

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 28 June 1995

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**Chairman:**

Mr H. Becker

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson
 Mr J.G. Cummins
 Mrs D.C. Kotz
 Mr S.R. Leggett
 Mr J.A. Quirke
 Ms L. Stevens

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Police, \$267 662 000

Witness:

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

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Hunt, Commissioner of Police.
 Mr D. Hughes, Director, Corporate Services.
 Mr B. Smith, Manager, Administration.
 Mr F. Bowering, Manager, Financial Services.
 Mr N. Stephenson, Acting Manager, Business Services.
 Mr G. Barlow, Acting Manager, Computing and Communications.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee hearings 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 14 July. I will allow the Minister and the lead speaker for the Opposition to make an opening statement of 10 to 15 minutes and at the change of each payments line. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for questions based on three questions per member alternating from one side to the other.

There has been a tendency to ask four or five long and drawn out supplementary questions, and that practice will cease. Subject to the convenience of the Committee, a member who is outside the Committee and who 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. An indication to the Chair in advance from that member is necessary. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure as revealed in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments (printed paper No. 9) or reference may be made to other documents, including Program Estimates and the Auditor-General's Report—although that is difficult this year as the Auditor-General's report has not yet been tabled, and that will be subject to a separate debate. However, last year's Auditor-General's report would be quite satisfactory.

Members must identify a page number or the program in the relevant financial paper from which their questions are 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 incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the House of Assembly; that is, it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the Minister and not the Minister's advisers. The Minister may refer questions to the 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.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to pages 160 to 163 in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments and to pages 447 to 465 in the Program Estimates and Information. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I do, Mr Chairman. With the Committee's indulgence I would like to continue the practice that was adopted last year, and that is that my opening statement will address only those lines which are currently open. As there are five separate departments involved, I would prefer to make a brief statement for each of them. The most extensive obviously would be for the South Australian Police Department as it involves the most significant portion of appropriation of my portfolios.

Last year, I outlined to this Committee the Government's community safety policy and strong commitment to law and order enforcement. This commitment has again been confirmed by the budget allocation provided to the Police Department for 1995-96. As the Committee is aware, the Government is pursuing a firm policy of debt reduction and establishment of responsible work force targets throughout Government. This approach was advocated strongly by the Audit Commission in its report last year.

In so far as the Police Department is concerned, the Audit Commission drew attention to the fact that in 1992-93, South Australia spent around \$26 million—or 15 per cent—above the amount assessed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission as sufficient to provide a level of policing services similar to other States. Whilst the Commissioner of Police has indicated to both me and to the Under Treasurer that he has some reservations over the methodology used by the Commonwealth Grants Commission for those comparison purposes—and I share the Commissioner's concerns—he has acknowledged that expenditure per capita in South Australia is indeed the highest of all States.

As a consequence, the total savings contribution by police required of the Government over a three-year period is \$10 million against what the budget would otherwise have been, which is well short of the \$26 million that the Audit Commission identified. The police budget has been set at \$299 017 000—an increase of \$28 million on Labor's last budget in 1993-94. Of this amount the recurrent budget is \$265 463 000—an increase of \$23 million on Labor's last recurrent budget. In addition, \$1 450 000 has been allocated to the Police State Band, which has been transferred to my miscellaneous funding line.

The Commissioner has provided me with details on the first 135 additional operational police positions, which will be allocated by the end of this current financial year, meeting in part the Government's commitment to have 200 additional

operational police in place by the end of our first term in office. The Treasurer's financial statement presented to Parliament outlined a number of measures implemented by the Police Department during 1994-95 to better utilise the police budget and to free up operational police resources. These have included the redeployment of a number of police formerly in non-operational areas to operational areas such as the Command Response Divisions, Salisbury subdivisional base and Aldinga police station to assist in meeting the Government's target of achieving an additional 200 operational police; the contracting out of the department's vehicle workshop activities, incorporating annual savings of \$750 000 and resulting in the redeployment of 18 police positions back to operational areas; the civilianisation of 40 positions formerly occupied by uniformed police officers; and the commencement of a process of rationalisation of some functions of the department, including warehousing, aircraft service operations and accommodation.

Further measures already identified for implementation in 1995-96 include the contracting out of a number of functions which are not seen as core business, for example, printing services, couriers, gardening services, radio workshops, infringement notice processing and tow truck operations; continuation of the civilianisation program; further rationalisation of the aircraft services operation; reduction of police housing stocks; introduction of user pays for police attendance at major sporting and entertainment events; the Police Security Services Division taking over the operation of speed cameras from 24 August 1995 to release more police to operational duties; and the transfer of police vehicles to State Fleet to take advantage of the centralised fleet management and purchasing.

The police capital works program has been increased by \$10.9 million to \$33.6 million in 1995-96. This program includes the completion of the new Port Augusta police complex; the relocation of the existing Regency Park patrol base from existing substandard and poorly located premises at Hindmarsh to the former EWS Department premises at Ottoway; and commencement of work on the Darlington police complex to enable the completion and relocation of Darlington police and also to enable the construction of the Southern Expressway through that part of our city.

These initiatives complement those that have been implemented or are under way, including the transfer of the Transit Division from TransAdelaide to the Police Department; work to establish a combined emergency services dispatch system; work to establish a shared emergency services training facility in part of Fort Largs; participation of the South Australian Police Department in whole of Government contracting out of certain computing and telecommunication activities; the establishment of community police or shop-front police stations; and acceleration of the implementation of new Neighbourhood Watch areas. All these initiatives demonstrate the Government's high priority to law and order and its commitment to ensuring that an appropriate level of resources is available to the Police Development.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the member for Playford care to make an opening statement?

Mr QUIRKE: I certainly would. I would like to read into the record some correspondence I have received from the Council of Pensioner and Retired Persons Associations (SA) Incorporated. Headed 'Voice of the Elderly', it reads:

Dear Mr Quirke,

Our council is incredulous that at a time when crime seems to have reached plague proportions in the community the Government has significantly reduced funding to the South Australian police in the 1995-96 State budget. It is also bewildered by further cuts in the State budget to health services when waiting lists for surgery and for specialist consultation are grossly extended. That hospital wards should close at such a time is extraordinary and inappropriate. These funding cuts to police and public health services will only exacerbate existing dangers and inequalities in the community and especially amongst the ageing.

We are accordingly writing to all State members of Parliament seeking redress of these anomalies and to ask for your comments on these issues. We are also asking that you vote according to your conscience on these cuts to the police and health services when the 1995-96 State budget comes before Parliament. Both policing and health are prime areas in public activities and should be funded accordingly, even in the time of severe economic difficulties which South Australia is experiencing at present. Reductions in funding, and therefore services, in both areas put the public at serious risk and we cannot help asking, 'Where will it end?'

The letter continues for several more paragraphs, but in essence the passage that I have quoted makes the point pretty well. The Government has much to answer for because it raised expectations back when it was in Opposition that considerably more resources would be placed in policing and a whole range of areas such as health and education. We are now finding that the pill, once bitten into, is a bit different from the sugar coating on the outside. With that, I have no further comments to make other than that the Opposition in general is very disappointed in the Government's performance in the two budgets in respect of the police budget and with regard to a series of other matters which will be explored further during our questioning today.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Playford may ask his first question.

Mr QUIRKE: When I asked the Minister in the House not so long ago about the number of police officers on the payroll in South Australia, I believe that the answer he gave me over the past two years is that there were 12 more. Can that be confirmed or can we ascertain the exact number of police officers on the payroll now? Can we also know what the figure was in December 1993 and the figure for the financial year 1993-94?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Today it is important that this Committee deals with facts and not with emotion. With regard to dealing with the facts, I am putting on the table the exact numbers so that the Opposition can have those figures. These are the latest figures available to me. As at 13 December 1993 (the time we came into office) there was a total of 3 608 sworn police in the South Australian Police Force. As at 6 June 1995 (and this is the latest figure at my disposal) there were 3 621 sworn police.

It is important that the Committee understands what is meant by 'sworn police'. It means those people who have taken the oath. Over the years, there have been a number of ways in which people may have taken the oath to become sworn police officers. I would like to give an example of the way in which one police officer who wrote to me recently took the oath, and that officer is not the only one of his kind in the Police Force. The officer was seeking a targeted separation package. Having worked for the Police Department for a number of years, he believes that he should be able to get a targeted separation package because, while he is a sworn police officer, he claims that he is not really a police officer.

How can that be? When he joined the Police Department, the officer was asked to undertake a three week familiarisation course at Fort Largs Academy against the policy of the

Government of the day. The officer had joined to become a carpenter and, after his three week familiarisation course at the academy, he was placed on a 12 month probation. At the end of that probation, he was sworn in as a police officer, but he never undertook police duties. Today, that officer works in horse stables. That officer says that he is not a police officer.

Why would people accept being sworn into the Police Department instead of being employed under the Public Service Act or whatever it was that prevailed at that time? The answer is pretty simple. Police officers are entitled to six weeks annual leave instead of four and access to the police superannuation scheme instead of the normal Government superannuation scheme. What I am revealing is that, for years in this State, the public of South Australia have been misled over the number of police in the Police Force. What we are saying as a Government is that enough is enough.

The public consider police as being those people who investigate, detect, react to crime and prevent crime. They would not regard someone who works as a carpenter in horse stables as a police officer and, indeed, that officer does not feel one himself, but he is included in those figures and he has been included in those figures every time a Labor Government Minister stood up in Parliament and said that South Australia was the highest resourced Police Department in Australia. It is those people whom we are endeavouring to separate out of the equation, and it is important that we do so. We must recognise how many there are in the department and identify what duties they undertake.

With respect to the comments made by the Retired Persons Association, I can only say that they are acting on information that has been promulgated by the Labor Party in the public arena. If the Labor Party wants to talk about police budget cuts today, I am happy to talk about when the police budget cuts did occur—the only time in living memory, to pick up a quote from the Leader of the Opposition—and that was in Labor's last budget. The 1993-94 budget papers are there in black and white for every member of the public, members of Parliament and members of this Committee to look at if they want to. Those budget papers show that, in its last budget for 1993-94, the Labor Party cut the police budget by \$3 million, spread equally over capital and recurrent. It cut the budget: the figures are there.

The budget papers also reveal that the police budget changed after the election because it had to be topped up. We had to move \$4 million from the capital program to recurrent so the Police Department could manage. We did not like having to do that, but we had to. It was not necessarily the case that the department did not have an adequate budget given to it to meet its needs, if its needs had been restructured, but that the Labor Government of the day said to the Police Department that it had to have a budget cut and did not assist the department in restructuring its operations so that it could operate in the new funding regime.

That was the appeal that came to this Government from the Police Department. We have been working with the Commissioner to restructure the department's operations, and significant restructuring is required. It is a big job for all of us and we are tackling it; we are not standing back from it as was done before. So, we have a budget increase. The Labor Party has made much of the recurrent, day-to-day expenditure, but its last budget for the Police Department, as seen in black and white, was \$242.3 million; ours this year is \$265.4 million. Members can apply inflation to it or do what

they like to it, but it is an increase on the Labor Party's budget. That is what we are dealing with.

Mr QUIRKE: In December 1993 there were 3 608 sworn police officers on the payroll in South Australia. We find now that there are 3 621, and increase of 13. As I understand it, the Transit Squad came in at the beginning of 1994, so 72 members of that squad came into the equation in January 1994. As I understand it, there are 18 police mechanics—and I will have more to say about them afterwards—who are now out there on the beat. So, that means that, in terms of the number of police officers who are not mechanics and the transit squad, if we take them out of the equation, we see a significant reduction in the number of police officers. I would like the Minister to tell us exactly how many police officers have come in since December 1993 by way of the transit squad, by way of maybe one or two carpenters and the 18 police mechanics—are there any more?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Commissioner will be happy to provide the Committee with the details of the numbers who have come into the force. If the Committee likes, and if the Commissioner has the numbers with him, we can provide also the numbers that have gone out during that time. I come back to the example I gave of the sworn police officer who had three weeks' familiarisation at Fort Largs Police Academy and has never undertaken any policing work. Those are the people who are being targeted by this Government to be identified not as police. I have said up front before that there are a lot of people in the Police Force today—at this stage it could be as many as 404 plus—who do not undertake policing duties. At this time the actual categorisation and agreement on those numbers is being worked through around the enterprise bargaining table with the Police Association. We are very pleased with the progress that we are making on that to date.

But the fact is that, in our Police Force, there are a large number of people who are not really police officers and Governments of the day have been fudging the figures. This Government could keep the figure fudging going. We could pretend, like the Labor Government did, that there are more police in the Police Force than there really are. We are not prepared to do that. We believe we need to be up front with the public and let them know the games that have been going on for years. A lot of the reason for the reduction in those numbers is that, through natural attrition, some officers are departing from the Police Force, as one would expect. Many of their positions are being backfilled by people who have been moved from other areas.

So, the fact that a larger number has come into the force than the actual numbers showing on paper for sworn police cannot be used to compute that we have not increased the number of operational police by as many as we say we have. As we have always put up front, this Government always knew—and said before the election—that 200 extra police positions would be created through a mixture of redeployment from non-operational positions and, we believe, new recruits. We said we expected the mix to be about 50-50: 100 new recruits, 100 redeployees. I do not mind admitting, and I have admitted this before, that we have been surprised by the number of people undertaking non-operational work. I did not know before the election that we had people undertaking three week induction courses at Fort Largs. That is something we found out after coming into office. That has meant that we can achieve the 200 without the 100 recruits. Instead of the mixture being 100 new recruits and 100 redeployees, we can achieve easily 200 redeployees because of the way in which

the numbers have been fudged over the years. Mr Des Hughes has the numbers in front of him, so he will take this part of the question.

Mr Hughes: I do not have a breakdown of these figures, but since December 1993 there have been 144 intakes through the academy and, during that same period, there have been 188 graduations. Those figures would include some of the State transit squad. I do not have the exact breakdown, but that gives the honourable member an indication of the numbers going through the academy, at least, during that period.

Mr QUIRKE: What are the number of police officers that, for one reason or another, have left the service during that time?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Over past years the figure averages between 95 and 115. The estimated figure for 1994-95 (and we are pretty safe with that figure now with only a couple of days to go) is 112. The actuals for previous years are as follows: in 1993-94 it was 88; in 1992-93 it was 90; in 1991-92 it was 85; in 1990-91 it was 128; in 1989-90 it was 136; in 1988-89 it was 148; in 1987-88 it was 145; in 1986-87 it was 162; and in 1985-86 it was 183. So, it is fair to say that the attrition rate was much higher between 1985 and 1991 and is now slightly less than it has been in past years.

Mr QUIRKE: Concerning the 135 police officers that you say are now on the beat, I assume that that is the Transit Squad which has been sworn in since then, the mechanics and a series of other people, is that right?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Is the member asking us to explain where those 135 are?

Mr QUIRKE: The Premier has been making much of the fact that now there are 135 more police on the beat. We would like to know where they come from. Is this the Transit Squad? Is this the result of the outsourcing of mechanics' work (that is, the mechanics are now out there on the beat), and presumably other persons have been transferred onto the beat from various activities in the Police Force?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Commissioner will answer the bulk of that question. We said up front that the 135 positions that would be redeployed would be in place by the end of this financial year, that is, by 30 June. However, with some officers being on leave and some needing to finish the work that they have been undertaking, all the bodies will physically be occupying those positions by 27 July. The Commissioner will be happy to provide a breakdown of the 135.

Mr Hunt: The 200 additional operational police are proposed to be achieved from two main sources: first, the transfer of 72 Transit Police from the STA and, secondly, the redeployment of 128 police officers from non-operational duties, thereby making a total of 200. As at 30 June, 135 of those 200 positions will have been reallocated, and I shall indicate generally how those positions will be reallocated by that date. There are the 72 Transit Police and a further 63 are on redeployment from various other sections of the organisation. Some of those areas have been mentioned: the Novar Gardens workshops, Government House, the Human Resources Branch, and a number of other areas.

It is important to note that the places to which those positions have been attached are all operational positions, for example, from Novar Gardens the people have been transferred to the Salisbury subdivision, command response divisions, the Aldinga Police Station, Hindley Street and a number of other command response divisions. It is impossible to change all the people who go with those positions immedi-

ately, but 97 positions and officers have already been redeployed—the 72 transit police, 20 to the Salisbury division, four to the Aldinga Police Station and one to the Hindley Street police station. The remaining 38 positions will be reallocated to command response divisions.

There is the process of getting the people into those positions, and they will be in those places by 27 July. The reason for that slight delay is because people need specific training when taking them from one place and putting them in another, so they will be on training but attached to their new destinations. The positions will be allocated by 30 June, and the total number of positions will be filled by 27 July. The remaining 65 positions of those 200 positions will be determined during the forthcoming year: 42 officers will be released from speed camera operations when that function transfers to the Police Security Services Division on 24 August. The remaining 23 are still being finalised, and those placements will be made from other sources as officers are released.

The CHAIRMAN: I will allow the member for Playford to ask one more question, as I have already allowed him to ask several supplementary questions. The art of Budget Estimates is to ask a very simple question and get all the information required. The trouble is that I cannot force the Minister to supply the answer that the honourable member wants.

Mr QUIRKE: Thank you, Mr Chairman, for your advice. We will just keep coming back to the same topic until we get the answers we want. So we now have 18 mechanics who, by Friday of this week or at the latest 27 July, will be serving as police officers. For how long has the longest serving of those officers worked as a mechanic and what is the least amount of time?

Mr Hunt: I do not have the exact times that those people have been there. One of the reasons I mentioned the difference in time in filling the positions is because it could well be that the people who have been in those positions for a number of years are not ready to take on front line duties in the operational field. So, we will have to train them for a position from which we will transfer someone who is currently in a more operational mode. They will all be employed in an operational command area, but we must deal sensitively with people who have not been in a front line position. We do not want to put them in a position of compromise, and we must take into account the question of occupational health and safety.

Mr QUIRKE: As a supplementary question, I ask specifically: how long has the longest serving of those officers at Novar Gardens, who will now go into operational policing, been working as a mechanic, and who was the most recent recruit to the Novar Gardens facility?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: We are happy to take that question on notice.

Mrs KOTZ: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for his efficient handling and presentation of what is a very complex budget involving a wide ranging area of portfolios. I commend him for the efficient manner in which he has handled this process. I am extremely pleased that the Minister has demonstrated the capacity of members of the Liberal Party to present such an efficient budget. Page 449 of the Program Estimates states that the Police Department will be funded \$265.463 million for recurrent expenditure and \$33.554 million for capital works, a total of \$299.017 million for the 1995-96 financial

year. What are the benefits of this particular aspect of the budget?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I believe that a budget of this magnitude (\$299 million) will again be shown by the Commonwealth Grants Commission analysis to be the highest budget *per capita* of any police force in Australia. Our Police Force is well resourced, and we will continue to ensure that it remains so. This substantial level of funding will enable the achievement of the Government's election commitments with respect to community safety. The Government came into office with a policy of increasing the number of operational police by 200, and it continues to strive to meet that commitment, as I have already stated.

This appropriation to the department will enable the continuation of improvements to workplace accommodation for police officers. It is particularly important that we reflect for a moment on accommodation that is provided to police officers. For a long time, police officer accommodation has been recognised as being probably some of the worst Government office accommodation. That has not happened by accident. Because the department has not been assisted to resolve some of the matters forced upon it by Government, it has been forced to operate inefficiently. I have just cited the example of someone who comes into the Police Force as a carpenter, who, in order to make it look good for the Government of the day, as though there are more police than there are, has been sworn in as a police officer and given extra annual leave than they would otherwise have had. That problem is compounded by a large number of people undertaking police duties and all getting the extra leave allocation which was introduced initially in recognition of the fact that police officers lose public holidays because they do shift work.

That extra impost, which was added just to make the Government of the day look good, as though it had more police, made the department more costly to run. But the Police Department did not get that recognition up front from Governments. So to cover that extra cost impost through a variety of areas, often the department was forced to draw on its capital. That is why we have found in successive years under the Labor Government that police station buildings have been promised, but they have still been there the next year. The department has continually drawn on its capital budget. When the Liberal Party came into office, as I said, it had to move \$4 million from recurrent capital; but it did so up front: it is reflected in the budget figures. However, I can inform the Committee also that the department has been carrying across a shortfall from 1992-93, and that has caused difficulties because that shortfall has had to be repaid, and the department has continued to draw that shortfall from capital moneys. We have put in place a comprehensive capital works program which will be adhered to, so that the police will get accommodation that is needed so that they can work in an environment which they will not have to be continually concerned about and they can get on with the job.

This capital works program includes provision for the completion of the Port Augusta police complex at an overall cost of \$5.5 million. I was pleased to note when I visited Port Augusta recently that the building program for that complex is well under way. It also includes the relocation of the Regency Park patrol base to better premises at Ottoway, at a cost of almost \$2 million, and \$7 million has been allocated in 1995-96 for the commencement of the building of the new Darlington police complex, which is planned for completion in mid-1996, providing a much needed accommodation

solution to the problems that have been evident at Darlington police station for the best part of a decade or more. At the same time, this will make way for the Southern Expressway.

Recognition has also been given in this capital works budget to the importance of operational police having up-to-date equipment and vehicles. The budget will enable a comprehensive replacement program for operational vehicles. Funding is also being provided to enable substantial progress to be made in the operation system integration project which is aimed at simplifying access to the multitude of computer programs that are used by police. This is a further good example of the way in which police have been pretty tolerant of the conditions which they put up with. It is not an uncommon sight to enter a police station to find one officer having to use as many as three different computer terminals to access a PC program, the police mainframe or the JIS mainframe, and they all look different. It is confusing and difficult to learn, particularly if the officer is not computer literate in the first place. We will be removing all those obstacles from police work, and through this new project we will be putting up front a one-window opportunity for them to use one computer to access all those things. It will not matter to the officer whether they are using a multitude of different computer mainframes because their job will be simpler and quicker.

While the department also has been required to make a contribution from its budget to the State debt reduction strategy, the Government has taken into account the high priority it gives law and order in setting the police budget, and that is exactly why the police budget has been set at such a comparatively high level.

