminution in this last financial year in the Government effort; it has been the same effort as that provided by the former Government.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to Program Estimates (page 337). The Government has an objective to achieve 50 per cent representation of women on Government boards and committees by the year 2000. What progress has been made in that area?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The establishment of the breakthrough register is an initiative of this administration to assist the Government to achieve its target of 50 per cent representation of women on Government boards and committees by the year 2000. The register comprises a comprehensive list of women who are willing to serve on Government boards and committees. We have concentrated

initially on the Government sector and progressively will be working with the private sector in this regard.

Agencies have been nominating members to Government boards and committees. Before they do so, they are required to consult the register. Since December 1993, approximately 400 women have completed a breakthrough application registering their interest; in November 1993 the representation of women on Government boards and committees was 25.5 per cent; and as at mid-May 1995 the figure was 26.4 per cent. We have also developed an executive search consultancy because it has become apparent that, for a number of level 1 boards, women have not been wishing to put their names on the register so that it is referred to by Government boards, committees and Ministers; they expect to be searched out as they would for any other position if they were seeking to change jobs.

Therefore, we have engaged Jane Jeffries as a consultant to undertake that executive research. The women contacted said that they definitely were not prepared to put themselves on a general register; they wanted to be interviewed for the particular purpose and they did not want certain information on the record to be part of a general computer search arrangement or breakthrough. This initiative has been well received by women concerned. A number of appointments from that executive search has been made already by Government, it has been well received by Ministers and it has been a good investment for taxpayers in terms of the development of skills of women in this State on high level boards.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question again refers to the Program Estimates, page 337. I note in the program description of the Office for the Status of Women that the Women's Advisory Council is undertaking rural consultations. Will the Minister describe the progress made by the Women's Advisory Council in its inaugural year?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Women's Advisory Council was given four areas on which to focus its efforts initially because we wanted to ensure that we achieved outcomes from the work, time and investment that the women put into the new Women's Advisory Council. The areas to be examined were women and representation, women and the economy, women and violence, and women in rural and regional areas. All these issues are being explored, but a major effort has been concentrated on women in rural and regional areas for a variety of reasons: not only the drought and the nature of farming life but the fact that there has been a trend for younger people to leave country areas, making older women responsible for so much of the assistance on farms and in small business and also for the community sector. This is of major concern to the Government, as it would be to all members of Parliament.

The Women's Advisory Council has had regional consultations on the West Coast and in the Riverland. It goes to the South-East next week, and there will be further consultations throughout the coming financial year. As I indicated earlier with regard to the Passenger Transport Board, when discussing transport brokerage schemes, transport access has constantly been highlighted. It is apparent that the Government must do more to encourage innovative moves in that respect. It is important that the Government and the community as a whole should look at access to ease the burden and pressures on the lot of women in country areas. The transport brokerage scheme relies on funding through local government and HACC, and we can look at expanding that program. The Office for the Status of Women, the Women's Advisory Council and the Passenger

Transport Board are working to that outcome, and I applaud that effort. I am looking for early recommendations so that we can start to provide some positive benefits to women in the community arising from their feedback so that they know that the Government is not only listening but able to respond.

Mrs PENFOLD: As a supplementary question, have the needs of women coming to the city for health reasons, such as breast cancer, been assessed?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am aware that is being assessed by the Minister for Health. I can provide a more detailed response for the honourable member. The matter has been raised by the Women's Advisory Council, and the Minister for Health will be the next Minister to meet the council. The Ministers for Family and Community Services and for Environment and Natural Resources met the council a few weeks ago. I will get those details for the honourable member.

Mrs PENFOLD: My third question again relates to page 337 of the Program Estimates. The Women's Switchboard has been a vital part of the provision of services to South Australian women. Will the Minister describe what action is being taken to ensure that the switchboard will continue to meet the present and future needs of women?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A draft report has been prepared. It is with the Director of the Office of the Status of Women now in terms of the review of the Women's Information Switchboard. The goal is to ensure that the service does meet the current and future needs of South Australian women. The review was undertaken by a consultant, Miranda Rowe. She had the benefit of a support group. The Director may be able to add more on the support group.