Mr LEGGETT: I note that on page 450 of the Program Estimates a total of \$46 640 000 in recurrent funding has been allocated for 1995-96 for crime detection and investigation services. What are the details on the overall crime statistics? In particular, what are the crime statistics for breaking and entering, larceny of motor vehicles and are any other areas showing a drop?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is the sort of information that this Government will ensure goes to groups such as the Retired Persons Association, as this shows that the Police Department is succeeding in its objectives of tackling crime—it is succeeding in the areas in which South Australians want the Police Department to succeed. I am pleased to be able to advise the Committee that the figures for the 1994 calendar year show a 3.7 per cent drop in overall crime on the previous 12 months. Indeed, that is an encouraging effort from police in tackling crime in 1994.

Of particular note is the fact that property offences have gone down by 8.2 per cent—offences of break and enter have gone down by 13.8 per cent; offences of larceny and illegal use of motor vehicles have gone down by 9.3 per cent; and the total number of larceny offences, excluding those of motor vehicles, have gone down by 7.3 per cent.

There are some areas that do require further attention because, while overall crime has gone down and there are significant drops in those crimes affecting people directly such as breaking and entering and larceny, offences against the person have increased by 1.8 per cent, and it has become a major focus of the department to have that follow the same trend as other crime. Also, offences against public order have increased by 11.6 per cent and drug offences by 4.9 per cent, and those are areas that the department is continuing significantly to target to ensure that we get the same drop there as for other areas of crime. In all, I believe that these figures are

a tribute to the way in which the Police Department is focusing its attention on its core business; that is, protecting the public and ensuring that the incidence of crime keeps dropping.

Mr CUMMINS: Page 456 of the Program Estimates states that one of the objectives of the crime detection and investigation services program is to discourage the incidence of crime activity. I have noted in recent newspaper articles that Operation Pendulum is being discontinued. Can the Minister provide the Committee with a summary of the results achieved by that operation and say why in fact it was discontinued?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This particular operation is a credit to the way in which the department has been changing its method of operation. From time to time over past years, the Commissioner has implemented a series of task forces and short-term operations but has not had the flexibility to utilise those resources to maximum advantage. We have been pleased to support the Commissioner in every endeavour to group together people to tackle a particular crime, and Operation Pendulum was one such short-term endeavour. It commenced on 1 August 1994 and concluded its activity on 31 October.

The operation was staffed by 90 selected police officers who concentrated on apprehending offenders for the recovery of stolen property, and members will see from those figures for 1994 that I just revealed to the Committee that groups such as Pendulum certainly have had their effect on stolen property. The task force was divided into three groups, consisting of a group north of the Torrens River, one south of the Torrens River and one in the central city area, and each group was headed by a police inspector; and, in addition to operational personnel, it had in-built staffing for administration and intelligence analysis.

This is one area where the department has been using high technology. Through this operation, the department revealed to the public that it is capable of mapping the areas where crime has been occurring and the times at which it has been occurring. So the department has been utilising the intelligence information of knowing when crime may be more likely to occur in a particular suburb or even street, and it used that intelligence information throughout its work in Operation Pendulum and continues to use it.

The operation achieved considerable success, and I was pleased particularly with the Commissioner's involvement of Neighbourhood Watch in the operation because for the first time Neighbourhood Watch members were given the opportunity to become actively involved by assisting police in an operation. Neighbourhood Watch members were given telephone numbers of their representative task force and they gave that task force information that they believed might be of assistance. It could be something simply that they had observed or heard, but it was all put through to the police.

In the three month period of operation, the task force arrested or reported 1 080 persons for 2 707 offences. These offences ranged from robbery with violence, demanding money by menace, breaking offences, receiving stolen property, false pretences and larceny to the execution of a variety of warrants. Stolen property valued at \$851 736 was recovered and \$1.4 million worth of crime was cleared as a result of the apprehension of offenders. So, I believe that indeed this operation is a tribute to the force and the way it is working and that it demonstrates the results which the force is capable of achieving when it uses its officers in this manner.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Norwood have a supplementary question?

Members interjecting:

Mr CUMMINS: I do nod, my friend. He can see: I know you are blind and we know the quality of your questions.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr CUMMINS: I don't practise law. Unlike you, I was capable of being qualified: I doubt whether you would be.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member to proceed with his question. I have given him the privilege of a supplementary question—

Mr CUMMINS: Mr Chairman, if I may have a bit of peace and if you could keep these geeses on the other side quiet for a couple of minutes—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That comment is unparliamentary, and I will not tolerate that sort of mud slinging in this Chamber. We are here to obtain information from the Minister. I have given the honourable member the privilege of a supplementary question. Please ask that supplementary question.

Mr ATKINSON: I ask that that comment be withdrawn.

Mr CUMMINS: On reflection, I do not think I can describe them as birds, and I do withdraw the comment. I note that part of the policy of this Government and the Minister's policy certainly is to target crime. Page 455 of the Program Estimates states that an objective for 1995-96 is to review the establishment of command response divisions and consolidate the functions undertaken by those divisions. Can the Minister provide details on the success of the command response divisions and why in fact it is necessary to review those divisions?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The command response divisions were essentially the follow-up to Operation Pendulum and, on being able to deliver the success through the Pendulum operation, the Commissioner decided to undertake a six month trial by introducing command response divisions—one to be located for the northern region at Holden Hill and the other to be located at Glenelg to cover the southern region of our city. Those groups commenced operation on 5 January this year with their six month trial finishing at the end of this month, when their performance is to be reviewed.

The department found that reported crime can be divided into three areas for investigation, namely, A, B and C, with category A being the most serious. They can cover major indictable offences. Category B covers minor indictable offences and category C covers summary offences. When a crime is reported, the category of the offence dictates who in the department actually completes the investigation. Category A offences are forwarded to a member of the CIB, category B offences are forwarded to the officer in charge of a command response division for allocation to a member of that division and, for category C offences, if the suspect is within a local patrol area or further inquiries are being conducted locally, the police incident report will be forwarded to the local patrols through their supervisor.

The command response divisions have been focusing principally through the Commissioner's changes on the category B offences. Through that we are able to report that to the end of May there have been a total of 529 arrests and 1 179 reports, which I believe is a significant effort by those officers, and I will certainly be looking forward to the findings of the Commissioner's review of what to date has been a very successful operation.

Both command response divisions have been actively involved in operations and special policing objectives, which include observation of criminal groups in reaction to crime; operation control; looking at licensed venues throughout Adelaide; attention to suburban licensed premises regarding suspected breaches; and liaising with secondhand dealers. They also provided the security for the recent royal visit and have been concentrating upon hydroponic systems for growing cannabis, particularly in connection with motorcycle gang activities.

They also provided the operational support for the National Action rally and have assisted Hindley police when they have had some difficulties with increasing crime. They have been responsible for collection, collation and dissemination of intelligence relevant to criminal activity under investigation by the respective command response divisions. In all, that again indicates that the Commissioner has the freedom to best utilise his resources and to get results. I congratulate him for that.

Mr ATKINSON: On a point of order, I believe it is quite in order for the Chairman to acquiesce in supplementary questions. It is surely quite another thing, and improper, for the Chairman to invite a member to ask a supplementary question as the Chairman invited the member for Norwood to do. Before you rule on that, Sir, will you point out to the member for Norwood that the plural of 'goose' is 'geese' and not 'gooses'?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. The honourable member indicated to me by nodding that he wanted to follow through with the question. He was not satisfied with the answer, as often happens on the Opposition side. In the past seven days of the budget Estimates Committees, I have given quite a bit of latitude to supplementary questions. However, some members do abuse the system by asking four or five supplementary questions. As I said earlier to the member for Playford, the whole art of asking questions is to ask the right question to get the answer you want or to get the information you are seeking. That is the art of the whole exercise. Let us see the member for Spence practise that art.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to the police traffic escort section, which has a long record of safely transporting on our public roads over-dimensional loads, such as 12-metre wide school buildings, 70-metre long columns and machinery up to 7.5 metres high. This uniformed section keeps private motorists clear of these loads, and to do so it must take control of intersections from the traffic lights, move some loads onto the wrong side of the road and organise the safe movement of thousands of private motorists on the wrong side of the road. Is the Minister worried about the risk of major road accidents and the magnitude of the State's liability if he proceeds with transferring responsibility for the escort of over-dimensional loads from the police to civilians employed by the private sector?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Any change in staffing nature of that type is the responsibility of the Commissioner, and he has information that he would like to share with the Committee.

Mr Hunt: Currently the requirement for police to perform this duty is encased in legislation under the Road Traffic Act, and therefore there is no discretion at this stage on whether we can or cannot perform those duties. In the overall review of core business and seeing whether or not we ought to be doing that, we are taking cognisance of what has been happening in other States. I emphasise the fact that no decision

has been taken on this because the matter should be subjected to a proper and full business case study.

To take up the questions that have been put about safety, I offer some of the following comparisons. Western Australia employs private escorts for vehicles under 5.5 metres in length, and there are a number of other considerations. However, no definite police policy or practice exists in Western Australia regarding the utilisation of police or otherwise. In New South Wales police substantially withdrew from over-dimensional escorts on 1 July 1991 and escorts are performed in the main by private operators. Local police commanders may approve police escorts in specific cases if considered appropriate in the interests of road safety. I imagine that it is a case-by-case basis.

In Victoria escorts are performed by VicRoads personnel and police may escort over-dimensional loads on rare occasions in rural areas if VicRoads staff are unavailable. A user-pays system applies and is administered locally. In the Northern Territory legislation provides for a combination of police and accredited escort personnel. Escorts are administered by the Northern Territory Motor Vehicle Registry and it is not the sole prerogative of the police. We have made some queries of other jurisdictions, replies to which have not yet been received. The matter is still under review and, apart from the safety factor, there needs to be full consideration of the business case in relation to it.

Mr ATKINSON: Does the Minister think that motorists will respect civilian escorts as they respect police escorts, and will they respond to civilian instructions as quickly as they respond to police instructions?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The member wants to cross his bridge before he even comes to it. The Commissioner just advised the Committee that the matter is being considered but that no final decision has been made. The police are required to provide the service through existing legislation; no draft legislation has been undertaken, and no legislation is before Parliament. All those matters are being examined by police at this time. The Commissioner has also advised of the practices operating in other States. I am quite comfortable in waiting for the police to complete their work rather than trying to cross bridges before we come to them.

Mr ATKINSON: By way of further supplementary, as the Minister and the Commissioner raised interstate experience, does the Minister have statistics from interstate about collisions arising from the civilian escort of wide loads and, if so, will he share those statistics with the Committee?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Commissioner will be pleased to advise the Committee on that.

Mr Hunt: I have adverted to that. I have given the information that we have at our disposal at this stage. It is an indicator of the police involvement. We are seeking fuller and wider details of all operations of wide load escorts, and certainly when that position comes to hand it will be used totally as part of the evaluation of our position.

Mr ATKINSON: Is the police traffic escort section that the Minister is considering privatising self-funding? Indeed, is it profitable? If it is self-funding or profitable, what is the point of abandoning the function?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: At the start of the Committee sitting today, I said that I was pleased to deal with the facts today, but that we did not want to have to deal with emotion. It is important that this budget Estimates Committee continues to deal with the facts. The honourable member has just said that I am (so he says) considering privatising (so he says) the police escort section. I am happy to share the facts with

the honourable member. I was unaware of the work being undertaken on that group until I read it in the paper. That is not exactly uncommon when the department is analysing, initially, areas of potential change that it may wish then to put to Government. If the honourable member is implying that there was a directive from me, I can tell him categorically that there was not other than that the department has been asked to assess all its operations. However, I am happy to hand to the Police Commissioner the point about the revenue received from the division concerned.

Mr Hunt: It is premature to be trying to talk about the number of dollars received by way of fees as against, say, fixed costs of salaries because that does not take into account the other ancillary costs associated with the employment of personnel. That is why I indicated that a proper business case must be undertaken to discover the full costs of the provision of that service to the community.

Mr ATKINSON: My third question is about speed cameras. I had a copy of a memorandum from Mr B.M. Woollacott, Chief Inspector, Officer-in-Charge Traffic Division Southern Command. The subject is kerbside hours and it reads:

Senior Sergeants are to monitor daily staff deployment for radars from Darlington and Thebarton. Due to staff shortages and failure to maintain kerbside hour targets the following procedures will have to be adopted:

Shift Sergeants Darlington/Thebarton will liaise with each other at commencement of the shift if they cannot put out three cameras. The week of RBT is an exception. It is expected that every endeavour will be made to put out six cameras in the Southern Command (378 KSH per week for Division-non-RBT). Sergeants will conduct the run through if it is necessary to use a Senior Constable supervisor on camera. Supervisors should operate cameras from time to time to maintain expertise. Scheduling time should be kept to a minimum and it is expected that at least 5¼ hours KSH can be recorded against each camera per shift.

Should insufficient staff exist from either radar team, inquiries will be made with response teams to ascertain if a camera operator is available. If this is the case an operator will be supplied by the Response Team. Other issues, including staff levels, laser sighting, etc. are being examined to try to maintain target hours. I realise this is a burden without the required staff numbers but this schedule has become essential until staff numbers can be reestablished. It can be seen that local advertisements are now relating to speed and maximum effort to be applied to speed detection devices.

Have uniform traffic patrols been withdrawn from service to man speed cameras?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am not familiar with that particular memo. It is obviously an internal memo of the department from a senior officer to some of his staff. The memo does, of course, refer to kerbside hours. Kerbside hours are the hours which the department determines are necessary to provide road safety protection on the road. Those hours are used within divisions to ensure that cameras can be moved around to as many locations as possible to let the public know that they should not speed on our roads.

I am not sure whether there has been a temporary staff shortage, for whatever reason, at Darlington, but if there has it obviously makes sense that the station would wish to draw on operational police officers who are sitting behind speed cameras. That is the very reason the Government has moved to have the Police Security Division undertake those very duties from August this year. Security officers will undertake those duties and that will ensure that operational people are available for patrol work. The memo demonstrates the very problem that the Government detected some time ago. The Commissioner may have more details about the particular need at Darlington at this time. I do not have that information.

Mr Hunt: I am not aware of the particular memorandum to which the honourable member referred. I suppose that in the day-to-day business of managing the Police Department, nor should I get to know about all of that. However, from what has been read out, it seems to me that the memo involves an administrative and managerial change and arrangement for working staff to their best capacity within a given area of the organisation, which they are empowered to do.

I would be happy to look at the instruction at another time, but there may well have been some other time of the year which has necessitated a shortage—for example, through annual leave, unusual sickness or things like that—which has caused difficulty in maintaining staffing levels. I see nothing wrong with redeploying people from one part of a traffic function to another part of that function in the pursuit of our role in respect of road safety which will therefore preserve lives and reduce or minimise accidents.

That is about the best I can offer by way of a view as to why such an instruction was issued. It is simply a local managerial resource arrangement which has been put in place to properly and effectively use the technical equipment that we have available.

Mr ATKINSON: As a supplementary, I must point out to the Minister that maintaining kerbside hours is very important in respect of maintaining revenue from speed cameras. Does the Minister think that his policy of having police vehicles involved in speed camera operation, open to the sight of approaching motorists, is partly responsible for the dip in speed camera revenue?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is fair to say that having cameras in the open could be partially responsible for a dip in speed camera revenue. As we have always said, it is not speed camera revenue which the Government is after. If one looks at the cost of road accidents in this State and the amount of speed camera revenue involved, it is in the Government's interest and the State's interest to have fewer people speeding, fewer accidents and less speed camera revenue. That makes good sense. Yes, we believe that by having those cameras up front publicly, that is one reason why revenue is reduced. People are travelling more slowly. We are only out to get those people who continue to speed.

Mr ATKINSON: They only slow down temporarily.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The honourable member may like to say that they are travelling slowly temporarily, but over the past 18 months the number of road accidents has been down. Road deaths have decreased although not by anywhere near enough. We all agree that any road accident or death is one too many.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The road toll is certainly well down on where it was at the same time two years ago. Last year there was the largest drop in the road toll for a significant period. I believe that I am right to say that it was the most significant drop for 40 years. We hope to see the toll even lower by the end of this year.

It does not make us particularly happy whenever there is another death on the road. I am sure it does not make anyone particularly happy. If we can deploy our police and the use of cameras better to keep that toll and accidents declining so there are fewer paraplegics and quadriplegics, we will continue to do that because it makes sense. That is what this is all about. The relationship to revenue cannot be drawn. Kerbside hours are determined to obtain the maximum deployment of cameras and, as the honourable member said,

up front and out in the open, to try to get people to slow down.

Mrs KOTZ: Reference is made on page 455 of the Program Estimates to the introduction of a user pay system for police attendance at major sporting and entertainment events. Can the Minister provide the Committee with details of whether the proposal is the first time police will be called upon to charge for their services?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: There is obviously a lot of interest in what may be done to charge for police attendance at particular events. It is interesting to note that charges are already levied for police attendance. As the member for Spence identified a short while ago in a previous question, charges are in place for wide load escorts undertaken by police, for repeated attendance at false alarms at business premises, for time spent by police members when being interviewed by solicitors, for the provision of police reports such as burglary and accident-related reports, and for police clearance certificates. Those charges are already in place.

The proposal being examined by the department at this time is essentially a follow-up from a recommendation of the Audit Commission, which said:

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

The Audit Commission also recommended that 'the Government should give consideration to the introduction of user charges for police services at sporting, entertainment and other events.' The department is working on this consideration. Cabinet has given approval in principle to the introduction of user charges for police services on a more expanded basis and the department is identifying every event where that could apply for ultimate Cabinet approval before such a scheme would take place.

I raised this issue publicly at the time of the Rolling Stones' concert. Considerable police resources had to be utilised while that concert was being held in Adelaide for absolutely no financial return to the department to cover its cost. However, when that concert was held in New South Wales, it attracted a user pays fee. It is that sort of inequity that is reasonable to examine in this State to ensure that promoters, in this case of a multi-million dollar extravaganza, do not get a free ride in Adelaide while in other States they have to pay.

Mr LEGGETT: I note on page 465 of the Program Estimates that reference is made to the construction of a new Darlington police station. Will the Minister provide more details on this project and advise when it is likely to be completed?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This capital works project is probably in a position where, for the first time, Darlington police officers actually believe they are getting a new police station. They refer to it as the on again, off again police station. It is one of those stations that has often become the legacy of the need by the department to draw on its capital reserve. One officer said to me recently that he is prepared to bet that the station will not be built before he retires, and he reckons that he has another 10 years before he retires. That was before the announcement of the new Southern Expressway, and officers from that station know full well that the

Southern Expressway goes through part of the existing Darlington station. They are now actively involved with the Police Department and the Department of Building Management in preparing the plans for the new station. The land has been purchased at a cost of \$654 470 and was funded from the 1993-94 capital works program.

Officers have been particularly frustrated with their existing accommodation. It is dysfunctional and the buildings are on separate sites. Officers from the patrol base, who sit in what amounts to old transportable school classroom buildings, have to cross a road, go through a dolomite-covered field, dodge puddles, dodge around police vehicles and go in the back door of the station facing South Road, which is not exactly a desirable way to accommodate our police officers. They will be getting a police station that will be built in what would have been regarded as fast-track time under the previous Administration but which, under this Administration, is becoming normal building time.

The accommodation needs to be in place by June 1996. That will mean that, at Darlington, the department will have its much-needed accommodation. At this time the project cost is estimated to be about \$9.9 million, but that is subject to all the tender processes being completed, and we are eager to see that cost reduced to get the facility that those officers deserve. Interestingly this project will not just provide accommodation for officers already at Darlington, for the new complex will also accommodate the Southern Breath Analysis Unit, which is presently located at Colonel Light Gardens, the Southern Traffic Group from Thebarton Barracks, the Operations Response Section from Thebarton Barracks, the Southern Command Executive from police headquarters in Flinders Street, and Southern Command Response Division from Glenelg.

Amongst those groups are two from Thebarton Barracks and one from Flinders Street. It is part of the Government's policy of moving police out of city office accommodation to the suburbs so that we can increase the policing presence in the suburbs, and those officers will be there for back-up if required. That is a commonsense policing initiative that the department is following through vigorously.

Mr CUMMINS: With respect to the capital works program, I note that under the title 'Police works in progress', there is a paragraph dealing with the Port Augusta police complex. Will the Minister provide some background to this project and advise whether it will be completed on schedule? I note that the completion due date of the Port Augusta complex is March 1996. I am particularly interested in this because, when I practised law, I knew that some of the facilities for police up there were not exactly adequate.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, this building will be completed on schedule. I had the privilege of being in Port Augusta recently and met with police officers there who were very excited about their new facility. It seems that almost every officer at Port Augusta has taken the opportunity to have a look at the site and to see what is being built to make sure that the building reflects the plans in which they had some involvement. It will ensure that another very inadequate police facility is replaced by one with conditions of which those officers are deserving. It involves not just the replacement of police facilities at Port Augusta but also means that the Divisional Headquarters, which are presently located away from the main complex in a building owned by SGIC, and the Prosecution and Crime Scene Units, which are located in a building owned by BankSA, will be brought together into the one.

The cells are heavily used in that location and do not conform to the required standards. We are mindful of our responsibilities following the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, so we will have cell accommodation that meets those requirements. Officers at Port Augusta have also been working from a relocatable building that was placed on site in 1990 to assist with their accommodation difficulties. The project was reviewed by the parliamentary Public Works Committee in accordance with new procedures that were implemented in July 1994, and the committee recommended that this work proceed. The total cost of the project has been estimated at \$5 568 000.

I have been advised that, in response to the question that was asked earlier about the Darlington police complex, as of this morning I can advise that Hassell Pty Ltd has been appointed as principal consultant for the Darlington police project. Fletcher Constructions has been appointed as construction manager of that project, and a series of secondary consultants have been appointed to cover structural engineering, services engineering and cost management.

Mr QUIRKE: When will the next intake be admitted at Fort Largs?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The intake is heavily dependent on negotiations which are occurring at this time with the Police Association around the enterprise bargaining table. It is important that all parties are in agreement before we are able to announce the new recruitment process for the Police Department. At this stage I would rather take that question on notice so that I can ensure that I give an accurate answer to the honourable member. We believe that negotiations with the association will be finalised shortly, and then we will be in a position to give the honourable member an accurate answer based on the agreement we will have in place with the union.

Mr QUIRKE: A supplementary question to that: am I to believe then that the training arrangements which have been in place for some years down at Fort Largs are to be changed? Is there a policy change in the wind?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: No, there is not a policy change and police will still be training at Fort Largs, as they have been for a long time. But we have also identified, clearly, that there is—even after we have introduced the Government commitment of 200 additional operational police—likely to be some surplus who will leave the force through natural attrition. It is that which is being negotiated with the union at this time. The attrition rate will then determine whether it is necessary to defer some training at Fort Largs and for how long that period is to be.

Mr QUIRKE: My second question is in relation to the proposed police board. It is useful to have the Commissioner and other officers here with the Minister on this particular question. I refer the Minister to the speech he made to the Police Association delegates—I think it was on 10 March this year. Can the Minister tell us exactly what the police are not doing that he believes this board will somehow or other improve?

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

Mr QUIRKE: Can the Minister tell us, in answer to the member for Newland, if he has made allowance in the budget this year for any transition phase to a police board?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: There is no allocation in this budget for a transition phase to a police board. The same question could well have been asked of the former Emergency Services Minister, Kym Mayes, when he tabled in Parliament the Labor Party's proposal to introduce a police

board. It was the Labor Party in this State that first tabled in Parliament a proposal to introduce a police board.

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Well, see the answer. As I have advised the House, I was the one who gave the Police Association the paperwork that was tabled in Parliament so that they could find out about the police board, because there had been no discussion with the union over that proposal.

Mr Quirke interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: If the honourable member sits back and listens, he will get his full answer. There are police boards in existence in other States in Australia and it is perfectly reasonable for a Government such as ours, a new one coming into office, to pose the question: if a police board is in operation in other States, why is it not here? Is that because we are undertaking our management of the Police Force in South Australia in a better way than the way in which they are in other States? That is one of the first things to look at. The Labor Party was adamant that a police board was the way to go. Was it right in being so adamant? That work is still continuing.

The Commissioner and I have both done work on the proposal and, it is fair to say, the Commissioner has put a number of options to me which are being considered as to how the department could be administered. It is a very big request of any Government of one individual to manage a business the size of the Police Department—some 4 300 employees if we include both those who are 'sworn officers' and those who are Government Management Employee Act employees—to be responsible for overseeing the reaction to and prevention of crime, or the policy involved in that. It is an enormous task. It is fair to say that one of the most difficult parts of that task is to address some of the restructuring that is necessary in the administrative areas of the department.

If a board was to be introduced, it would be introduced because the department is comfortable in the knowledge that it can address those administrative changes in the department; it can address some of the promotional concerns that have certainly been put forward by the union in the past; and, at the same time, give the Commissioner the support base to be able to concentrate more time on the fundamentals of policing rather than having to carry such an extensive administrative burden. Those are the sorts of reasons boards have been introduced in other States. In the view of some of those States, though, boards have been introduced at the time to provide a buffer for corruption. I want to make it quite clear that the latter part is not a concern that this Government has in this State. So, if it were to come into place, it would certainly come into place to assist that process. It would not come into place, though, to control the Police Department in the way that was sought by the previous Government.

The one thing I am very happy to share with this Committee is that the Department for Emergency Services, which was abolished by us within days of coming into Government, was put in place for one reason and one reason only: to put an executive officer above the Police Commissioner to be able to direct Government policy into the Police Department and interfere in the operations of the Police Department. I make no bones about that: it was to be a very big empire. On coming into Government I was horrified to find that the Department for Emergency Services had, in the weeks of the election and the weeks leading up to the election, printed large amounts of Emergency Services' stationery, signed a lease on a floor in the Natwest Centre to accommodate 45

staff, purchased well over \$100 000 worth of furniture—the exact amount I do not have in front of me—with a view to building its empire and being able to control the Police Department, but under the guise of better working together with the other emergency services agencies.

We do not subscribe to that. But a police board may be able to assist, if it were to come into being, in management of that administration, and also following through the implementation of Government policy in the administrative area. That is the reason why it is being analysed. It is nothing insidious, unless of course the honourable member is volunteering to me that his Government also had an insidious intention with the police board. But if a decision is made to introduce a board, then we will announce it as a definite decision. But, at this time, no definite decision has been made, but it is likely.

Mr QUIRKE: As a supplementary to that—most of that is just pure fantasy. But I asked, and I ask it again in the presence of the Police Commissioner: exactly what policies is the Police Force in South Australia not carrying out now that led the Minister to make the statement that a board would lead to the Police Force carrying out more effectively Government policies? What policies are these people not carrying out, Minister—while they are all here now in your presence—that makes you want to move in this direction? I know it is all going to be our fault from years ago—so I will save you that bit now.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is very gracious of the honourable member to acknowledge that it is all the Labor Party's fault from years ago and I am very pleased by that admission.

Mr QUIRKE: It is a class act.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: If the honourable member sits back he will get his answer.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Have you finished?

Mr QUIRKE: Yes, go ahead. Tell your mates to shut up, too.

Mr Quirke interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Do you want to hear the answer or not?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Committee will come to order. I am not going to allow this to continue. I call the Minister.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I indicated before, it is a big ask of the department to attend to the crime difficulties it has had before it, and it is reducing those, and, at the same time, prepare for a significant structural change in the way the department is administered. This is about resources. The department has prepared a schedule for implementation of our policies: it has done that, it has prepared the schedule. The difficulty the department has is in the way it allocates the resource to do that. Obviously its first charter is to respond to crime. The Labor Party said for years that there needs to be significant change to the way the Police Department is administered. However, if on the one hand the department is having to respond to law and order and, on the other hand, it is being asked to make change, which will be the most difficult for it to attend to? It will be that policy change and that change in direction. So it is an extra resource that we have the opportunity to put at the disposal of the department and, at the same time, significantly attend to some of the promotional difficulties.

Since coming into office the union has consistently told me that it is unhappy with the way in which promotions occur

in the Police Department. There is a lot of concern over that. Other States have used the Police Board to handle the promotions of their senior officers. So, it is an option that is there to be able to also use such a body but, again, we have not said that we will definitely reintroduce a Police Board. It is a strong option and remains a strong option, but there are a number of others that the Commissioner has put before me as well which are also being considered.

We want to ensure that the department has the resources available to it to oversee the implementation of policy, particularly in administrative areas. I am happy to give some examples of where the department has had to place administrative resource to help complete messes. We looked before at the operational systems integration and also at the changes to the department because of new computing agreements the Government is about to enter into. Those sorts of changes require resource and overseeing, and they are to fix up problems that we inherited.

I outlined before the problem that an officer has at the crime front, in the station, in putting in the details of a crime report. They have just apprehended the offender and often they have to work with three computer terminals that do not interlink in functionality. That is one of the problems that has to be fixed. There are also other problems that they are attending to, such as the combined communications and dispatch system that is being analysed at this time. Emergency services across the State use different communication and dispatch systems. In many regional centres there are five or six different communication towers. Some of the systems are cumbersome and do not work as effectively as they could, and the cost imposts are a lot heavier.

To make that change officers have to be involved. Someone has to oversee the process. So the issue is: should we expect the department to continue with all the previous functions that it has there as well as make these changes to clean up the mess? It is a board that can drive those changes and oversee, potentially, or it may be that it is another individual working with the Commissioner in the department, another senior officer. Those are things that are being examined. There is no hard and fast solution as yet. We need to make sure that the department has the resources to take it through that change.

If the honourable member is going to sit there and say that everything is perfect in the Police Department because the Labor Party did such a good job and that we do not need to fix anything, let him say so. The Audit Commission identified that 15 per cent greater expenditure *per capita* on law and order than anywhere else in this country; but that money has not been going to the crime front. A lot of it is locked up in old administrative practices that have not been changed and someone needs to oversee that change. There may be outdated systems or procedures. It may be that people are shuffling pieces of paper that they do not need to be shuffling. All those things have to be addressed. It is nothing more insidious than that. It is plain commonsense.

Mr QUIRKE: Before I ask my third question I would like to say that the Opposition thinks that the police are doing a pretty good job and I am sorry if that is not shared by this Minister and the Government.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Mr Chairman, I am not going to sit back without replying to that sort of disgraceful reaction and beat-up from the Opposition. Today we are dealing in facts, not hysterical beat-up or disgraceful interjections—and you have tried a few of those on Government members who are also asking questions here today. Opposition members

should read what I said in *Hansard* about the police response to crime. If we are to ensure that Government operations work efficiently we have an obligation to the community, one which the Labor Party shirked, to also be honest and up-front and identify where things are not working as well as they can and to provide officers with the opportunity to work better where they know they can.

That is what this process is about. It is not about beating people over the head and saying that they are not doing a good enough job. It seems that every time the Labor Party was made aware of a problem it either swept it under the carpet or thought it would be telling people that they were doing a bad job if efficiencies could not be made. That is why this Government is now moving this State forward again after you guys moved it backwards so fast.

Mr QUIRKE: I refer the committee's attention to a thing called *Police Post* Issue No. 61 of 1 June this year—in fact it was the day of the State Budget. I wish to read the contents of this into the record:

In accordance with Government policy in respect to reducing expenditure in the public sector a three year budget containment strategy has been developed for SAPOL. To achieve the necessary savings will require the reduction of 185 police and 65 non-police positions. With few exceptions all positions identified will come from administrative or support areas. It is anticipated that many of the functions affected will still be performed following an assessment of revised work practices and contracting out proposals.

It is important to note that no person will become redundant. Reductions for police positions are planned to be achieved through attrition and, consequently, persons will, where necessary, be redeployed to other positions. Targeted voluntary separation packages will still be an option for GME Act persons in appropriate cases. The process is expected to take place over the next two to three years and until a range of studies are conducted in those cases requiring revised work practices and contracting out there will not be a noticeable difference to our operations.

At this time steps have been taken to notify those persons working in areas likely to be affected by the work force reduction strategy. Naturally, when change of this scale takes place in an organisation there will be many questions raised and information sought by employees. Also, it is important that factual information is provided to avoid unsubstantiated rumours. It is my intention to provide every assistance possible to anyone who maybe affected by this process and to ensure that appropriate counselling services are made available to facilitate satisfactory placements in the redeployment process.

Therefore, I would ask that where you have any questions or require further information those inquiries be directed in the first instance to your respective Divisional Commander or Manager. Additionally, a telephone inquiry facility has been established at Human Resource Management Branch for police officers on . . . [it gives the telephone number] and GME Act employees on . . . [again, it gives a telephone number]. As a matter of priority, and to ensure that you are fully informed, I will be providing additional information on the overall SAPOL budget strategy following the release of the State Budget.

The question that obviously emerges from this is: why did the Government see this as such a terrible document and want it recalled within a matter of hours? It seems to me that this was a reasonable attempt by a chief executive officer of the department to prepare the staff for what was obviously going to come.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I said at the outset, today people are dealing in facts and not emotion. The fact is that at no time did I or any of my staff, or any member of the Government, request the recall of that particular bulletin, because at the time I first saw it I was totally unaware that it had even been sent out to police stations. I want to make that absolutely clear. I was concerned about that bulletin going out at the time because many of the items contained therein were on the enterprise bargaining table with the Police Association,

and I felt that it had the potential to aggravate the association if those items had not been agreed to—and at that time they had not been agreed to. I certainly do not intend to divulge to the Committee today details of what stage we are at with those enterprise bargaining negotiations, but that was the major concern. I am happy for the Police Commissioner to advise the Committee what action was taken to recall the document. I do not know how or whether the document was recalled, but if the honourable member would like the Commissioner to provide an answer I am happy to put this matter to rest once and for all.

Mr Hunt: Following discussion with the Minister, it became plain to me that it would not please the Minister to have the document go out on that particular day. Given the circumstances that prevailed, it was recalled.

Mr QUIRKE: As a supplementary question: at the conclusion of the document, it states:

I will be providing additional information on the overall SAPOL budget strategy following the release of the State budget.

Has further information gone out to police officers since 1 June?

Mr Hunt: At the conclusion of the Estimates Committee today, some detailed information about the budget will go out to the various commands. It will take the form of a briefing with the Police Association and other interested parties. Written documentation will accompany that to reach a wider level of people, and the matter will be introduced by way of communication to groups.

Mrs KOTZ: I return to the bricks and mortar situation without the emotion. On page 34 of the capital works program it is stated that it is planned to relocate the police operations at Hindmarsh to the former EWS premises at Ottoway. What has prompted this move, and will the Minister provide some of the background to this project?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is a particularly good example of police officers not having received the benefit of the accommodation standards that many other Government employees have received around the State. The present Hindmarsh complex was completed just before 1910 with the ground floor having been constructed in 1880. While many people may think that it would be novel to be located in such an historic building, if it has the same services that it had then, I assure members that police officers do not find it novel to be located in a building the ground floor of which was completed in 1880.

There are a number of difficulties with the site: it is not located in the commercial centre or focal point of the policing district. As I have indicated, the accommodation does not provide a satisfactory working environment. Parking for both police vehicles and the public is inadequate, and obviously high maintenance costs are associated with any building, particularly one which has not been substantially upgraded during its life. The preferred and most suitable option would be to provide facilities that support community policing objectives, and that will be achieved through the establishment of a facility on a site nearer to the civic or commercial centre of the policing area.

The Police Department has identified a suitable site as a result of the Government's outsourcing of some EWS operations. The former administration amenities building at the EWS depot at Ottoway has been identified by police as suitable to meet the patrol requirements of the Regency Park division provided that some money is spent on upgrading that building and making it suitable for their use. As a result,

arrangements are now in place to upgrade that building at a cost of \$3 million. This will incorporate \$900 000 plus commissioning costs for the purchase and \$1.9 million in capital works. In all, the police, by utilising the existing building, believe that they will save at least \$1.1 million. It will also enable central traffic operations, which are presently at Thebarton Barracks, in a similar way to moving people from the city area to Darlington, to move people from the city to Regency Park.

Mr LEGGETT: I note from page 455 of the Program Estimates—‘Crime prevention and general police services’—that the Aldinga Police Station has been established for more than 12 months. What has been the success of that police station, and has it led to the opening of more shopfront police stations throughout the metropolitan area?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Aldinga Police Station was opened by the Premier shortly after we came to office. It has been spoken of in the Police Department as the fastest fitted out and opened police station in the department’s history. Those involved deserve to be proud at the rate at which that project was moved. We expect that changes will need to be made to that police station in the future, because obviously the growth of the Aldinga and Seaford areas is such that we will need an even greater policing presence than the one that is there. This police station was established in line with Government policy of establishing a facility in a new suburban community rather than establishing a facility in a community after it has grown to a considerable size and when the rate of crime has already been established.

The new premises which accommodate three officers are located in a leased shopfront police station. They were opened by the Premier on 27 May, and it has become a focal point for the community. Since its opening, officers at the station have arrested a number of offenders for car stealing and house breaking in the area, and they have been in a position to provide a timely response to any reported crime.

I am advised by the Commissioner that they have achieved a five minute response time compared to the previous 20 to 30 minute delay that was evident in the area. With support from the local community in a two-way exchange of information, community policing in the area has been most successful. The member for Kaurana has advised me that community response to the station has been excellent and that the community is grateful to have that police facility in its area. Members of the station participate in school programs, and students are made aware of expected standards of behaviour in the community. As a result, drug dealers and graffiti vandals have been apprehended by police and antisocial behaviour by youth in the area has decreased.

A local disaster committee has been established, and is working with other emergency services in the area. An excellent working relationship has been established between the Aldinga police and Willunga council. The location of the station has ensured a steady stream of public visitors who, police also advise, continually express their appreciation of the service provided, and the station has also been able to provide support for neighbouring one person stations at Willunga and McLaren Vale. The cost of commissioning this police station, including the supply of a vehicle and communications equipment, was \$69 087, which indeed would have to go on record in today’s terms as being one of the most cost effective introductions of a police station that we have seen.

The South Australian Government is committed to a program of establishing shopfront policing to major shopping

areas in the Adelaide metropolitan area. Police have received a number of requests for establishment of centres from areas including Blackwood, Aberfoyle Park, Marion and Colonades to name but a few. An important factor in establishing each community facility is an assessment by police as to the demonstrated effectiveness of such a facility in the community as against cost factors. In November 1994 a pilot program commenced at Tea Tree Plaza in the Westfield shopping centre. This strategy involves three police officers and is benefiting the electorates of the members for Newland and Florey. Other pilot community policing facilities have been established at Prospect and North Adelaide and the model for these locations is based on one police officer operating from, in those locations, existing police premises and providing a dual role as station member and community liaison officer. The department presently has negotiations under way with a number of shopping centre proprietors to determine what arrangements can be made to the benefit of the public and the department to put further facilities in those places.

Mr CUMMINS: I note from the support services program on page 465 of the Program Estimates that departmental workshop operations have been outsourced and that there is an objective to further outsource. What benefits are expected out of that initiative and the initiatives in general?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is another one of those areas with which the former Labor Government had so much difficulty and which is a good working example of how moneys can be better utilised by the department in carrying out its business. A review of the Police Department’s motor vehicle workshop operations at Novar Gardens was completed in 1994. As a result of the review, the department has either contracted out, or is in the process of completing the contracting out, for vehicle servicing and repair, vehicle fit and strip and vehicle accident and collision repairs. All those things were done by the Police Department at Novar Gardens.

I found that some police officers in the department were concerned about these changes, and we worked through a number of those anxieties. They raised very real concerns that if the private sector was responsible for work on police vehicles they could somehow be endangered as someone other than a sworn police officer would be working on their car.

Those people who have expressed concern to the Commissioner, to my office and to other people in the department have been provided with information concerning all work done on vehicles, and this came as a surprise to most of them. The facts are that, first, police vehicles are constructed by civilian personnel; secondly, police vehicles for many years have often been seen in the workshops of various car dealers throughout metropolitan Adelaide and indeed in country centres also, because those car dealers have been responsible for ensuring that defects on those vehicles were rectified.

In addition, vehicles being serviced by the private sector in country towns are a matter of life in those towns. Obviously, it did not make sense to bring vehicles from regional centres into Novar Gardens to be serviced and maintained, so that work was undertaken in those areas. So, the only part of the equation—the servicing and repair of metropolitan vehicles and the initial fit and strip—was done at Novar Gardens, and it made sense to go down the same path as we had with the rest of that work.

As a result, a contract for the mechanical service and repair of SAPOL vehicles was awarded to Fleetcare, which is a division of Ultra Tune (Australia) Pty Ltd, and it commenced operation on 3 April 1995. Members may be

aware that Fleetcare has provided a similar service to the New South Wales police service continually since 1989. The contract provides for a full range of services, including general servicing and mechanical repairs, high speed pursuit inspections and an emergency breakdown service delivered through a State-wide network of some 140 approved repairers. This network provides access to repair services at the local level, and this minimises the down time of departmental vehicles.

The contract, which will operate for an initial two-year period with two annual options for renewal, places a strong emphasis on preventive maintenance and a high quality standard of service. I am advised by the department that the experience in the first three months of operation suggests that these objectives are being met, and the response from field personnel over the period also has been very positive. The department's Fleet Services Branch has responsibility for management of contract specifications, including monitoring of the work performed by the repairers.

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

Mr QUIRKE: I refer to provision made in the budget this year and to the question of resources should there be a change to prostitution laws in particular in South Australia during the course of the next financial year. Without going into any great detail on that, I am sure that the Minister is well aware of the fact that a significant Parliamentary change is proposed to the various Acts with respect to prostitution in South Australia. Will the Minister or the Commissioner give a response to several angles? First, what level of resources is now required as part of the ongoing policing of the various Acts that prostitution contravenes in South Australia at this stage? I understand that the Commissioner submitted a report some time ago on this question. If these changes were to get up, how would it affect some of the forward estimates and some of the amounts of money currently resourced for anti-prostitution measures by the South Australian Police Force?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As that is essentially a question concerning allocation of resources, it would be more appropriately answered by the Police Commissioner.

Mr Hunt: A short answer would be that, although prostitution comes within the general ambit of so-called victimless crimes, it is nonetheless associated with criminal activity and therefore is a crime command responsibility. We would see, by the devolution or redeployment of some of the people I have indicated earlier in the 135 and 200 positions, that staff would be put into the CIB investigation area which could embrace the question of prostitution and the associated criminality that goes with it.

Mr QUIRKE: By way of supplementary question, with the measures that are before Parliament at this stage, I understand the first measure being debated is to totally strike prostitution from the statute books in South Australia. Is it the opinion of the Minister or the Police Commissioner that that will do nothing to free up police resources for other areas of criminality or police activities in South Australia should that measure be successful?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I defer to the Commissioner.

The CHAIRMAN: I have some problems with the question as it is hypothetical. However, it was linked up with existing resources.

Mr QUIRKE: It is linked up with the resources we are discussing in this line, namely, the availability of police resources over the next financial year, as referred to in my

initial question. This is a supplementary question on my first question.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Obviously the department has given consideration to what effect the outcome of the legislation would have if passed, so it is appropriate that I give the Police Commissioner the opportunity to respond.

Mr Hunt: There is no foreseeable diminution in the application of the operations of Operation Patriot and/or associated activities in criminal investigation associated with the question of prostitution, which should be enlarged in the appreciation of the question of prostitution and include things like paedophilia, the pornography industry and so on. There are about six or seven different aspects of the sex industry often referred to as in principle prostitution and it is those activities which are still ongoing and I see no diminution in them at all.

Mr QUIRKE: I refer to police security. About three or four months ago in my electorate office I received a letter (and I am sure other members received the same where the same circumstances were involved). During the holiday period I employed two people to come in while my secretary was on holidays and one had failed to access the proper security code. The department employed a new cleaner who presumably did the same on two other occasions. I received a letter, which I do not think was in the spirit of a service culture from this organisation, advising me that this had happened. That was reasonable for it to do so, but it went on to tell me that my office would be off-line for any services unless I were to pay a deposit in future. The deposit was \$50. When I came down from the ceiling I contacted the Department of Industrial Affairs, which looks after the electorate offices. I understand that it signed (because I certainly did not) the necessary documentation to this organisation.