Ms O'Loughlin: People had been involved with the switchboard for quite a while, including representatives from the women's switchboard support group, representatives from the older women's council, staff volunteers and women with special expertise in information technology. A diverse range of women worked toward a consensus model of what the switchboard should look like coming into the next millennium.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I understand that that report is in draft form. There are a few facts and figures the consultant needs from the Office of the Status of Women. The finally form coming to me would be used for further discussion with that representative reference group. This is very important today, with all the new technologies available and with the wide range of women's and community groups. A wider range of options is available now for women to access than was the case when the Women's Information Switchboard was first set up. We must look at how we work with those groups to ensure that women have the benefit of the latest technologies, have confidence in using them, and know that the services provided are up to date in terms of the information through this system. A lot of work is to be done in this area. We have to look at the resources required to meet those expectations and that is what the consultant and reference group have been undertaking. The funds for the Women's Information Switchboard are about \$300 000 for this and next financial year.

Mrs PENFOLD: With the problems of relocation in the country regions a great need exists for mental health advising. Is a mental health expert available through the Women's Information Switchboard?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Not directly engaged by the Women's Information Switchboard. They have several information officers with language-based expertise, including

Vietnamese, Greek, Italian and Spanish expertise. We also have an Aboriginal representative. There is not a specific area of expertise other than that cultural background.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to page 337 of the Program Estimates. I draw the Minister's attention to the second broad objective, namely, to provide effective and balanced policy advice on the issues and concerns of women in South Australia. I will refer to two policy decisions that I believe are of concern to women and inquire how the Minister manages this role in Cabinet. First, in the health portfolio, in relation to disabilities services, we know that the major burden for the care of disabled people falls into the hands of many women. Many of those women are on their own because their marriages and partnerships have broken down because of the strain of caring for a disabled person.

Many of these women are aged in their 60s and 70s, and there is even one that we know of in her 90s, caring for children who are in their 30s, 40s and 50s and who are intellectually disabled. We know that women are the people who suffer most in relation to health policy in this area.

The second area relates to Family and Community Services where, again, women bear the brunt as the leaders of families—single mothers, women in poverty, and women fleeing from domestic violence situations. I want to know what your policy advice was to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Family and Community Services in relation to the cuts that have been applied to those areas that have greatly affected the lives of women in our community?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have a number of roles. One is the Minister for the Status of Women; another as a member of Government trying to deal with the inherited debt mess. So we have—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A week is a long time in politics, I understand, but somehow for some reason, and possibly for good reason, you want to forget 18 months ago. So we are dealing—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The whole community—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The Committee will come to order. The Minister has the floor.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I heard the question in silence. It is amazing when you provide an answer they do not like they have to interject.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The member for Ross Smith is out of order.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They do have a short memory. Just 18 months ago the people of South Australia got rid of Labor—and for good reason.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The member for Ross Smith is out of order.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not too hard. We are making the decisions that the community expects us to make and we continue to be well advanced in the role.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Women and children will suffer as long as the debt in this State remains high and we continue to spend \$900 million of taxpayers' money in interest rates alone.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Reallocation—from what?

Members interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, you took it from South Australians and you put it towards the State Bank debt.

Mr Clarke interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Ross Smith is out of order.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That was a great reallocation of resources, so do not talk to me about reallocation!

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Elizabeth is out of order.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am one of three Ministers working diligently on the implementation of our caregivers policy, and that has the support of the—

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: She is a junior member of this Parliament. She will learn some courtesies one day, one would hope.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: She certainly does not remember any political history or even wish to be associated with past Government policies. The caregivers policy is one on which the Caregivers Association of South Australia is working with the Government, and we are implementing this policy. It will raise awareness about carers, ensure adequate supports are in place for carers—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! As the time for consideration of this vote has expired, I declare the examination completed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 22 June at 11 a.m.