I raise the issue here because I have some fears about the customer service relationship of this organisation, at least to my office (and I suspect to one or two others). Is it now fully under the umbrella of the Police Commissioner? Has the Police Security Service Division taken over all of those functions of State security and is it now totally under the direction of the Commissioner?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, the Police Security Service Division is under the direction of the Police Commissioner. Part of that division was previously SACON Security. I certainly do not know of the incident to which the honourable member refers and the Commissioner also indicates that he is unaware of it. We would be grateful to get details from the honourable member because we both agree that the incident related is not the sort of thing we as a service organisation like to see happen.

Mr QUIRKE: Another member has indicated that he had a similar response. I am happy to get the documentation. My point in raising it was to talk about the lack of a service culture that seems to be prevalent in that organisation and this is our opportunity to raise it today. I also point out that there is every obligation on persons not to waste police time by allowing police officers to be called out on false alarms.

The other issue with respect to police security relates to a number of persons I have had come to my office and ask for either a voluntary or targeted separation package. One constituent had worked with State security for a number of years. He wished to exit the system but, because it is now under the umbrella of the Police Force, he believes that he is not entitled—and that was the advice that came back—to a voluntary or targeted separation package. Will the Minister advise us whether that is so, if it is intended that that be the

situation in future or whether he will make some allowance for persons who were not in the Police Force, were never intended to be in the Police Force and who now come under the umbrella of the Police Force?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: That information is not the case and 11 people in the Police Security Services Division had the opportunity of taking a separation package. Five have been accepted. I am not sure whether the honourable member's constituent is one of the five or one of the 11, but we are happy to check it out for him.

Mrs KOTZ: In relation to the area of security issues, but with regard to the operation of speed cameras, page 458 of the Program Estimates, under the program title 'Government Security Services' states that Police Security Services Division personnel should 'Undertake specific security duties in support of the South Australian police.' Will that include the Police Security Services Division staff operating speed cameras in this State?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, it will. The timing of this question is rather fortuitous following the question from the member for Playford because it gives me an opportunity to explain why some of the separation packages have been offered in the Police Security Services Division. Separation packages are normally only available where positions are to be abolished in the department. They are targeted in that way because they are no longer necessary. However, the working of the PSSD is about to be changed because that organisation is to take up the role of operating speed cameras. Clearly, with that organisation's changed role, it is important to ensure that personnel are equipped and able to undertake those services. It came to the department's attention that some of those people were not best placed. Therefore, it was possible to offer some of them separation packages. However, at the same time we must increase the number of staff in the PSSD by 25 and staff are being interviewed at the moment and some are in place having been moved from elsewhere from with Government.

The benefits of having the PSSD operate speed cameras is that that ensures that kerbside hours, which the member for Spence referred to earlier, to cover public safety on roads can be maintained at a level required to keep our roads safe. It also means that 42 police positions will be available for redeployment. Those 42 positions are not insignificant. As the member for Spence indicated earlier, from the Police Department perspective, there is a need to balance kerbside hours to ensure that the public get the message that, if they speed, action will be taken, and to respond to other operational matters of the force. That should not be a problem in future and we will have 42 more police who can go back on the beat while security officers will be responsible for manning speed cameras.

Mr LEGGETT: Along the same lines, with regard to page 459 of the Program Estimates, the program entitled 'Police Community Liaison and Education Services' refers in part to the continued expansion of the Neighbourhood Watch program under 1994-95 specific 'Targets/Objectives'. Will the Minister provide details, in particular about the elimination by June 1996 of the backlog of those areas?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I thank the honourable member for that question as I am aware of the strong commitment that he has shown to Neighbourhood Watch since becoming a member of Parliament. The department and I are particularly grateful to him and to other members of Parliament who assist Neighbourhood Watch groups. The member for Newland has assisted groups in her area and has

often helped them to obtain sponsorship advice and with photocopying their newsletters. The member for Hanson has also done that. Likewise, the member for Goyder has assisted local Rural Watch groups in his area. That assistance is appreciated by those groups because it enables them to get their crime prevention message to the public.

As of 20 April 1995, 409 Neighbourhood Watch groups had been established with an average of 700 homes in each group. However, we are concerned that 177 areas are still on the waiting list. At the same time, 155 Rural Watch and 10 Business Watch areas were established. We are rather proud of the fact that, through those programs, the department has been able to attract in excess of 13 000 volunteers working in the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Many of those people can be part of delivering the crime prevention message to the community. We are also pleased to find that major insurance companies have recognised the value of Neighbourhood Watch and are offering discounts on premiums to people in Neighbourhood Watch areas. That of course places pressure on the department to get the 177 areas on the waiting list on line.

During 1994-95, steps were taken to try to eliminate the backlog. At the start of that financial year, 230 petitions were waiting for launch. As the honourable member will note from the figures I have given, there has been a reduction. The reduction in the number on the waiting list is not quite as high as the department or the Government would have liked, but regardless of that the department has been able to increase significantly the take-up rate and it is confident that the backlog will be under control by July 1996.

The other problem facing the Police Department with regard to Neighbourhood Watch has been the availability of coordinators. I am sure that, from time to time, all members have received complaints from Neighbourhood Watch groups that they have held a meeting, but the officer who was supposed to attend the meeting was called away to operational duties. We all want officers to undertake these duties, but it is a fact of life that, when there are 409 Neighbourhood Watch areas, 55 Rural Watch areas and 10 Business Watch, that places a big demand on police officer time.

The department is therefore increasing the size of Neighbourhood Watch areas beyond the figure of 700 homes in an area in an attempt to launch areas faster. At the same time, the department is presently considering how to better utilise the way in which its officers work. I do not mind volunteering the fact that, in the suburb of Hallett Cove in my electorate, there are three Neighbourhood Watch programs and one on the waiting list. On average, those programs attract between 20 and 35 people to meetings and sometimes fewer than that. I am sure members have similar experiences from their electorates.

It would be a heavy use of police resources to have a different police officer attend each of those three group meetings (and ultimately a fourth officer when the fourth program comes on line). The department is hoping for the cooperation of groups so that they can meet together regularly and an officer can attend a combined meeting of two or three groups (bearing in mind that the meetings are often in the same suburb, involving the same issues and crime statistics). That would ensure that we had a better coverage of police resources for those meetings. I am pleased that the department has worked on that and it is confident that it will be able to achieve that. The program is assisted through sponsorship from ETSA and the current sponsorship contract is due for renewal in July 1996. Total sponsorship from that organisa-

tion has been \$90 000 per annum and that has assisted the program enormously in furthering the crime prevention message.

Membership:

Mr Meier substituted for Mr Cummins.

Mr MEIER: It is evident from the Receipts and Payments that funding for the highly respected Police Band is no longer drawn from the police budget. Can the Minister advise the Committee where funding for the band is now drawn from?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This comes down to one of those areas of honesty with the public over police statistics. The Police Band is a well respected band within the State and justifiably so. I have been pleased and privileged to have the opportunity to witness the band at first hand at public events and I have attended its concerts. There is no doubt that the band is excellent. However, we must recognise up front that, while the 36 members of the band (33 officers, two sergeants and a director of music) wear police uniforms, they do not undertake policing duties. The problem is that those 36 are included in the police figure that I gave earlier to the Committee.

We need to be up front with the public and say that, while we recognise and support the need for a Police Band, it is not right to include it in the police number figures. The band members will be excised from those figures and I hope that all members of Parliament use those figures honestly thereafter as the Police Band figure is also used by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. As all members know, the Federal Government puts pressure on the State to ensure that it is not spending more on services than is spent in other States. All members of Parliament will be aware that the Federal Labor Government has exerted pressure for us to conform with the average in other States for our running of correctional services and police services.

The trouble is that those 36 officers are a component in our budget, but in the other States they are not. To get around that problem, to bring the statistics up front and to ensure that our Police Band gets the funding it needs to continue, the budget allocation of \$1.45 million has been transferred out of the Police budget to the Miscellaneous line of the Minister for Emergency Services. That will ensure that the band continues to be funded.

Nothing else has changed with the operation of the band. Those officers continue to be regarded as part of the Police Department. They continue to report ultimately through the line to the Police Commissioner, but they are not included in the figures. I am pleased to be able to advise the Committee that the band's workload is such that it carried out 330 engagements in 197 working days in the 1994-95 financial year. That is evidence of a pretty strong demand on the band's time and resources. They have put their efforts towards assisting fundraising for charitable organisations such as the Cranio Facial Unit, Camp Quality, Make a Wish Foundation and the Lady Mayoress Fund for Homeless Youth. So, while the band does have a promotion role for the State, it is very much involved in assisting charitable organisations.

Further, every Thursday three small band groups attend five schools, on average. In addition to the music they present, on behalf of the Police Department they assist in conveying a crime prevention and safety message to our school students, and I am sure that we all agree that is important. A rock group performs at secondary schools and

the members of that group are drawn from the band. It is part of the Kids, Cops and Crows program. If members have not seen the rock group section of the Police Band, I encourage them to attend the next Police Band concert because they really are worth seeing and hearing. The band provides support at official Government occasions and ceremonies. It also has its own CD and cassette, and that production will be released later this year. As in the past, I am pleased to advise this Committee that the proceeds from the sale of the CD and cassette of the Police Band will go to charity.

Mr QUIRKE: I draw the attention of the Minister to an article that appeared in the *Southern Times* under the by-line 'Police Beat' on 21 June this year. The article, which was written by Jeremy Pudney, is entitled 'Noarlunga fears police station upgrade delays'. The article states:

Noarlunga council is worried about the planned upgrade of the Christies Beach police station, after another application to put a temporary building on the site. The council is seeking an assurance from the State Government that the station upgrade will be completed by 1997, says the City Manager John Comrie. The move follows an application from the State Government, received by the council last week, to place another temporary office block at the station.

Can the Minister tell us what is the future of these renovations? When will a proper bricks and mortar police station replace these temporary buildings?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I do not have the construction schedule for that building before me. I recall the article because it was brought to my attention. The author of the article, Jeremy Pudney, spoke to neither the Commissioner nor to me, and to this stage neither has Noarlunga council done so. However, after receiving the article, I have established that Noarlunga council was under the wrong impression that the placement of a temporary building at that site would mean that the capital works project had been put off indefinitely. It has been assured that that is not the case and that the building program is such that we need to have temporary accommodation there right now to be able to assist in meeting the current needs. If that structure were under way, we would still need the temporary building. I have just been advised that the building is on the projections for construction during the 1997-98 financial year.

Mr QUIRKE: Will the Minister tell the Committee how many speed cameras are currently employed in South Australia, if that number has increased since this time last year, and if the night-time capability of those cameras has increased since this time last year?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: My understanding is that there has been no increase in number but, in order to provide precise details, particularly concerning the night-time capabilities, the Commissioner and I would prefer to take that question on notice so that I can bring back a detailed, accurate response.

Mr QUIRKE: About a week or so ago, I received a phone call in my office on which the Minister may be able to cast some light. Some incidents took place, which are not important to this issue, in a Hills town somewhere around Hahndorf. The incidents took place in the middle of the night. Apparently, a patrol from Port Adelaide eventually responded to the call. For the Hills communities between Mount Barker and Hahndorf, what is the relevant station, after midnight, from which police can be tasked to calls?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Commissioner and I are equally mystified as to how a Port Adelaide patrol could have been tasked. If the honourable member has further details, we

would certainly like to receive them. I appreciate that he might not want to put those details on record because they could serve to identify individuals, but we should like to receive the information to find out how that could be so.

Mr QUIRKE: The second part of my question seeks an assurance for residents in that area that there are adequate police resources in the general district. It has been put to me that Stirling closes sometime at night, that it is not a 24 hour station, and that the nearest 24 hour station for those regions is Darlington or Port Adelaide. Is that correct?

Mr Hunt: Hahndorf falls within what is known as the Adelaide Hills division and there is a usual working arrangement between Stirling, which is the headquarters area, and Mount Barker, and I would expect that from time to time there could be a call to a patrol from Woodside which would attend in those areas. The arrangement between them is quite flexible and depends upon availability and hours. I have not known of any major shortage of service to the area, and I have a bit of a residential interest in that myself.

Mrs KOTZ: My question relates to the training program for victims of crime. On page 456 of the Program Estimates, reference is made to proactive programs relating to victims of crime. I must admit an interest and a curiosity in knowing how the Police Department goes about training its personnel to perform the very important role which police play in assisting the victims of crime.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is certainly an area in which it is fair to say that the South Australian Police Department has been a leader. The Commissioner has taken a deep and personal interest in seeing that his force is better able to respond to the needs of victims of crime and in assisting victims of crime. For that reason, while I could provide the details that the honourable member seeks, I would like the Commissioner to have the opportunity to share with the Committee the program that he has put in place to attend to victims of crime.

Mr Hunt: It is fair to say that South Australia took the lead in many ways, the police being among them, in developing our function relative to victims of crime. We certainly have been instrumental in designing developmental cases and courses for people based on such things as victims of crime surveys and those kinds of things. Additionally, we were the first in Australia, under the auspices of the former Director of Victims of Crime, who is a tutor in the subject of victimology. In fact, I personally did a postgraduate course in victimology, and I know that many other officers have undertaken those courses. In order to maintain a proper focus on that we do have a Victims of Crime Branch, which is advisory and operational and which is decentralised throughout the metropolitan area, dealing with a whole range of people who are in one way or another regarded as victims of crime. It ranges from proper training and education in matters of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse and general help and counselling, to the extent that we know where and when to call on other resources provided by other Government and/or volunteer organisations to be able to bring some comfort to victims of crime.

Mr LEGGETT: I am personally aware of the police education drivers' safety programs in schools, having worked with Sergeant David Hearn for many years. Page 464 of the Program Estimates sets out a number of specific targets and objectives for road safety in 1995-96. I note that there is no specific reference to the outstanding work which is done by the police with respect to school students. Can the Minister

indicate what police road safety programs are in operation for school students and the effectiveness of these programs?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Traffic Safety Section conducts a youth driver education program, which consists of two sessions of two hours duration and highlights attitudes, road collision causes, defensive driving techniques and the disasters that can occur if alcohol and driving are mixed. Every school, college and area school is included in the program. The program enjoys the approval of school principals and, obviously, the support of the Government. Six members are employed full-time in this program, and SGIC as the comprehensive third party insurer sponsors the program by paying costs of salaries of four of those members and covers the cost of six vehicles and a range of teaching equipment.

The objective of the program is, quite sensibly, to reduce the number of young drivers involved in road crashes. Its main strategies are to create an awareness of the causes of road accidents, the consequences of drinking and driving and the laws pertaining to driving and their enforcement. To a wide extent, the program has certainly promoted a safer driver attitude amongst those younger drivers who have been exposed to it and, at the same time, obviously it has the added benefit of improving liaison between traffic police and young people.

Under this program 15 500 students in years 11 and 12 were included in the program for the 1994-95 financial year. In addition, student volunteers at schools are trained in safe and efficient management of marked crosswalks and school pedestrian crossings. During the 1994-95 financial year 10 400 students involving 200 different groups have again been trained. The Traffic Safety Section also provides children's road safety education and bicycle safety to school and community groups at the safety school. I can still remember, Mr Chairman, many years ago when I participated in that program and I am pleased to see that it is still going. I still remember the message the police officer gave me on that day. Last year 248 groups involving 9 000 students received instruction under the program.

Road safety awareness presentations are given to various groups representing a wide cross-section of our community, and they include junior primary and primary schools, service clubs, businesses and church groups, defence force personnel and Government and semi-Government authorities. Last year 30 000 persons, both adults and children, involving 350 different groups, attended lectures conducted by the Police Traffic Safety Section. So, it is a fitting tribute to those officers, the work they have undertaken and the number of people they have been able to reach, hopefully with a message that they will listen to so that we can have less deaths and accidents on our roads.

Mr LEGGETT: Following on from that answer—and I appreciate the magnificent work that the police are doing in schools in relation to safety—I am aware that at some time in the past people involved in accidents or traffic breaches were required to attend compulsory lectures run by the police. Can the Minister advise whether or not this system is still in operation?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am pleased to advise that the system is still in operation. The Traffic Safety Section conducts a driver safety awareness program for members of the public involved in minor road collisions. People are invited to attend lectures by the prosecution services of the department. In 1994-95, 24 lectures have been presented and they involved 1 440 offenders and friends. All those sessions

were conducted in Adelaide. The objectives of the program are essentially to define driver attitude and to recall the attributes of a safer driver; to explain the four most prevalent occurring collisions on our roads and highlight the excuses that often are given; to illustrate relevant information about alcohol and drug related driving offences; to define and discuss giveaway and other sections of the Road Traffic Act; and identify reaction time and its use to a driver. Again, as with other programs, obviously the benefits are creating a positive attitude amongst drivers and, hopefully, safer drivers and improving communication between the people undertaking these courses and traffic police. Again, sponsorship for this program comes from the compulsory third party insurer SGIC, and that also covers the cost of any overtime which is incurred by departmental personnel in presenting these lectures.

Mr MEIER: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 463. I notice that reference is made there to quality training being provided to STAR Force members to ensure that their operational expertise is maintained. I would be interested if the Minister could advise the Committee on the type of training which the STAR Division receives.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: To many members of the public the STAR Division is probably the glamorous TV side of policing in their eyes: the officers who are often seen at things like a siege, an armed hold-up, carrying heavier weapons with a bullet proof vest, but in reality they are the officers who are faced with danger in most of the jobs they tackle. They are the officers who in operational situations are regularly faced with life threatening situations, often facing known armed offenders. For that reason, it is important that they receive intensive training by the force. Their training covers search and rescue, special weapons training, specialist training for air crew, diving or marksmen observer training.

A dedicated command and control course is programmed for all STAR Division supervisors and this ensures that they professionally approach every task they have at hand, as well as complementing the nationally run Standard Advisory Committee Protection Against Violence (SACPAV) courses of the same nature, which these officers also have the opportunity to be involved with. A key component of their training is the control of weapon related incidents and high risk arrests, both of which have gradually increased over recent years. Supervisors need to be trained to the extent that they can distinguish appropriately between response to a counter terrorist situation and a domestic siege situation, which, despite both being high risk, need a different approach. Members of STAR Division also receive external training courses. For example, during this financial year two members have attended the national police search and rescue mission coordinators' course—one is a student and one is a member of directing staff—and attendance of two more members will occur during the coming financial year.

Supervisors within the STAR Division are trained to a national standard as field controllers for land search, and qualification for maritime search control is also gained through the national course. Five members of STAR Division have attended interstate to receive specialist training in weapons related incidents during 1995. STAR Division implemented competency-based training during 1994-95 to coincide with Police Department national guidelines.

I have had the opportunity, since becoming Minister, to observe first hand the rigorous training that some of these members undertake, and that training demonstrates how dangerous are the situations in which they can find them-

selves. No more vividly can that be brought to mind than the dreadful shooting of officer Derek McManus, who was gunned down, and to his credit and that of his family and medical advisers his recovery has been progressing well. However, that is a vivid reminder to all police that there is always a danger with their job, particularly when they are a member of that part of the organisation.

Mr MEIER: I was very interested in the Minister's answer. I note that the Program Estimates refer to it as 'STAR Division' and that the Minister used that term. Does that mean that 'STAR Force' is no longer the accepted term?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: STAR Division has always been its correct name—Special Tactics And Rescue. I think that STAR Force was a term adopted by the media. Its correct name is STAR Division.

Mr QUIRKE: Mr Chairman, I seek your advice and possibly that of the Minister on some points. I have further questions that I wish to ask and, at the end of that, I have other questions which I imagine would be better placed on notice. In fact, I have a list of them here, and most of the information I would be more than happy to receive in due course. Is it appropriate, when I have finished asking questions, to read those other questions into *Hansard* before we vote on this line?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, that has been the practice.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am comfortable with that. If the member has a copy of them that he could give to *Hansard*, I am sure that *Hansard* would be equally as pleased to receive a copy.

The CHAIRMAN: Unfortunately, Standing Orders are such that they must be read into the *Hansard*.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am simply saying that *Hansard* would appreciate a copy, too.

Mr QUIRKE: *Hansard* will get a copy. Can the Minister give details of the proposed performance bonus scheme for senior executive officers, including details of the ranks which will be included in the scheme, the criteria for determining whether or not each officer has performed well, the amounts of the potential bonuses and who will decide whether or not bonuses are awarded?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am intrigued about where that question has come from. The Commissioner and I have just discussed with each other whether either of us have spoken of or considered a performance bonus. At this time it is not a matter of consideration of which we are aware.

Mr QUIRKE: As a supplementary question, we understood that in all departments the CEOs and a number of other persons associated with the top ranks would, in future, be eligible for specific targeted bonuses. This matter emerged during investigations into Treasury, when it was confirmed to the Opposition that most departments were experiencing or were ready to experience this particular aspect. If that is not so, and there is no intention in the Police Department to countenance any kind of bonuses, we are quite happy with that.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The scheme to which the honourable member is alluding is one that is associated with some of the contractual conditions that some CEOs have entered into with the Government. Those contracts do not apply to police officers.

Mr QUIRKE: To tidy that up further, obviously this will not apply to anyone under your control in the police lines. Is that right?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Indeed. I would go so far as to say that none of my staff in any agency has a contract with an associated performance bonus.

Mr QUIRKE: Is it the case that overtime for police is still being paid six weeks in arrears?

Mrs KOTZ: Mr Chairman, I ask for a point of clarification. Consideration of this line is supposed to be closing at 2.45 p.m. I believe that that is a negotiated arrangement with the member opposite and, as the member has a series of questions which he wishes to read into the record and which obviously will take quite a few minutes, can I clarify the member's intentions as far as the time is concerned?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. The Government and Opposition lead spokespersons are supposed to get together and agree on the program. It is not up to me to decide; that is up to honourable members. I read that out in my opening instructions.

Mrs KOTZ: I am happy to accommodate, but I would like to know exactly what is the intention of the member for Playford.

Mr QUIRKE: I would be happy to make it crystal clear. The Opposition has come to the Estimates procedure and, on occasions, Government members have not asked a single question, whereas on other occasions they have asked one or two. Today, however, they want to take up as much of our time as they can. The Opposition was asked to estimate a timetable—an informal arrangement. You made it very clear, Mr Chairman, that it was an informal arrangement. Earlier today I indicated that it depended purely and simply what Government members did here today as to whether or not we would be able to meet those timetable deadlines. I envisaged we would be able to do it; I still believe that we will largely be able to go there.

I made two other comments in those remarks earlier today. The first is that I thought that the lines that would follow after this would probably be shorter so any time could be picked up at that point. I also indicated that the informal arrangements, which were negotiated through me a couple of weeks ago, contained some provisions over which I had no control. One of those, of course, is the activities of my good three colleagues opposite.

The CHAIRMAN: To put it bluntly, if the Government asks very few questions the proceedings may not have lasted as long as was expected. I suggest that at this stage we let the member for Playford ask his questions and read out those which he wants to put on the record, that we wind up this line at about 3 o'clock and proceed from there.

Mr QUIRKE: How many police positions have been civilianised in the past 18 months? Will the Minister provide details of the further police jobs which the Minister says can be changed over to civilian positions? I am quite happy for that to go on notice.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: We would like to take that on notice, Mr Chairman.

Mr QUIRKE: Is it the case that overtime for police is still being paid six weeks in arrears? If so, does the Minister intend to improve the efficiency of the pay section of the department or ask the Commissioner to do it so that that is no longer the case?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Those delays are acknowledged and have been a subject of discussion between the Police Association and the department and, indeed, between the association and me. They are intricately interwoven with the enterprise bargaining process. I do not believe that I am breaching any part of the confidentiality of that process by

advising that it has been made public before that the association has put forward as a negotiating option annual salaries so that that difficulty is eliminated in a different way. To answer the honourable member's question completely: yes, we are aware that there is a problem; there is more than one way to solve it, and we are quite confident that the problem will be solved to the satisfaction of officers concerned.

Mr QUIRKE: I indicate that I have one more question to ask. I then intend to put a series of questions, as I indicated a moment ago.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think there are to be any questions from the Government side.

Mrs KOTZ: It is not just a matter of the Opposition's asking questions: this Committee has been set up for all members of Parliament. I am quite prepared to be accommodating, as long as the honourable member wishes to ask only one further question in this area.

Mr QUIRKE: As the gauntlet has been thrown down, I will defer to the Government members to ask their three questions.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mrs KOTZ: I direct my question to an area touched on earlier by the Commissioner, namely, Operation Noah. In the crime detection and investigation services program at page 456 of the Program Estimates, I note again a reference to proactive programs between the public and the police which are aimed at, amongst other things, illicit drugs. I am also aware that Operation Noah is one way in which the police have been able to interact with the community to crack down on illicit drug abuse. Is Operation Noah still being conducted in South Australia; and, if not, are any other avenues being used to enable members of the public to provide information that may assist the police in their fight against drug abuse?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As the Commissioner has overseen a number of changes to Operation Noah, this is essentially an operational police question, so I am pleased for him to answer it.

Mr Hunt: National Operation Noah was not conducted in South Australia in 1994. Although it had been conducted every year since 1985, South Australia decided that as 1994 was the International Year of the Family it would conduct an education intervention strategy as an alternative to enforcement. A campaign was developed in association with Drug and Alcohol Services and Lions International to provide advice and assistance to families confronted with drug abuse or experimentation by teenage children. Central to that campaign was a book entitled *Drugs and Your Teenager*, which was written for South Australian families. Copies of that book have been distributed to schools, libraries, drug agencies and police across the State for public reference.

The International Day Against Drug Abuse was held on 26 June 1994. The campaign was jointly launched by the Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Health on 22 June. The campaign received State-wide media coverage, and from responses received from the public it is evident that there is community concern about adolescent use of both licit and illicit drugs. The campaign gave the police the opportunity to highlight their commitment to the national harm minimisation objective, and we decided that South Australia would not conduct Operation Noah in 1995 but would again join with Drug and Alcohol Services to consider an alternative strategy.

Other States are considering their position relative to Operation Noah as Federal funding has been withdrawn.

Somewhat to make up for the absence of Operation Noah, there is now a permanent alternative in the police drug hotline. This service allows the public to telephone directly with information relating to the growing, selling, distribution or manufacture of illicit drugs. The hotline is regarded as a most valuable means for members of the public to provide confidential information to the police regarding drug-related criminality.

Mr QUIRKE: Derek McManus was raised earlier as being the name of a person who was severely injured in the line of duty, I think during 1994. I am not sure what Mr McManus's rank is in the Police Force, but he is one of a number of officers who have been injured during the course of duty. Some, of course, as in the case of Mr McManus, were injured with firearms while others have suffered other work related injuries. A number of these persons now work in jobs that are commensurate with their current health.

I ask the Minister whether these people will be looked after in the new regime, because one of the fears that the Opposition has is that, because of the abolition of a number of backroom jobs, so to speak, which the Minister has talked about in recent months and although a number of these persons are carrying out these duties as a way back to the normal day-to-day operations of the Police Force, positions will not be available for officers such as Derek McManus and others who, unfortunately and inevitably, in the future will be injured in the line of duty.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I thank the member for Playford for asking this question because it presents an opportunity to set the record straight on some statements that were made recently in one media outlet. The department, as do all Government departments, has a duty of care to any employee who is injured during the course of their duties. We are conscious of the fact that particularly in the Police Department the chance of injury is higher than in any other areas of Government employment. Indeed, right through my emergency services portfolio that is equally true. Officers such as Derek McManus will continue to be looked after in absolutely every way that would be expected.

In the past, those officers have always remained in the Police Department. One of the issues that the department is examining involves whether there may be an obligation on the department to go further than the duty of care that it provided before, for example, to assist those officers to undertake further training and tertiary education to enable them to undertake even more meaningful and productive work in the department in, say, administration or, alternatively, to find work in another Government department with that extra training.

So, essentially, we are endeavouring to ensure that we have in place what is best regarding the long-term career options of an officer so that that officer will have a long-term career if he is unable to return to his former active duties. In the past, officers have tended to remain within the Police Department when better career options may have been available to them. The duty of care remains and, if officers wish to remain within the Police Department at their current rank, that will continue to happen. We do not shirk our responsibilities at all in that area.

Mr QUIRKE: Obviously, if many back room jobs are abolished, positions will not be available within the department to enable it to look after a number of persons who may not have been injured as a result of gunfire but who may have stress problems—and that will be the subject of a few further questions which I will ask the Minister shortly. Will the

Police Force completely abolish these back room jobs so that, effectively, the only thing we will have is police on the beat with nowhere near enough jobs in which to place officers who may suffer from stress or other ailments that are not necessarily related directly to their job, as was the case with Derek McManus?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Our duty of care is recognised and those officers will continue to be catered for by whatever situation is best for their long-term career prospects to give them every opportunity of having an extended career. Issues such as stress are not uncommon in emergency services. It can relate to an incident to which the officer has been exposed, such as perhaps a young child dying in a car accident, a threat to their life or injury to themselves. Whatever the situation, the department is equipped to counsel those officers. Some of them need only a temporary replacement away from the duties they have been undertaking and, after a period of time, they are able to resume their normal duties. It clearly makes sense that, if an officer is unavailable for active duty only for a period of months, taking account the many years of training invested in them, it is in the department's interests as well as in the officer's interests to ensure that they are able to go back to those duties. So whatever arrangement is needed on an individual, officer-by-officer basis will be taken to assist those people.

Mr QUIRKE: How many stress cases have emerged during the current budget year? Have the changes to the Industrial Relations Act, which were introduced at the very beginning of this financial year, had any impact on the number of stress claims within the Minister's department?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The number of stress claims for the period up to 30 April 1995 shows an encouraging downward trend, as there were 20 stress claims to that period from the department compared to 30 in the previous financial year up to 30 June 1994. To 30 June 1993, there were 36; to 30 June 1992, there were 39; and to 30 June 1991 there were 28. So there initially has been a downward trend. I do not have the figures available for the past two months. Indeed, total claims have also dropped quite significantly to date from 734 as at 30 June 1994 to 549 as at 30 April. There were 698 to 30 June 1992.

Stress claims as a percentage during that 10 month period were 3.6 per cent compared with 4.1 per cent the previous year and 5.1 per cent the preceding year. Obviously, even with 20 claims 20 officers are affected in an adverse manner, and the department acknowledges its duty of care on an individual basis to each of those officers.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Playford wish to read questions into *Hansard*?

Mr QUIRKE: Yes, Mr Chairman. I will read the following questions into *Hansard* and ask that they be taken into account for each department for which the Minister has responsibility. For what boards, committees and councils does the Minister have responsibility within his departments, and what are the roles and functions of each board and committee? Who are the members of each committee, board or council; when does the term of office of each member expire; and what is the remuneration of members and has this changed since the last financial year? Who appoints the members and on whose recommendation or nomination is the appointment made?

What are the names, classifications, salaries, and titles of all staff employed in the Minister's office? How many officers in the Minister's departments have a salary or combined salary package exceeding \$90 000 and what

positions do they hold? How many officers in the Minister's departments are now on contract of service rather than permanent employment and at what Public Service classification levels are they serving? Who, if any, of those employees on employment contract are subject to performance reviews; how is the performance measured; who measures it; who reviews it; and what are the consequences of failure to perform? Are any performance bonuses paid and, if so, what are they and how are they measured?

How many performance indicators have been established for the agencies controlled by the Minister? What are those indicators; how are they measured; and who measures them? How often has the Minister been involved in the review of performance indicators and what has been the result of any performance reviews that have been undertaken? Can the Minister summarise the extent of cuts made this year to all his departments' budget and say whether they will be achieved by down-sizing of staff and reducing programs and services? If so, what are the details of those reductions? What is the staff reduction target used as the basis for framing this budget for 1995-96 and what are the targets for the next three years? How many staff have accepted separation packages since January 1994; what classifications did they hold; and were any classifications denied access to the scheme?

Have any fees and charges levied by the Minister's departments been increased since June 1994? Were these increases subject to public notification by advertisement or public statement and, if not, why not? Will the Minister provide details of all increases since June 1994? What functions have been outsourced since June 1994 and what savings are anticipated in the 1995-96 financial year from this outsourcing? Have the Minister's departments been complying with the commitment given in last year's June Financial Statement (page 30) to 'market test' the contracting out of functions that are more efficiently conducted in the open market; who is undertaking this market testing; and how is it being done?

In view of the Government's significant program of asset sales, can the Minister detail those assets, including any land controlled by any of his departments which may be sold under this program, and will any of these disposals require legislative change? What assets were sold during 1994-95 and what were the details of all sales above \$20 000? Which assets are to be sold this year, and what is the revenue projection for 1995-96 and the three forward estimates for 1996-97 to 1998-99 for returns from the sale of assets controlled by any of the Minister's departments?

What information technology systems are now operated by the Minister's departments and what functions are carried out by these systems? How many staff are engaged to maintain and operate the systems? What did it cost the departments to operate the systems in 1994-95 and what will be the cost in 1995-96? What is the projected timetable for the departments to implement the Government's policy to outsource computer operations to EDS or are the departments under the Minister's control not to be part of the EDS contract? Exactly what functions, if any, will be taken over by EDS? Can the Minister detail the annual savings, if any, that are expected to flow to his departments from the Government's decision to outsource information technology requirements?

How many staff, if any, will no longer be required by the departments as a result of outsourcing IT functions? Will the policy to outsource information technology requirements result in the departments having to purchase any new

equipment and, if so, what will be the cost and how will this be funded? Have the departments changed any accommodation arrangements since June 1994 by taking any additional rental space or by moving to other premises and, if so, what are the details of these changes; why were they made; and what are the costs, including the fit out and rental? Do the departments have any country based staff occupying Government-owned housing or subsidised private housing? What housing rentals were paid during 1994 and by how much will they increase in 1995?

How many motor vehicles are maintained by the Minister's departments and, of those vehicles, how many are subject to home garaging arrangements and how many carry private number plates? What will be the cost of operating these vehicles in 1995-96? Have any significant changes been made to the fleet since 1994 and, if so, what are the details? We understand about the transfer of the police car fleet to State Fleet. What consultancies have been let by the Minister's departments since 1 July 1994, and what was the cost of each of these consultancies, including the cost of all expenses associated with them? What was the purpose of each consultancy? Were tenders called and were specifications prepared? Did the consultant prepare a report and, if so, will the Minister table a copy of each consultant report? Did the consultant make any recommendations and, if so, have they been acted upon? Will the Minister list all consultancy contracts with a value of \$100 000 made since 1 July 1994? What was the purpose of each of these contracts, if any? Were tenders called, were specifications prepared and how was each of these tenders and contracts supervised?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I have some very depressed staff around me who are looking at the mountain of work. The Commissioner and I were discussing the user-pays concept. We had not thought of applying it to Opposition questions, but a hefty fee would be involved in researching those replies.

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

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: We also have the issue of the miscellaneous payments that may relate to police lines. It also includes the ambulance service which, on agreement, we have separated out because there may be separate questions of that body.

Mr QUIRKE: I am happy that we have finished all questions associated with the Police Department. We thank them for their coming down here and for their cooperation. Seeing how tentative some arrangements can be around here, we hope that they conduct their affairs better than we conduct ours around here. I have finished with the Police Department. My colleagues opposite may have other questions under other lines, but I have not.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Will the Opposition also indicate whether it has any questions relating to the National Crime Authority, the Police State Band, the provision of the helicopter service or the State Emergency Services?

Mr QUIRKE: We have plenty of questions, but we have been cognisant of the time. We could stay here longer but, in the spirit of organising the timetable, the time has expired.

Metropolitan Fire Service, \$6 465 000

Membership:

Mr R.P. Bass substituted for Mr E.J. Meier.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr W. Haby, Chief Officer, Metropolitan Fire Service.
 Mr R. Hoey, Deputy Chief Officer.
 Mr B. Treagus, Director, Corporate Services.
 Mr R. Hagan, Director, Support Services.
 Mr D. Asser, Senior Financial Accountant.
 Mr M. Bentley, Commander Metropolitan Fire Service.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I explained at the beginning of the questioning on the Police estimates, I will be grateful for the Committee's indulgence to allow me to make a brief statement at the beginning of this, and the other sections.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister may do that now.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: In 1995-96, the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service budget includes an increase of \$2 022 600 against the 1994-95 budget level, to a level of \$50 053 000, of which the State Government contribution is \$4 465 080. The reason for that increased appropriation is to cover the first \$15 component of the Government \$35 per week increase pay rise package offered to all Government employees and to cover an increase in payroll tax on superannuation amounting to \$235 000 and an increase in debt servicing rate in accordance with Treasury guidelines.

The Fire Service has commenced the first stage of significant restructuring of its operations. On 13 March this year, an ambulance team was permanently located at the Adelaide Fire Station. A new purpose-built fire/ambulance station, the first of its kind in the State, is currently under construction in your electorate, Mr Chairman, at Brooklyn Park for occupancy by November 1995. Plans are being developed for a wider spread of joint facilities throughout our State. The Capital Works Program for 1995-96 also provides for the building of an addition to the existing Whyalla Ambulance Station to house three fire appliances and accommodate retained or part-time crews alongside the St John Ambulance Brigade and the South Australia Ambulance Service personnel at that station.

A joint emergency service committee is examining the options for a joint service communications and dispatch centre and ultimately it is intended to amalgamate the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service and the South Australia Ambulance Service (the two full-time paid organisations) into the one service. We envisage that that will occur over five years and will provide firefighters and ambulance officers with an exciting range of expanded career options and provide the public with an even more responsive and cost effective service. All metropolitan paid personnel and 40 per cent of country retained staff have completed hot fire training at the joint service training facility at Brukunga and that training facility has improved the ability of firefighters to tackle large hot and very difficult fires, as well as providing, under controlled working conditions, the experience of effectively being under fire.

During this year, firefighters will progress through the next stage in which they will be trained under conditions encountered in very hot flammable fuel fires, further enhancing their skill levels. Recently introduced legislation

has now made mandatory the installation of smoke alarms in all new houses and houses undergoing significant modifications in our State. The Fire Service has, for some time, advised Governments of the life-saving potential of those alarms and this Government has been pleased to take the initiative and act on the advice from the service. The service is collecting data on house fires where smoke alarms are fitted and I feel confident that I will be able to report positively on that initiative next year with the figures associated with the initiative's success.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Chief Fire Officer, Mr Winston Haby, and Financial Director, Mr Brian Treagus, for their dedicated service. Some members of the Committee may not be aware that both officers will be retiring on 3 July, Mr Haby after 29 years service and Mr Treagus after 21 years. That is long and dedicated service from each officer. Mr Haby has been Chief Officer since September 1990. He joined the then South Australia Fire Brigade in March 1966 and he has dedicated himself to the work of the Fire Service, progressing through the ranks to the most senior position. I have personally appreciated his advice on future directions for the department and that of Mr Treagus on matters financial. With the indulgence of the Committee, I wish to take this opportunity to thank both officers and wish both Mr Haby and Mr Treagus well in their retirement.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Playford wish to make a statement?

Mr QUIRKE: I have a quick comment to make. I was not aware that Mr Treagus was retiring although I was aware that Winston would be retiring and I thank him for the past five years during which I have dealt with him. I have also had some dealings with Mr Treagus and I wish them both well in the future. I have been very satisfied with the answers to questions provided when I was in Government and in Opposition. Probably most members here, if not all members, would concur with the remarks made by the Minister and myself and we wish both those gentlemen well in future.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Playford wish to ask a question?

Mr QUIRKE: Yes I do.

Mr BASS: Does that mean you are going to be nice?

Mr QUIRKE: I have had a cup of tea. I am much better after a cup of tea. I have some questions to explore what the Minister intends to do with the Metropolitan Fire Service and the Ambulance Service. The Minister referred in his statement to the fact that he was going to bring the two organisations together. Is that the reason why, as we understand it, there will be no permanent Chief Fire Officer appointed in the near future?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: At this time, the duties of the replacement on Mr Haby's retirement are being finalised through the Commissioner for Public Employment. The Government will be opening the position to both fire personnel and non-fire personnel to ensure that we get the best possible person for the position. This matter has been the subject of discussion between myself and the union and I am pleased to advise the Committee that the union has indicated to me its acceptance of this approach so long as existing officers have an opportunity to apply and of course that opportunity exists.

Mr QUIRKE: Presumably the Minister will appoint a Chief Fire Officer in the relatively near future. Will the Minister advertise the position nationally?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, the position will be advertised nationally. There will also be some international advertising involved. I can advise the Committee that the position will also be advertised through Internet. If the Government could obtain a suitable applicant with experience in both fire and ambulance services, we would consider that to be a potential benefit in view of the changing nature of the service. We simply wish to ensure that we have the best person for the job and the final structure of the service will be determined in the next few days as we finalise arrangements with the Commissioner for Public Employment.

Mr QUIRKE: How will the structure of the new department come together? There are currently Chief Executive Officers in both departments. Is it the intention to appoint one of these as CEO of the now amalgamated or merged department or is it the intention to have another layer over the top of the two CEOs of the Ambulance Service and the Metropolitan Fire Service?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It is certainly not the intention to create any new layers of management through amalgamation of the two services. Indeed, quite the contrary is the case. As the Committee will appreciate, the issue of amalgamation is complex and many details need to be worked out carefully. That is one of the reasons why I said that we expect the process to take five years. The easier end of the scale has involved collocation and the location of officers from both services at one station with both fire and ambulance appliances operating from that station.

Other simpler areas to amalgamate are obviously personnel, human resources and finance areas. Over time those amalgamations will gradually occur. It will ultimately mean that those personnel will be accommodated in the one head office. Significant operational restructuring is also possible, affecting the way in which both services respond to incidents. Both the Ambulance Employees Association and the United Firefighters Union have been given personal assurances from me that they will be involved in that detail because, in order for this to work and work well, we need to have the officers of the services behind it and committed to it. We genuinely believe that it presents an exciting new career path variety for those officers, and we want them to be absolutely satisfied as to the benefits they will derive from it.

From the discussions that I have had with fire and ambulance officers at city and country stations over recent weeks, I can say that there is a level of enthusiasm about the proposal. However, some officers have concerns and lots of questions to ask, and in the near future we will have in place regular ways of advising staff through information bulletins as to the progress of change and how it is to occur. The final scheduling and components are nowhere near in place. The funding system for the two services is totally different and, again, the way in which the services are to operate with two different funding systems as one is an added legal complexity that Crown Law will have to work through, and it will take time. A lot of questions will be asked in the next few months into years as we amalgamate the services, but we look forward to the positive benefit that we can derive therefrom.

At this time we have two chief officers, one from the ambulance service, Ian Pickering, who has worked his way through the ranks of various organisations as an ambulance officer to his present level, and Mr Haby, from the Fire Service. Whatever happens with the amalgamation of the two services into one, we envisage that there will be a need for a senior ambulance operative and a senior fire operative who have knowledge of those parts of the service. So, we see the

need for the positions of chief ambulance officer and chief fire officer to exist, but staff reductions in administration in other areas that have been amalgamated will mean overall that there are fewer management staff, not more.

Mrs KOTZ: In the program 'Fire safety and supervision of emergency safety standards', a significant initiative for 1994-95 was the introduction of smoke alarm regulations in building codes. What has been achieved by the introduction of these regulations?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Fire services throughout Australia have attempted over a number of years through the Australian Building Code Board to achieve legislation requiring that all new class one buildings (as the fire service calls them, but we know them as domestic buildings) have hard wired single station smoke alarms fitted and that this installation be required by the Building Code of Australia. When the national proposal was unsuccessful, fire services in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia liaised with their respective State Governments seeking their own legislation. While that legislation was forthcoming in Victoria and New South Wales, in South Australia no decision was made.

On 4 July last year, a delegation from the Metropolitan Fire Service met with my colleague the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations (Hon. John Oswald), and I am pleased to say that he listened supportively to the suggestion from the Metropolitan Fire Service that changes be made, requiring that hard wired single station smoke alarms be installed in all new dwellings. The proposal has been accepted by the Building Advisory Committee and the Development Policy Advisory Committee, and it was put to Cabinet by my colleague and it was accepted. The amendment came into effect from 1 July. All States with the exception of Western Australia and the Northern Territory require smoke alarms in new dwellings, and that is a positive move.

Mr LEGGETT: I refer to the fire suppression and control program for the metropolitan area and to the broad objectives and goals, which provide for 'progressive upgrading of stations and appliances, communications and equipment to maintain an efficient service to the public'. In that context I refer particularly to the introduction of an enhanced triple zero telephone monitoring system as a service to the public. What are the real benefits of the enhanced triple zero system and what other upgrading of communications has occurred which also meets the stated objective?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: When an emergency call is transferred from a Telecom operator to fire, police or ambulance, details of the caller's phone number and billing address are provided electronically and displayed on the dispatcher's monitoring screen at the same time as the operator is talking to that triple zero caller. Obviously, the facility has a number of benefits. First, it identifies to the operator a telephone box from which the caller may be calling. The caller may not be familiar with the area from which they are ringing. It also enables the operator to confirm the address of premises which persons may have been visiting when they made the call and do not know the street number, how to spell the street name or, for whatever reason, cannot give an accurate description of the address to which the service response is needed.

It provides the operator with a telephone number to which they can call back and confirm details of the incident or to get more information, if that is needed. It also allows a rapid response to incidents where the caller cannot complete the

details or be understood. If it is a fire incident and the line goes down shortly after the call, there may be sufficient detail for the operator to identify the location, even without those details having been given over the phone. It may involve a young child who is unable to use a telephone properly or someone who is ill and unable to speak. For whatever reason, it gives the operator those details. Obviously and importantly, it gives us an opportunity to reduce the number of malicious false alarms, and that also presents us with some big benefits. If people are maliciously wasting the time of our emergency services, we have the opportunity to find out who made those calls.

The new telephone system is called Trade Centre. It was installed in January at a cost of approximately \$110 000. It has certainly improved dispatching facilities, providing a more integrated yet modular system to operate emergency telephones. It has helped reduce stress levels of communications dispatch centre operators by being able to get that information up front earlier. It has helped reduce maintenance times and it has enhanced the telephone facilities. Indeed, it is of benefit indirectly to an amalgamation between the fire and ambulance services because it gives a compatibility of systems. It has also improved traffic light control by the introduction of a more sophisticated controller and, at the same time, room for expansion in the dispatch centre has been provided should it be needed in future. The enhanced triple zero emergency facility and the upgraded telephone system have benefited the fire and other services.

Mr BASS: In the fire suppression and control program for the metropolitan area, one of the stated objectives is to review the MFS/CFS mutual aid agreement. Will the Minister explain the term 'mutual aid' and provide a summary of the cooperation that exists between the CFS and the MFS?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Mutual aid is essentially a cooperative scheme that is operated by the two fire services in areas adjoining their mutual boundaries. In essence, mutual aid ensures that, irrespective of the boundary or the source of the fire appliance, any emergency incident will be attended by fire crews which are the closest in terms of response time. I imagine that this matter has concerned a number of members, particularly those who live in areas that have both CFS personnel and MFS personnel, to be sure that the closest appliances are always there when required.

Legislative responsibility is always maintained by dispatching at least one appliance from the service in whose area the incident occurs, and the senior attending officer of that service is the one who takes the role of incident controller. In those country towns which are serviced by the MFS auxiliary, the MFS has become a member of the adjacent CFS group, and this allows input by the MFS officer in that area into group plans and decisions, and also has assisted in furthering the cooperation between those two services.

In the Adelaide metropolitan area there is recognition of the time required for volunteers to respond to their stations, whereas some MFS personnel can get there quicker, so those personnel will get there and backup the CFS personnel as they come on line. Training is designed to instruct each service how to handle incidents within each other's boundaries, and currently staff of both services, the MFS and the CFS, are trained to use joint service standard operation procedures on bushfire probe procedures, response to high-rise buildings, response to automatic fire alarms, airport procedure and greater alarm systems.

It is often said that the two services have some aggravation towards each other because, in the past, certainly there has

been concern by one or the other service that the other is attempting to poach its territory. Certainly, it has been my experience during the 18 months I have had the privilege of being Minister that both services do work together. Certainly, there can be the odd personality clash, but that is also possible within a service, let alone between two services.

I have been pleased to observe the productive way in which the CFS and MFS do work together, and particularly the productive way in which Mr Haby, the Metropolitan Fire Service Chief, and Mr Ferris, the Country Fire Service Chief, have worked together closely to overcome some of the difficulties that the services have had over where the lines are drawn on their boundaries for response. After all, both services do work with police, ambulance and State Emergency Services as well. It is all part of working together to ensure that they provide the best support and reaction to an incident for the public. From what I have observed in the past 18 months, I am pleased to be able to say that it does work well.

Mr QUIRKE: It would not be an Estimates Committee if we did not ask the Minister about the boat, the *MV Gallantry*. Has the Minister managed to sell it yet?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The *Gallantry* was the subject of questioning by me when in Opposition and now is the subject of questioning of the Labor Party now in Opposition. To further the line of questioning along, let us put a couple of things on the record. Both this Government and I have no doubt at all that there are advantages in having an ability to respond from the water to attack fire, to disperse spillages and also to pump water to appliances—there are no problems with that. The whole debate over the *Gallantry* has been whether that is best done by fire officers on a boat owned by the Government or by an arrangement with tug boat operators who may have fire pumping equipment fitted to the tug boat. Those are the arrangements that are used in other States. They tend to lease those services.

Having read through the mountains of paperwork, I still cannot justify the expense on that boat. It is fair to say that it would be very difficult ever to justify it, but we do have the boat and while it is there we will use it. To this day it has not poured so much as a bucket of water on a fire, but it was used recently at the silo fire to pump water to fire appliances so that they could pour the water onto that fire, and also it has been used recently to assist in dispersing some oil spillage. However, that work also could easily have been undertaken by a leased boat, and that is not to say that the firefighters thereby involved also could not have been working on that leased boat. The only issue with the fire boat is whether or not we need to own one.

Mr QUIRKE: Can I presume through you, Mr Chairman, that the vessel is still for sale; is that right?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: If the Government could get a reasonable price for it we would certainly look at it, provided that we could also, at the same time, enter into a reasonable contract with an existing tug boat provider. I have to say that even the union that represents the operators of those boats lobbied Government just after the last election to say how disgraceful they thought the decision was. So, it has been an interesting issue indeed.

Mr QUIRKE: Last year the Minister told the Estimates Committee that he had requested the Office of Information Technology to coordinate a study on the combined dispatch monitoring system for all emergency services in South Australia based on a private sector model for funding and operation of the system. He expected a report from the study by the end of last year. He also said the Victorian Govern-

ment had recently announced plans to outsource the communications role in that State and that he was interested in examining the decision. What was the outcome of this feasibility study, and does he intend to proceed with the outsourcing of communications for emergency services?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The first phase of the study has been completed. That phase first examined the technical feasibility of providing combined communications and dispatch systems—in other words, common equipment for all emergency services. The findings of the committee were that it is a technically feasible proposition. The charter also was to determine whether or not there were efficiencies to be gained in terms of cost and operation from such a system. Again, the response has come back in the affirmative.

I would, however, like to distance the work we are having done in some way from that which is occurring in Victoria. As Minister, I have already given our operatives here—the fire union, ambulance and also Police Association—the undertaking that we do not intend to outsource the running of the communications dispatch centre and take those jobs away from the uniformed personnel who know the business.

While I respect Victoria's decision to do that, I remain to be convinced that there are benefits in having operational staff distressed at the thought that there might be a lack of knowledge. Whether that distress is right or wrong, that is certainly the operational staff perspective. They are distressed at the thought that there could be civilians in the control room who may not know their jobs. To us that is not a big issue. To us the big issue is whether we can get a better communications and dispatch system by having one system for all emergency services. We are quite happy to see police, fire officers and ambulance officers working together in the one communication room—if that is what the final recommendation is—to dispatch our emergency services. I received only yesterday the paper work for the next phase of the review, and I have not yet had the opportunity to go through it in detail. Essentially, it is the terms of reference for the next part of the consultancy: how much it is going to cost and how we can phase it in. Where we do have a deadline imposed on us is that our dispatch systems in place are in a bad state for some agencies. We need to upgrade all agencies' dispatch systems. The fire service dispatch system essentially was in-house designed with enhancements over the years and it is in need of upgrade. But, because we need to upgrade all those systems now is as good a time as any to try to implement one system for the whole lot.

Mr QUIRKE: Is the MFS to be part of the EDS computer outsourcing deal?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, certainly all agencies within my portfolio, as part of Government, have the opportunity to be part of that arrangement. Because of the nature of some of those agencies, I was, as Minister, in the position where I could decide whether I wished my agencies to be part of it or not, but I see benefits for those agencies in being part of that arrangement, so that is why it will be occurring.

Mrs KOTZ: Could I add, on behalf of the Government members, our best wishes to both Mr Haby and to Mr Treagus and thank you for the service that you have provided in a most professional manner to each of your respective services over the years. I do wish you all the very best for the future.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you; that stands for all of us on the Committee. The standing of the Metropolitan Fire Service has increased in the public perception remarkably in

the past few years. More importantly, in the past few years there has been the campaign to install smoke detectors in houses, and what I saw on TV the other night is something in which I know you have been involved. Congratulations, and thank you both for what you have done for the State. I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Country Fire Service, \$6 104 000

Departmental Advisers:

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

Mr T.P. Crichton, Director, Corporate Services.

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

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Last year when I addressed this Committee I indicated that I had been impressed, after just six months as Minister, by the dedication of the 18 000 CFS volunteers and the willingness of the board to examine policies and standards to ensure their relevance today. Now, 12 months later, I am pleased to advise the Committee that I continue to be impressed by the dedication of the team of volunteers and the CFS board members.

The CFS volunteers have demonstrated that they have benefited from the training and experience that they received when they combated major fires in the Heathfield, One Tree Hill and Ansteys Hill areas in January of this year (to name just a few), which fires were contained in extreme fire weather conditions and, to the credit of those volunteers, with no loss of life or property.

South Australian business has benefited from the CFS fire appliance purchase program with the Murray Bridge based general engineering firm, Moore Engineering, producing 20 four-wheel drive firefighting appliances. The quality and competitive price of these appliances is extremely pleasing. I have been pleased to hear firsthand from the brigades which have taken delivery of these appliances as to their operating standard.

The Country Fire Service allocation for 1995-96 again is consistent with the Government's budget strategy to reduce overall expenditure and reduce debt. The CFS budget for 1995-96 has been gazetted at \$12.743 million. The recurrent funding formula, which was introduced to ensure that the CFS budget is based on its published income and expenditure statement, has assisted the agency in providing internal funds to replace its assets and to repay debt. An amount of \$250 000 was repaid off the debt in 1994-95 and a further \$500 000 will be paid off the debt in early 1995-96. In 1994-95 the CFS for the first time for some time did not borrow any funds, and this will be the case during the forthcoming financial year.

While the CFS reduced its paid staffing levels by 20 per cent during 1993-94 and 1994-95 it was able to maintain quality services to its volunteers and the community. Fire stations were completed and appliances were completed and delivered as scheduled, and training programs were delivered.

During the year, I initiated for this agency a program to examine the benefits and options for collocation of services.

Prior to constructing fire, ambulance or SES stations, each agency is required fully to examine options for collocation. For example, I was pleased recently to open the Tumby Bay Joint Emergency Services Centre, which provides the CFS and the SES in that area with a quality facility at a lesser cost and to a better standard than otherwise would have been provided if two separate facilities had been built. These brigades have also taken the opportunity at their own initiative to further share other resources, resulting in improved coordination, cooperation and a more efficient service. I take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the Tumby Bay council for the way in which it oversaw and supported this collocation and made sure that it worked to the benefit of its community.

As the Minister responsible for the CFS, I am able to advise the Committee that appropriate funds have been provided to the service for 1995-96 to ensure that our team of volunteers have sufficient resources, training and support to protect the communities they so dutifully serve.

Mr QUIRKE: I have a bit of an interest in this area, having fought a few fires in the Hills some years ago. One of the problems is the compatibility of equipment from CFS to MFS, and communications were virtually non-existent in the two Ash Wednesday fires. Can we have an update on those two matters?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: In an earlier answer to the Committee with regard to the MFS budget line, I covered some of the changes to communications and dispatch, and those also benefit the Country Fire Service. In so far as equipment is concerned, it is my understanding that compatibility now does exist as a result of the Ash Wednesday experience, but I am happy for Chief Officer Ferris to elaborate on that.

Mr Ferris: Our equipment now is compatible with that of the Metropolitan Fire Service. We use the same hose connectors and the same type and diameter of hose. In fact, our standard operating procedures are now the same, but they were different in those days. There is now a very much improved area of joint cooperation and use of similar types of equipment.

Mr QUIRKE: Thank you. I appreciate that very important answer. I suppose it should have been asked years ago why this was not done; it took two fires to bring about that situation.

In terms of communications, have you or any of your officials thought about the provision of mobile phones to some brigades, particularly in country areas where there is adequate 018 and 015 coverage, given that, when a fire starts in some locations, a large number of volunteers effectively come out of the woodwork and really need to be kept in touch with what is happening?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: A couple of matters are of relevance. Brigades are equipped with a paging system to notify volunteers of the advent of a fire. In addition, by their own arrangement, many brigades have been able to obtain a mobile telephone, which they use for the purposes mentioned by the honourable member. The overall operational need to have telephones for communication is one of the aspects being examined by the communications and dispatch system review that is under way at the moment but, to the credit of brigades that have a mobile telephone, they have obtained it through their own resources, which is often the case with volunteers.

Mr QUIRKE: My next question is relevant to both the MFS and the CFS. It relates to the insurance contribution to

fire services generally in South Australia. Will the Minister tell us a little about that and how the funding base for the CFS, in particular, is underwritten by insurance contributions?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The funding of both fire services is undertaken through a fairly complicated formula. In broad terms, funding for the Metropolitan Fire Service comprises: 75 per cent from the insurance industry; 12.5 per cent from State Government; 12.5 per cent from local government; and, in addition, the State Government provides an extra financial consideration for the Port Adelaide and Port Pirie districts. Funding for the CFS comprises approximately one-third, the State Government; one-third, local government; and one-third, the insurance industry; the local government contribution not necessarily being cash up front but often by way of services provided. Many local governments fund to a far greater extent than that one-third through decisions made within their own community. One of the most difficult tasks of another review that is under way into funding of emergency services is examining exactly how much local government contributes to the CFS. That group believes that it has been able to identify the last of those funds that have been contributed in order to determine how those services are funded.

The State Emergency Service has a very mixed base funding comprising State, local and Federal Government funding. Federal Government funding is provided to a central body and covers the employment of some officers. State Government funding matches local government funding to an amount of \$5 000 per local government. Again, that is not a satisfactory funding base. We would like to develop a better funding system, but that will not be implemented overnight; it could well take a couple of years. In my view it will certainly require bipartisan effort by political Parties to ensure that we develop a good system for everyone.

Mrs KOTZ: Under the program entitled 'Emergency Response and Management' on page 483 of the Program Estimates, it is stated that a broad objective is to minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies on life, property and the environment under areas of CFS board responsibility. What is the rationale for the use of aircraft in fire operations by the Country Fire Service, and what will be the arrangements for the use of aircraft during the next fire danger season?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I particularly acknowledge the member for Newland's interest in the use of aircraft in fire operations, because the member is the Chair of the Environment and Resources Development Committee, which has examined the issue of the Canadair CL415 and its use as a fire fighting aircraft. In her role as Chairman of that Committee she has interviewed many suppliers of aircraft used for fire fighting purposes, both rotary and fixed wing. The CFS has contracted Australian Maritime Resources (AMR) to supply a number of air tractor bombing aircraft for use in aerial fire operations. It also uses a range of other fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft to provide services such as fire spotting, monitoring, fire intelligence, equipment and personnel transfer, and water bombing coordination.

The details of the contract are briefly as follows: AMR has been associated with the Country Fire Service in its present capacity for about 10 years and has demonstrated considerable expertise in aerial fire operations. The contract arrangements for this current financial year provide for a single air tractor 502 aircraft, which has the capacity to drop about 2 000 litres of either foam or retardant, to be on standby at the Woodside airstrip during the fire danger season. In addition,

the principal area of priority protection for the bomber is in the Mount Lofty Ranges extending from north of Kersbrook to the south of Cherry Gardens where airstrips are also located. The standby charge rate is \$1 200 a day, and a flying and relocation rate of \$800 per hour applies.

A second water bomber is also available on request from CFS control operations and/or when a fire ban is declared for the Mount Lofty Ranges district. Again, this craft can be deployed anywhere in the State, but obviously priority is given to deploying it to the highest risk area. The CFS deploys both the bomber and other rotary or fixed wing aircraft as soon as possible after the confirmation of a fire. This is, effectively, the initial attack response, and it is predicated on the fact that aerial operations are most effective during the early stages of a fire. The CFS has negotiated with AMR to have the first half an hour of an initial attack free of charge to encourage CFS brigades to use the aerial appliances to their best advantage.

The member for Newland may be aware that some brigades are a little apprehensive about using aircraft for firefighting operations. I am concerned that some of them believe that in some way the aircraft may take away from their job which, of course, is not the case: these aircraft enable the fire to be lowered so that the volunteers can get in faster and put it out. After the first half an hour that is offered free of charge to the volunteers, obviously the parties need to receive authorisation to continue bombing operations. During the last bushfire danger season, similar standby arrangements existed in the South-East of our State with a joint arrangement between forest owners and the Department of Primary Industries, with forestry funding standby charges to a maximum of \$25 000 for the season. During 1994-95 both CFS brigades and air operations personnel involved with fire bomber coordination have reported very favourable results from the initial and extended bomber operations on fires at Vivonne Plain and Parndana on Kangaroo Island, Echunga, Sturt Gorge and Black Hill in the Mount Lofty Ranges. Arrangements for 1995-96 will be negotiated with AMR along similar lines to 1995-94.

Mrs KOTZ: What is the Government's position regarding the use of large fixed wing amphibious fire bombing aircraft to fight bushfires in South Australia?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Following the work of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee, the Premier raised with the Prime Minister the issue of utilising larger fire bombing aircraft, notably the Canadair CL415. In addition, at the Emergency Management Ministers' Conference on 15 December 1994 I made all States aware of the work that has been done by our parliamentary committee. Other States have had the opportunity through their Minister to examine our committee's report. I attempted to get all States to agree with the Commonwealth jointly to fund a trial, but regrettably that did not succeed—other States were not prepared to participate in the trial. I have recently contacted the new Emergency Services Minister in New South Wales to seek his interest in becoming involved with the South Australian Government in a trial of the aircraft subject to Commonwealth Government assistance.

I have informally discussed the matter with the new Minister, he is assessing the situation and he has advised me that he will give his response when he has had the opportunity to consider the matter in detail. I also recently have had the opportunity to examine a Canadair CL-415 in operation. I visited Canadair's facility when in the United States and Canada recently and I was particularly impressed by the

manoeuvrability and ability of the craft and was surprised at just how manoeuvrable such a large craft is. However, the difficulty we face relates to the cost; the craft are about \$26 million to purchase and they would cost us about \$2 million a year to utilise. So the cost of the craft becomes our single largest problem and we, as a State, do not have the resources to be able to go it alone.

Mr LEGGETT: I note that page 485 of Program Estimates, under the heading of Human Resource Management, states that a specific target/objective for 1995-96 is to achieve a level 1 WorkCover rating for volunteers. How will this assist CFS volunteers who are injured during the 1994-95 fire danger season? What support does the CFS give its volunteers who are injured whilst protecting their community?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is a particularly important question for all emergency service organisations because the reality is that at times emergency service workers are injured and, in the case of the CFS, volunteers who have been taken away from their normal work places to provide this service to the community can be injured. The CFS has a Critical Incident Stress Management team, which consists of a coordinator; a team leader, who is a registered psychologist; two support debriefers who also are registered psychologists; and six trained volunteer peer support personnel.

On the completion of a serious incident, the team provides a debrief within 72 hours and intervention as appropriate. This is a 24-hour State-wide service to all CFS volunteers and staff, and is something that was put into action in a fairly large scale manner after the New South Wales bushfires when so many volunteers gave their time to travel interstate and were in need of debriefing when they returned to South Australia. The team also responds to requests from brigades and individuals who require assistance, and it is also proactive in ensuring that personnel who have experienced an abnormal event during the course of their duties are coping with that, remembering that CFS responds to accident rescue as well.

Ongoing stress prevention and management training is provided to volunteers and staff and is supported by the CFS stress prevention and management policy. Probably the best way for me to describe to the Committee how this can be put into effect would be for me to cite an example of two fire fighters from the Myponga Brigade who sustained burn injuries in a fire at Second Valley on 2 January this year. On 3 January, after those officers had been injured, the CFS Incident Stress Management team debriefed the families of those injured officers and also two fire fighters who were on one of the appliances at the time one of the officers was injured. The CFS Rehabilitation Coordinator ascertained relevant information from the wives of the injured fire fighters to activate WorkCover claims for them; arrange for the maintenance of their salary; to assess their requirements for work assistance; and to provide advice regarding rehabilitation and compensation.

I have visited some injured fire fighters in hospital and have been pleased to find that their families and the officers have benefited from this counselling during this time of distress for them. I have also been particularly pleased by the way in which some employers have responded. One particular officer I visited works for a company—Bone Timber Industries—which has been particularly helpful in assisting him back into the work force after sustaining burn injuries. That obviously helps him keep up his spirits during the next

12 months as his body recovers from the burns he has received.

The service has provided a psychological intervention, which is ongoing and SGIC provides a claims management service. The fire fighter I mentioned is now back at work with Bone Timber, but undertaking modified duties with which the company has assisted him. His employer will continue to pay wages for the time lost during medical appointments and so on, and the CFS will in turn reimburse the employer. Another fire fighter who I have visited is a dairy farmer, and a farm manager has been put in place for him. That farm manager will remain until the injured officer is rehabilitated. So I am pleased to report, as Minister, that I have witnessed firsthand the terrific way in which the CFS supports its volunteers when the worst happens and that is when officers are severely burnt.

Mr QUIRKE: Last year the Minister told the Estimates Committee that he would introduce the Fire Services (Mutual Recognition) Bill to remove any perception that the CFS and MFS would be amalgamated. We have not yet seen the Bill; what has happened to it?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Bill still will be introduced but, having drafted the Bill through the parliamentary draftsmen, it seemed to me that the Bill in itself did not do a lot apart from just recognise what the services were and the guarantee of protection. We have decided to introduce that legislation as part of another Bill that will be coming before the Parliament as we refine, first, the fire and ambulance service and, secondly, more carefully re-define the role of the CFS. So those provisions still will be introduced during this term of Government, but we felt that, rather than simply put through that one Bill when we have so many others to follow that are also related, it made good sense to combine them.

Mr BASS: On page 483, one the 1995-96 specific targets and objectives is to construct 17 fire appliances to continue the replacement program. I also note that last year the Minister was pleased to see that South Australian industry can produce fire appliances of high quality and at a competitive cost. Could the Minister please provide advice as to the outcome of the 1994-95 appliance replacement program and plans for 1995-96?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This certainly is an important question because we can be proud of the fact that we have companies in South Australia which are capable of producing fire appliances not just for South Australia but also for other States. I was pleased to be able to announce last year that a Murray Bridge based general engineering firm—Moore Engineering—won a contract of up to \$1 million per annum to provide 2 000 litre and 3 000 litre four wheel drive fire fighting appliances for the CFS. The contract was awarded for three years with an option of an additional two years renewal, and I am pleased to advise that the company has delivered both the quality and the price that were expected on schedule.

As at 30 June, all 20 of the scheduled appliances will have been delivered. To date, 311 of the total 480 appliances approved within the standards of fire cover have been replaced. In 1995-96 it is proposed to replace 20 more appliances, of which 17 will be built at Moore Engineering; one pumper vehicle and two quick attack vehicles will be procured during 1995-96 once specifications for those vehicles have been completed; and two communications vehicles purchased during 1994-95 will also be fitted out and commissioned in 1995-96.

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

Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Correctional Services—Other Payments, \$16 010 000

Advisers:

Mr I. Pickering, Director, Ambulance Operations, St John Ambulance Service Inc.

Mr C. Lemmer, Director, Metropolitan Operations.

Mr K. Hosking, Director, Country Operations.

Mr B. Hinton, Director, Corporate Services.

Mr D. Gillard, Director, Finance.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to page 174 in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments and to pages 447 to 501 in the Program Estimates and Information. Does the Minister wish to make a brief statement?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: It gives me pleasure to advise the Committee that the ambulance service continues to work at reducing its costs. In the current financial year the elective call-out fee was reduced by 22 per cent for individuals and by 33 per cent for major client hospitals on contract, while emergency and subscription fees were not increased at all. In 1995-96 the fee increases for emergency service call outs and subscriptions have been kept at the CPI, while the elective call-out fee remains unchanged.

The ambulance service now has 60 per cent of its major clients on contract. Significant developments have occurred within the service over the past 12 months and of these undoubtedly the most significant has been the introduction of the paramedic service. The results of a pilot program of six paramedic officers this financial year have shown significant improvement in survival rates for patients suffering cardiac arrest and other patients with life threatening illness or injury.

In addition, the use of paramedics will, in the long term, enable better utilisation of ambulance service resources as there will be a reduction in the level of calls to back-up crews in those cases requiring more advanced patient care. Nine more ambulance officers are presently being trained as paramedics, with another nine officers to follow, bringing the number of paramedics to 24 by the end of this calendar year. It is planned that by the year 2 000 there will be 105 paramedics in place, providing a higher level of patient care within the metropolitan area and within larger country centres.

As mentioned prior to the Committee's consideration of the Metropolitan Fire Service budget lines, another notable development which involves the ambulance service also has been the collocation of fire and ambulance services at Wakefield Street fire station and the construction of a new purpose-built ambulance and fire facility in your electorate, Mr Chairman, in Brooklyn Park. A paramedic ambulance team will relocate from Fulham Gardens ambulance station to this new facility and collocation opportunities at O'Halloran Hill, Camden Park, Tanunda, Whyalla and Mt Gambier are currently being investigated by both services.

In addition, projects under way or about to proceed to improve ambulance operations include: work with the Asset Management Task Force and the Office of Public Sector Management to contract out fleet maintenance and management; development of tender specifications for the contract-

ing out of supply and purchasing, engineering and building maintenance and management; development of tender specifications for new financial systems (given my intention to combine the ambulance and fire service administration); and, implementation of a joint communication and dispatch system across all emergency services.

I also take the opportunity to place on record my appreciation for the dedication of ambulance personnel who have worked hard through these developments to ensure that we have the delivery of an efficient, high quality, cost effective ambulance service while at the same time proceeding with much needed change.

Mr QUIRKE: Will the information technology system of St John Ambulance Service be part of the Government's EDS computer outsourcing deal and, if that is to be the case, to what extent?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: To relate this back to a similar question the honourable member asked under the Metropolitan Fire Service budget line, the ambulance service being an incorporated body was one that I as Minister was given the option of including or not including as part of the process. Because I believe there are benefits for the service in being part of the overall Government computing strategy, the service will be involved to whatever extent needed to enable the service to receive its computing service in a more cost effective manner.

Mr QUIRKE: Did the St John Board investigate the cost and benefits of outsourcing to EDS and, if so, did the board recommend participation in the EDS contract?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The board has had the opportunity to look at the whole of Government computing strategy in the same way that other organisations that report to me have had the opportunity. The board also, with my agreement, involved a consultant in assessing a number of areas of ambulance operation and they are certainly insistent that, with any involvement in the whole of Government computing, there are direct benefits back to the service through entering into such agreement. It is my role to ensure that direct benefits for the service remain.

Mr QUIRKE: In last year's budget the Brown Government reduced from 100 per cent to 50 per cent the concession on country ambulance travel. These changes took effect on 1 January this year. The Opposition has been contacted by several country pensioner patients who were shocked to receive large bills from the ambulance service. What impact has the decision had on the number of country pensioners transported by the ambulance service?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I have previously stated publicly, a decision to reduce the level of concession to country pensioners was one that was outside the control of both me as Emergency Services Minister and outside the control of the ambulance service because it was a decision made through the health ministry. Notwithstanding, I advise that the level of subsidy for country concession cardholders, which are predominantly pension concession cardholders, as announced has not had the effect that some feared it may. The service did take the initiative to advertise up front. It is to the advantage of any member of the community to subscribe to the ambulance subscription scheme. By so doing every member of the community, particularly the elderly, can be guaranteed of financial coverage to be able to utilise an ambulance whenever they need to do so. I do not have with me the figures that would assist in answering the honourable member's question as to the exact number of pensioner carries. I will take that question on notice.

Mr QUIRKE: Has there been any increase in the bad debts of St John as a result of the decision that I have mentioned? Can the Minister provide details of that?

The CHAIRMAN: I get confused. What is the correct name for the ambulance service run by the State?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is often subject to confusion. The full name of the service is the SA St John Ambulance Service Incorporated, which now has a registered trading name of SA Ambulance. That is a different organisation from the volunteer organisation known as St John, to which I acknowledge that you, Mr Chairman, belong as a Brother of the Order of St John.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Playford just mentioned St John. I want to be clear that we are talking about the State ambulance service and not the St John Ambulance Priory.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I believe that the honourable member was referring to the SA St John Ambulance Service. I do not have the information that the honourable member requested at my disposal, but I can obtain it for him and bring it back.

Mr QUIRKE: What efforts did the ambulance service take to advise country pensioners of the changes to the scheme? Has it promoted its subscription scheme to country pensioners who do not have private health insurance?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: In the first instance, the changes were announced by the Health Commission through country press and through the *Advertiser* in December 1994. The ambulance service has also advertised the benefits of being involved in the subscription scheme. It is also fair to say that the country media picked up the issue and with various groups expressed concern about the loss of that component of the concession. That in itself presented another opportunity for the service, through its officers, to repeat the message that people should join the ambulance subscription scheme so that they can be guaranteed a full coverage.

Mr QUIRKE: According to page 504 of the Program Estimates, the number of full-time employees in the metropolitan emergency ambulance service will fall from 340 to 328 in the financial year 1995-96. How many of the 12 jobs that will be lost from the emergency ambulance service are operational positions? Which ambulance stations will lose crew as a result of those cuts?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: With regard to the 12 ambulance officers in the metropolitan area in 1994-95, I understand that they are all essentially reductions in number arising from the decision to allow the Royal Flying Doctor Service to assume responsibility for providing air attendants, in this case nursing staff, from 1 July 1995. The officers concerned, who were ambulance officers and employees of the ambulance service undertaking the ambulance attendant role, will be absorbed back into the ambulance service. They will effectively take up, through a direct replacement move or through a series of moves, positions which have been vacated through natural attrition. My advice is that there is no loss of officer jobs in any ambulance station.

Mr QUIRKE: Page 509 of the Program Estimates indicates that the ambulance service is further examining the opportunities of sharing resources with other emergency services, in particular collocation with the MFS. It is then stated that progress in that area is heavily dependent on the resolution of property ownership with the St John Ambulance Service SA Incorporated. What savings are expected to arise from the collation of MFS and St John Services in 1995-96 and how much was saved in 1994-95?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: There is a series of issues which require individual consideration. The issue of properties occupied by the ambulance service has been a vexed one since the signing of the joint venture agreement between the Government and the Priory of St John to facilitate the combining of ambulance operations under the one umbrella; one part of the operation being St John and the other St John Ambulance Service SA Incorporated.

Honourable members may remember that the lead-up to that agreement in 1988-89 was a particularly difficult time for ambulance officers. They may recall ambulances driving through the city with the St John name on the side of the ambulance covered up. There was a series of industrial actions, claims and counterclaims. Volunteers lobbied all members of Parliament and it was not a particularly good time for the ambulance service in general.

When the legislation was drafted to facilitate the current ambulance service structure, unfortunately the property issues were not tackled. Many ambulance properties around our State are vested in ownership of St John as distinct from St John Ambulance Service. Some of those properties have been deeded to the ambulance service through deceased estates. In some cases the wills specify St John, and in other cases the ambulance service. It is potentially a legal minefield if it is not resolved amicably between all parties. I am pleased to be able to advise the Committee that, at this time, I have reached agreement in principle with St John over the settlement of Adelaide metropolitan property issues.

Initially, that agreement was reached with the exception of three properties which were the Greenhill Road head office occupied by both St John and SA St John Ambulance Service Incorporated; an aircraft hangar at Adelaide Airport jointly owned by St John and the Health Commission and used by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and finally a training property at Payneham. In more recent negotiations, the matter of the aircraft hangar has been finalised and we are working on negotiations for the Greenhill Road city property, the Payneham training centre property and, at the same time, we are working individually through country property issues.

It horrifies me that that matter was not addressed before. Potentially, it could have left our ambulance service in Adelaide with nowhere to put ambulance stations. By convenience rather than intended design, the collocation between the ambulance and fire stations has made it far easier to resolve some of those issues. We expect to formally have legal documents in place in the near future and Crown Law at this time is drawing up legal contracts on the city properties. The issue will still take some time to resolve for the country properties. As for the savings which have been made through collocation, until all the property issues are resolved and there are properties which can be disposed of, there have been no savings in 1994-95. The savings in 1995-96 will not be known until the property issues are resolved and we can place values on the sale of those properties.

Mr QUIRKE: Would the Minister be kind enough to provide us with a list of all the property used for the provision of ambulance services which is owned by the St John Ambulance Service? Will he also tell us the value of that property? I am happy for the Minister to take those questions on notice.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I will take those questions on notice.

Mr QUIRKE: The Program Estimates refer to the fact that the ambulance service employed a management consultant to undertake a commercial review of its activities and in

1995-96, the service is seeking to implement the recommendations of the consultant. Will the Minister provide full details of that and any other consultancy let by St John since 1 January 1994, including the name of the consultant, the cost, terms of reference, and dates of commencement and completion?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Some of the contents of that question will have to be taken on notice, but I am certainly in a position to give some of the information at this time. As part of the service's desire to maintain a commercial focus, in August 1994 a management consulting firm was engaged. The firm, Griffith Consulting Limited, reported to the Ambulance Board on 13 December 1994 and it was to that report that I alluded earlier during questioning on this line.

The key recommendations of that consultant were to implement a revised organisational structure for the service, to install new financial, operational and management information systems, to proceed to tendering for the outsourcing of fleet maintenance and management, supply and purchasing, communications, engineering and building maintenance and management, the re-engineering of administration associated with the subscription scheme, and that a single, State-wide communications centre be located in metropolitan Adelaide.

Some of the elements of that consultancy recommendation I outlined in my opening address to the Committee on this budget line, which indicates that some of those things are now happening. In so far as the State-wide communications centre is concerned, that consultant's recommendation has gone to the overall emergency services team that is examining all communications and dispatch for all agencies. I first had the opportunity to review the consultant's report in March 1995, and I received it together with a response from the Ambulance Board to the recommendations.

The service has also contracted a marketing manager to assist in marketing a re-engineered ambulance subscription scheme in the hope that more people will subscribe and better cover themselves for ambulance service provision. As to other consultancies, I will take that on notice, as I will the provision of terms of reference.

Mr BASS: Page 508 lists as an objective the reduction of mortality and morbidity from accident and sickness. I ask this question on behalf of my seven Liberal colleagues from the country and also the Labor member who has a country seat. What steps is the Government taking to ensure the continual improvement of ambulance services to rural South Australia?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is one of the most challenging aspects of ambulance service provision because the distances involved in transporting patients are often large and the time taken to get to injured people at any time is of the essence, and the more remote the location the more difficult that task can become. The service has implemented a number of initiatives during the last year, all of which have enhanced the provision of service to rural communities, and that will continue into this forthcoming financial year.

A new ambulance officer course and long distance learning packages have been introduced to improve opportunities for volunteer officer training. Distance learning packages include videos and advanced training modules.

Career station down time is being reorganised to provide a focus on support for volunteer training. Permanent and paid career officers in the country are being offered the opportunity for training in advanced life support. During 1996, the very successful paramedic implementation program includes provision for the extension thereof to some of our larger rural

towns. In major country centres, ambulances are equipped with the most up-to-date medical equipment, including cardiac monitors and defibrillators. A version of this equipment was extended to most rural area ambulance services during the last year, and completion of this program is anticipated during this forthcoming financial year.

In country areas the service is developing a close liaison with medical officers with the dual aim of facilitating the delivery on site of a more comprehensive range of medical care and permitting more expeditious transportation of seriously ill or injured people from remote locations to major emergency centres. The focus on these major emergency centres has become more specific in recent days following the public release by my colleague the Minister for Health of the work by the State Trauma Committee and its recommendations to establish two State trauma centres in South Australia, one at the Flinders Medical Centre and one at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. The service is currently reviewing its technology relating to the dispatch and coordination of ambulances, as I advised, and much of that work will be dependent upon the recommendations of the communications and dispatch working party.

Country managers and branch management committees, which include by regulation the involvement of community representation, are being made aware of the need for auditing of their local services and are being encouraged to examine the service provided to their community to ensure that it not only meets now but also continues to meet community expectations.

Mr QUIRKE: As the consultant's report is the basis for substantial changes to be made to the service in 1995-96, will the Minister make the report publicly available?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I would rather take that on notice to ensure that there is no material in the report that could be deemed commercially confidential. I do not have any objection to making its terms of reference and findings publicly available and, if at all possible, I am happy to make it publicly available if there is nothing of commercial confidence in it.

Mr QUIRKE: I will read my remaining questions, and the Minister can take them on notice so that we can move to another line. Which services are to be outsourced as a consequence of this report? Will the Government's policy on contestability apply, that is, will existing employees have the opportunity to tender for their jobs? How many jobs are likely to be lost in St John as a result of any outsourcing? How much did the consultant claim would be saved as a result of outsourcing?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I can answer some of those questions now. The first question as to what will be outsourced in 1994-95 was covered in my opening address on this budget line. The second question relating to staff having the opportunity to tender for jobs is based on the premise that that is what will occur. In 1994-95 there has been no suggestion from me or the service that we are looking to outsource any aspect of ambulance service delivery.

During the last financial year, the patient transport service, a separate section of the ambulance service, was established, and that section uses different vehicles fitted to a lesser degree with life-saving equipment on board because the nature of their patient carry is elective, often from one hospital to another, for people who are ill but not so ill that they need emergency equipment on board. The officers undertaking that transport carry are of a lesser qualification and, therefore, lower salary level than those in other parts of

the emergency ambulance service. For that reason, the service has been able to reduce its elective carry by so much, making it cost competitive. Those changes are consistent with efficiency changes recommended by the consultant. We have made no plans at this time to outsource that and we certainly have no plans to outsource the emergency carry aspect of the ambulance service. I would not rule out considering anything in the future, but at this time I can volunteer to the committee that we have no plans in this regard. As to the total savings recommended by the consultant, I will need to take that on notice, and I am happy to provide that at a later time.

Mr BASS: In closing, I should like to congratulate the ambulance service on the service that it provides to South Australians. One sees the flashing light of an ambulance going down the street and when it disappears one does not realise the work that the ambulance service gives to the people of South Australia. Six months ago my father was involved in a very bad accident, and I have no doubt that he is alive today because of the treatment and care that he received from the ambulance service. I congratulate the service and I ask these officers to pass on to their people that we appreciate the work that the ambulance service does in South Australia.

Mr LEGGETT: I support my colleague's statements. I experienced the ambulance service's professionalism about 10 weeks ago, and I applaud you for the work that the service does.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mrs Kotz): I thank members for their well deserved comments about the ambulance service, and I should like to add mine, as I am sure, as the member for Florey has stated, all members of Parliament would add their congratulations. There being no further questions, I declare the examination completed.

Correctional Services \$76 661 000.

Departmental Advisers:

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

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

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

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

Mr M. Leggett, Manager, Business Services.

Mr M. Boswell, Director, Strategic and Business Services.

Mr J. Heywood, Finance Manager.

Mr R. Wright, Manager, Industries.

Ms J. Treadwell, Manager, Strategic Services.

Mr P. Menzies, Manager, Human Resources.

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

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Yes, Sir. Over the past 18 months, the Department for Correctional Services has undergone what has probably been the most significant series of changes in the department's history. It is with a great deal of pride that I am able to report to this Committee the achievements of the Department for Correctional Services during the past year and also its plans and projects for the coming year.

It is well documented that on coming into office this Government inherited a Correctional Services Department with the most expensive cost per prisoner ratio of all Australian prison systems. The cost of keeping someone in prison in South Australia was 25 per cent more than the average of all other States. Under this Government the department has reduced these costs by a very significant 27 per cent in real terms in just 18 months. This represents, in dollar terms, a reduction from more than \$52 000 to keep one prisoner in gaol under the previous Government to \$38 000 under this Government. Further, we expect that by the end of next financial year the cost will drop to less than \$35 000 per prisoner or a reduction in cost by 33 per cent since this Government came into office.

All this has been achieved, and will continue to be achieved, without a reduction in security, services and care for prisoners, with fewer staff and a reduced budget of \$2.4 million last year. The department's budget for the coming year has been reduced by a further \$3.9 million on what would otherwise have been allocated. None of these savings would have been achieved without the introduction of competition from the private sector. The department has worked to reduce its costs in the knowledge that the private sector would be entering its market place. Yesterday the first prisoners moved into the new Mount Gambier prison, which is being managed by a new Australian registered company with overseas parentage—Group 4 Corrections Services.

The past year saw WorkCover claims drop from 360 to 271, a decrease of 25 per cent, while the average cost of new claims dropped from \$2 803 to \$2 205, or a drop of 21 per cent. Other injury claims—sprains and strains—decreased from 305 in 1993-94 to 231 in the latest figures available to me from the department.

A major objective of the Government to put prisoners to work is well under way. New partnership industries have been introduced into Yatala Labour Prison—putting the 'labour' back into Yatala—and prisoners are undertaking more community work. I was pleased recently to have the opportunity to publicly announce one of these contracts, with mud brick manufacturer, Curia Pty Ltd. Prisoners supervised in the Yatala Prison brickyard produce mud bricks using a machine and raw materials provided by Curia.

Prisoners have also been put to work through the establishment of the first Mobile Outback Work Camp (or MOW Camp) in the Gammon Ranges by staff and prisoners from the Port Augusta Prison. I am very proud to put on record in this hearing that that project was developed by staff at the Port Augusta prison. Other work projects involving low security prisoners include the construction of a boat ramp on the Port Augusta foreshore; development of the Pichi Richi tourist train facilities at Quorn and the Flinders Ranges; and the clean-up of national highways in the Far North including the removal of tyre rubber. In addition, prisoners at Port Lincoln, Cadell and Mobilong have worked with staff in charity events to raise money for local charity organisations. Community corrections continue to be a major activity within the department in the areas of community service orders, probation and parole, home detention and other client services designed to reduce recidivism rates.

The value of community service to the South Australian community is conservatively estimated by the department to be approximately \$4 million annually. Over 600 000 hours are worked each year. Work undertaken through community service workers includes upgrading and maintenance of the SteamRanger tourist train line and facilities; cleaning of the

Torrens River in partnership with some councils; construction of a tourist boardwalk through dense bush near Port MacDonnell; a variety of clean-up and maintenance projects involving communities across the State; work with schools, charity organisations and a wide variety of community based organisations; and work with KESAB to clean up litter along our State's roads and highways.

The coming year will see further significant change in the department including an expansion of the Mobilong Prison at Murray Bridge which may include the role of Cadell Training Centre, depending on a decision on the future of the latter facility; closure of Labor's white elephant, the Northfield Fine Default Centre (the centre at this time is being fenced into the Northfield Women's Prison, thereby alleviating an accommodation shortage for female prisoners); outsourcing prisoner transport between prisons and prison and court and police cells and prisons and court; outsourcing prisoner health services; the installation of a controlled telephone system in every prison by September 1995, the successful tenderer having recently been selected; and an expansion of education programs in both the prison and community corrections systems.

Under this Government the Correctional Services Department now has a tight budgetary plan and objectives. During 1994-95, to the credit of departmental employees, significant progress was made. I pay tribute to the management team and officers of the department who are here in slightly greater numbers than would be usual, because for many of them it is their first budget Estimates hearing and I particularly wanted them to be here to share in the official recognition of their and their department's effort to achieve what has been achieved in just 18 months.

Mr QUIRKE: Half way down the first column of page 474 of the Program Estimates there is the statement 'improved targeting of clients at risk of reoffending in the context of parole reviews', yet the Parole Board has decided to release from prison Kingsley Hawkes, a convicted child sex offender, after he served only nine months of a three year head sentence imposed on him by Judge Bright last year. Hawkes previously had reoffended while on a good behaviour bond. An article on the front page of the *Advertiser* of 20 June (last week) on Hawkes' early release reported that the Minister was not prepared to comment on the issue. Will the Minister comment on the issue today and tell us whether or not he believes that the treatment of this person was appropriate or adequate?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I have said in questioning on other lines, what we are doing here today is dealing with the facts and not with hysteria or emotion. The *Advertiser* report contained two quotes: one that was attributed to an officer from my office and one that was attributed to an officer from the Attorney-General's office. The *Advertiser* article made it seem as though the Attorney and I were buck-passing the issue between each other. However, the fact is that both the Attorney's staff and my staff were asked two entirely different questions. The question that was asked of my staff was, 'Is it possible for the Correctional Services Minister to intervene to ensure that this person stays in gaol longer?' The reply was that the length of sentence is determined by the courts, and if the *Advertiser* journalist had a difficulty with the length of sentence imposed that question should be fielded to the Attorney-General.

The question that was asked of the Attorney-General's staff was posed by a different *Advertiser* reporter from the one who contacted my office, and the question asked was,

'Could the Attorney-General intervene to have the Parole Board review this case,' to which the Attorney-General's staff member quite rightly replied that the matter of the Parole Board was the responsibility of the Minister for Correctional Services. That is how the duck-shoving came about. If two different questions are asked one can appreciate that two different answers will result.

In so far as the release of this prisoner is concerned, yes, I am uncomfortable with the release of that prisoner and, yes, it would be nice to have the power to prevent that person being released from prison, but the fact is that the court sentenced that prisoner to a sentence which included a nine month non-parole period. The prisoner served his nine months non-parole and was due for release. Under the law we had to let that prisoner out of gaol at the expiration of that time. The prisoner had demonstrated good behaviour throughout his time in prison. The prisoner had participated in programs to assist him with his offending behaviour during his time in prison. Had the sentence of the court been a longer sentence the prisoner would still be in prison. The sentence was handed down through the wisdom of the court, bearing in mind the circumstances that were presented to the court at that time. The reality is that every person in our prison system one day will be released from the prison system. The duty the department has is to ensure that programs are provided so that when those people are released they are less likely to reoffend.

Mr QUIRKE: As a supplementary question, how extensive and thorough was the assessment of Hawkes before he was again allowed to go into the community? Can you tell us who examined him and what was the nature of that examination?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As the honourable member would expect, I do not have before me the details of all the 1 300 prisoners who are in our system at this time and all those who pass through it, but I am happy to take the question on notice and bring back the details of both psychiatric examinations and programs the prisoner has undertaken.

Mr QUIRKE: What programs in general are available in prison, especially for sex offenders? How are these programs, if any, coordinated with programs available to parolees to help offenders understand the nature of their problem and to minimise the risk of reoffending?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: While that detail is being obtained for me I will share with the Committee that the nature of treatment provided to offenders is moving significantly forward with the opening of the new Mount Gambier Prison. Members would be aware that the Mount Gambier Prison for many years essentially has been an institution used to accommodate protectees, most commonly child sex offenders. The contract with Group 4 requires that it has full time on its staff a social worker and a psychologist to deliver programs for prisoners to assist in that rehabilitation process. That again is an example of the way in which private management can guarantee that we get results. The company has the ability to draw internationally on some of the best programs available and to use those programs in rehabilitating offenders here.

In so far as other programs already in place are concerned, a specialised assessment and treatment program is provided by the Sex Offenders Treatment Assessment Program (known as SOTAP). This program was established in 1990 as a result of the 1986 South Australian Task Force into Child Sexual Abuse. The sexual offender program is one of a range of services undertaken by the South Australian Health Commis-

sion and the Department for Family and Community Services. The departmental psychologist at the Adelaide Remand Centre works closely with SOTAP and nearly all referrals come from this source, bearing in mind that offenders, when initially incarcerated, go through that remand institution.

Prison social workers and probation parole workers have attended various workshops conducted under the auspices of SOTAP. Working with child sex offenders is a specialised area and requires intensive training and support mechanisms for those officers. It is planned that formal mechanisms of intervention will ensue following further work with the Director of SOTAP which will be conducted later this year. We do not for one minute try to pretend that we have programs in place with which we are absolutely happy. It is an evolving process. A lot of lessons have been learnt by the department following the implementation of these programs since 1990. One of the department's major focuses at present is to develop education and rehabilitation programs for offenders regardless of the nature of their crime.

Mr QUIRKE: On page 473 of the Program Estimates the 'high levels of return to prison' is listed as one of the trends. What is the statistical data upon which this observation is based?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The department has conducted a study of the return to prison rate over a 10 year period. That study reveals that 60 per cent of offenders return to prison within five years of their release. Varying figures are often spoken about regarding recidivism. We are talking about a 10 year snapshot and we are looking at the recidivism rate over a five year period with respect to that population. Obviously, that of itself poses concern—60 per cent returning to prison. That is the group that needs to be targeted to ensure that it has access to programs to reduce that percentage. I am aware that overseas jurisdictions in the same time frame have been able to achieve a recidivism rate in the vicinity of 40 to 45 per cent. I am not personally aware of jurisdictions of a similar nature to ours that have bettered that, but we would certainly aspire to reduce our recidivism rate to that figure at the absolute worst.

Mr LEGGETT: I refer to page 473 of the Program Estimates. How has the Government reduced costs per prisoner by 27 per cent?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This has probably been one of the most contentious areas of my portfolio. I have lost count of the number of times that I have been personally abused, initially by prison officers and then by prisoners and their families, and my Chief Executive Officer and her senior staff have been subjected to the same fate. We have been targeted, individually or collectively, in union publications which have stated that these things could not be done. Clearly, we knew that they could be done. We came into office at a time when the department's costs were 25 per cent greater than those of other States. The department has been able to reduce those costs through implementing a number of mechanisms. First, there has been a process of restructuring each prison to allow greater flexibility through unit management principles. In looking at the capacity of staff to work, we have increased the capacity of prisons. Obviously, if you have more prisoners in an institution with the same number of staff, the cost per prisoner must drop. We have had continuing negotiations aimed at eliminating restrictive work practices which have been prevalent in correctional services for decades.

Additional capacity was introduced at the Adelaide Remand Centre and at Port Augusta to enable those institutions to accommodate additional prisoners within their walls.

Further restructuring of prisons is well advanced, and this will result in more reductions in the cost per prisoner figures over the next year. Work was also undertaken to project the demands of the prison system over the next 10 years or so. I think it is fair to say that I and many of the new senior staff in the department—most of the people with me today are new to the Department of Correctional Services or the positions they occupy—were surprised that the department lacked forward projections, objectives and a strategic plan. Those things have been put in place to give the department direction so that it is planning rather than knee jerk reacting as it has done for so long.

Part of this project identified the need to increase medium and low security accommodation and the size of prisons generally in order to better contain costs. For that reason, the Government is looking to enhance the capacity of Mobilong in a project that will be undertaken during the current financial year. The Government also plans to build a new prison which will have 500 to 700 beds and which will be designed in a much more cost efficient manner. The sad fact is that, while the previous Government expended considerable moneys on the building of new prisons, those moneys were not wisely used. Whilst some of those additions gained architectural awards, I assure the honourable member that the staff who work in them would not give them an award for efficient prison design. Many of the new components of prison building, notably at the Yatala Labour Prison in G Division and F Division and the Adelaide Remand Centre are design disasters. Those institutions will always be expensive to manage because of the appalling design that defied best practice and design standards achieved in Australia and overseas.

In addressing the needs of the expanding prison system, we have the opportunity to ensure that the new prison to cater for our needs into the year 2000 and beyond will be designed in an optimum fashion so that we can contain costs as well as provide services and programs. Work is continuing to improve the contribution that prison industries make to the running of the prison system. I have already outlined, in part, some of the initiatives that have been introduced into our prison system. We have now reached the stage where the cost of keeping a prisoner in gaol has been reduced by 27 per cent from \$52 394 in 1995 dollar terms when we came into office to \$38 000. The credit for that goes not to Government for providing direction, initiative and the will and desire but to the officers who have persisted in spite of the derogatory comments that have passed their way as they have worked tirelessly to reduce costs. I am grateful to all staff for the manner in which they have achieved what we have achieved today, and I am confident that no-one around me is resting on their laurels and that spirits are still high.

Mr BASS: I am absolutely flabbergasted that the Minister has brought nine staff to this Estimates Committee yet the shadow Minister for Correctional Services has not seen fit to attend. Obviously he is quite happy with what the Minister is doing. My question relates to page 473 of the Program Estimates and refers to Group 4 commencing operations at the new Mount Gambier Prison. What are some of the benefits to the Government and the community arising from the outsourcing of the new Mount Gambier Prison?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The benefits are extensive. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Group 4 for getting on with the job. It is not often that you get a company taking on one of the toughest jobs in Government, that of managing a prison, that is prepared to be belted so often by the Opposi-

tion and unions, have its reputation engineered through the media, without bothering about litigation. Some of the cases with which it was beaten over the head would have been almost open and shut. It suffered the indignity in one publication of being accused of being a company that was welcomed by Ronald Biggs, and they would send him a telex or a fax.

What utter rubbish! It never happened. However, they ignored all that and got on with the job. It is through their attitude that we have been able to maximise the benefits from the outsourcing of Mount Gambier Prison. I have already outlined that just the mere presence of a competitor in correctional services significantly has assisted the management team in the department in driving down costs. The rest of the department knows it has to compete if it wants to keep operating the prisons it is operating. So the presence of an alternate supplier and the competition this will bring has already had significant effect. The provision of a different culture in the management of prisons as well as an alternative industrial relations situation is also of benefit. We have specification of the standards of service to prisoners for the first time.

As Minister, I am joint signatory to a contract with that company, and that specifies exactly what sort of service we expect out of it. It holds the company to a fixed cost; if it does not deliver the service it can lose the contract; if it blows the cost that is its problem, not ours. It allows us to measure the potential for improved value for money and to deliver that and it provides us with an opportunity to objectively evaluate its performance. We have on site at that prison three Correctional Services Department employees working with Group 4. One is a joint manager who, had our Bill passed through the Upper House, would have been a monitor of Group 4. That person will still be undertaking that monitoring position even though there is no legislation that requires him to do so, because we believe that it gives us control over our contract. The other two Correctional Services staff employees are there to enable other requirements of the Correctional Services Act to be met, and they will be supervising Group 4 staff.

On a visit to Mount Gambier a few days ago, I was surprised when talking to those staff to find that they are going to be wearing Group 4 uniforms because they want to and because they believe it helps them be part of the whole team. They are doing that even though they are Correctional Services employees, and I am pleased to allow that to happen. That is an indication of the will that is prevailing at that institution. They will have a role of monitoring and reporting on the way the company is operating.

The process involving those officers obviously gives an incredibly controlled accountability process. Three people are able to tell us if that company is not doing the job properly. The contract includes penalties for escape. To this day I am told it is the only prison in Australia where there are escape penalties. If it loses prisoners it will have to pay for it. That does not occur anywhere else in Australia, although I believe it is being implemented in other States with their new contracts. It includes a comprehensive approval process for Group 4 employees. The criminal record check for the staff who are now employed by Group 4 at Mount Gambier is as comprehensive as a criminal record check for police officers and more comprehensive than any checks that have been undertaken previously by Correctional Services staff. We are now matching our checks against the ones that have been used for Group 4 so that we can ensure the department's are as rigid in those checks. The secondment of employees to

work with Group 4 has also meant the opportunity to expand ideas and best practice methods used at that institution.

I think it is also worth saying that while I was at Mount Gambier I spoke to a group of officers who are now employees of Group 4 but who at some time earlier had been employees of the Department for Correctional Services. Five of the 22 officers from the old Mount Gambier gaol took up employment with Group 4. I had spoken with some of those officers about a year earlier and, at that time, they were nervous about the changes, they were upset and concerned about their future and they were particularly concerned about the great ogre of private management. However, in Mount Gambier last week I spoke to five officers with a very different attitude—officers who were excited by the challenges that were before them and excited by their new career opportunities.

It is probably best summed up in the words of one officer when she said to me, 'Minister, this is not a step across: this is a step forward, this is a step upward. We now have career opportunities we had never even thought about before.' She then proceeded to tell me excitedly about the company exchange program that is in place to enable them to swap for periods of three and six months with other officers—and it may be only one staff member a year—including exchange swaps to the United Kingdom. That is something that was not available to them in the Correctional Services Department. I must admit that, while I expected a change in attitude, I was surprised at the rate and I was particularly surprised at the attitude of the three Correctional Services staff who will be working at the institution and as to how positive they are about this move. The initial indications are even better than I had anticipated.

Mr QUIRKE: After that answer I am rather interested to know a bit more about Group 4 and some of their other divisions, but we will get to that. How far is the Minister willing to go in terms of compulsory psychological or other medical treatment for sex offenders to ensure minimal risk of re-offending?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Under the truth in sentencing legislation introduced by this Government we now have for those prisoners who have a sentence of five years or more a requirement that, if the offender has not participated in education, work and rehabilitation programs to the satisfaction of the Parole Board, that person will not get out of gaol at the end of their non-parole period. Indeed at five years that offender has to apply to get out on parole. That has not been extended to those who have a sentence of less than five years, based on the fact that we would expect the courts to be handing down five year sentences for serious offenders.

The honourable member referred in his opening question to an offender who, to my surprise, received a sentence of less than five years. If that sort of sentencing were to continue, I volunteer that the Government may need to bring that five year time down to a lesser period. However, I would have expected a serious offender to get more years within the prison. There is a full seven day assessment being introduced to E Division in Yatala Labour Prison, and that starts in August of this year. For the benefit of members who may not be aware, E Division is now the induction area of prisoners into Yatala. That assessment for that seven day period includes education, psychological and vocational assessment, and it is linked to the assessment processes undertaken at the Adelaide Remand Centre. As surprising as it may sound, this is actually the first time the department has constructively tackled sentence programs from the initial induction into

prison, and E Division, as that induction division, will be undertaking that work from August to ensure that we have a proper program for prisoners.

Mr QUIRKE: I move:

That the sittings of the Committee be extended beyond 6 p.m.

I indicate to the Committee that we expect to wrap matters up within an hour after 6 p.m. We consider that it is unnecessary to have the departmental officers here all night, through having a dinner adjournment from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Motion carried.

Mr QUIRKE: What counselling, psychological and psychiatric services to prisoners will Group 4 provide? Will these be more or less extensive than the service provided in other prisons? Will the private sector or public sector staff be employed to provide these services?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I can provide some of that information now and some I will need to get from Group 4. Starting from August, the department will be undertaking seven-day assessments of all prisoners. That has not happened before. Group 4 is this time well ahead of the department through its existing prisons in the assessment it provides for prisoners in this manner. As I indicated, the contract requires them to have on permanent staff a full-time social worker and psychologist. The company has advised that, on arrival at its prison, a prisoner will undertake a four-day full-time need assessment program, so they are able to determine how the prisoner has progressed at the time it receives the prisoner, remembering that when a prisoner goes into Yatala they are classified as high security and when they go to Group 4 they are medium and low security. So, some work will have been undertaken previously by the department. They will receive the department's viewpoint of progress and undertake a further full-time needs assessment.

These services are embodied in the contract. There has never before been any psychiatric services available to prisoners at Mount Gambier. They have always been returned to the metropolitan area when they needed expert help. You can imagine the difficulties that has presented: an institution housing sex offenders with no psychological services available at Mount Gambier and having to send prisoners back and forth, adding to the accommodation and movement costs of those prisoners. This will now no longer have to be the case for that institution.

Mr QUIRKE: In terms of the provision of counselling, psychological and psychiatric services to prisoners, what measures are taken to include sex offenders in voluntary programs, given that sex offenders, especially child molesters, in prison are reluctant to risk being identified with their crimes?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Regardless of the willingness or otherwise of those offenders to be identified with their crime, where they have received a sentence of five years or more they have to participate in programs made available to them because, if they do not, the Parole Board is less likely to release them at the end of their non-parole period. The provision of that incentive engenders a new willingness by these prisoners to be more readily identified than they may have been in the past.

Psychologists are deployed in a number of locations and serve in particular specialist areas. The number of psychologists in the department has not been sufficient in the past. The Group 4 contract adds one more. The department is implementing its plans now to increase the number of psychologists it has, particularly in country areas. Port Augusta Prison

recently created two psychology positions in its professional services team. Port Lincoln Prison, likewise, at this time is endeavouring to reconfigure its staffing to appoint a psychologist to further augment its professional services team.

A psychologist position is located at the Adelaide Community Corrections Centre and that position is a specialist one in which the psychologist concerned has considerable expertise in the area of anger management. The present manager of the Northfield prison complex, Ms Kym Dwyer, is a qualified psychologist. A further position is located at the Elizabeth Community Correctional Centre and services the probation and parole staff in terms of psychological intervention with clients and support and to advise staff in matters of case management.

The psychologist at the Adelaide Remand Centre provides a specialist service to child sex offenders by acting as the major source of referral to the sex offenders treatment and assessment program (SOTAP) outlined earlier and works directly with the program one session per week. There is a vacancy at Yatala Labor Prison which is to be filled and will be an integral part of that August commencement program that I mentioned earlier. Also, the parole conditions for sex offenders usually require, as matter of course (and indeed that has been publicly revealed as part of the parole condition for the offender, as mentioned by the honourable member in his first question) assessment treatment by SOTAP, regardless of the length of head sentence given to those prisoners.

Again we do not for one minute pretend that we have these programs in place to the extent or operating in a way with which we are totally happy and even the implementation of these new services in August in Yatala will not be the finalisation of the implementation and expansion of those programs. There is still a long way to go.

Mrs KOTZ: Workers compensation in the Correctional Services area has always been a large problem in relative terms to budget expenditure. Page 475 of the Program Estimates refers to the level of workers compensation claims and costs. Will the Minister provide the Committee with the details of the department's workers compensation throughout 1994-95, including a comparison with the previous year, and provide details of any actions or programs undertaken or planned by the department to manage occupational health, safety and welfare?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Addressing the numbers issue, at the end of May (the latest figures I have at my disposal) 20 people were working in other positions in the Department of Correctional Services on workers compensation, 33 people working in other departments, six people working in supernumerary positions and seven people not working at this time. The number of long-term workers compensation recipients has decreased from 104 in August 1994 to 66 in May 1995. This reduction has also been achieved through the opportunity to offer some of those officers targeted separation packages and at the same time it represents a significant reduction in the number of long-term liability for claims.

The department has tackled the issue of workers compensation with vigour because it recognised that it had one of the worst records in workers compensation of any Government department. The staff councillors continue to provide individual counselling to many staff and their families who in the past would have simply contacted their doctor. Following that there was a possible outcome of a stress claim. By being interventionist in the early stages, those officers have been given assistance at the time they need it in a not too dissimilar fashion to the way in which some of my

emergency service agencies tackle the problem. If an officer has been exposed to a traumatic situation, it is at that time that the department acts rather than after the officer is stressed out and goes to their doctor, as unfortunately happened in the past. That early intervention has, as with the emergency service agencies, greatly assisted in a reduction in claims.

A revised accident and incident report form has been designed and distributed to each work site so that actual analysis of an accident causation is also required so that future prevention initiatives can be put in place in order to prevent accidents being repeated. The department has found that, all too often, people have been involved in similar accidents time and again because a problem was not reacted to in the first place.

The department now has a rehabilitation policy which clearly sets out the roles of managers and supervisors and which emphasises their role in being involved in early intervention. The workers compensation budgets have been devolved to individual locations to manage with incentive to utilise any savings for the implementation of health, safety and welfare initiatives, again to enhance the work environment.

Attendance by employees and managers at health and safety seminars has increased and has raised local level awareness. Central office staff involved in claims administration and rehabilitation and safety consultants are liaising closely with the local committees to assist in understanding and implementation of the new health and safety initiatives. Training has been given to managers and supervisors in health and safety responsibilities and their duty of care to employees, as well as their safety awareness and hazard management. Training has also been provided for staff in both pre and post incident skills and counselling.

Level one and two training has been provided to health and safety representatives. The departmental health and safety policy has defined responsibilities to all levels of staff within the department. A stress management policy has been implemented and critical incident counselling and debriefing have been undertaken since April 1994. We found it particularly astounding that critical incident counselling and debriefing was not in place or for a staff counselling and rehabilitation officer to be involved. That has enabled the department to provide a much more responsive service.

Management and staff have also received education training relating to post traumatic stress and the benefits of diffusing situations. The department is assisting the establishment of staff support teams who are trained to identify and intervene where stress is detected among any member, or group of members, in a work place.

At the end of all of that, the department has been audited by WorkCover for compliance with prevention performance standards and it has achieved a level one rating. It was commended by WorkCover and the Industrial Affairs Department for the achievements that it has made to date, and the audit has provided a catalyst to identify local problems and has given the opportunity further to rectify and improve problems in the work force.

I apologise for speaking at length on this issue, but it has been a significant area of change. As a result of all these initiatives, the department has reduced workers' compensation claims by approximate 25 per cent during 1994-95. There is a continued commitment to reducing claims with a target of a reduction by a further 20 per cent in 1995-96.

In my opening address, I outlined where some of those savings have been achieved. They have been made during a time when there has been significant restructuring in the department. From a ministerial perspective, one of the signals that I have looked for with regard to problems within the department while it has been undergoing change was for an increase in stress. The Opposition and the unions have told me that there would be an increase in stress and incidents in the prisons. However, that has not happened because the department has managed change very carefully and has ensured that its employees are counselled if at any time they show signs of stress.

Mrs KOTZ: I appreciate the Minister's taking time to identify those areas. Acknowledging that claims have been reduced by 30 per cent, will the Minister disclose the current number of long-term workers' compensation recipients with claims greater than six months?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As at May 1995, there were 66 people compared with 104 in August 1994. The important thing to mention is that the department is encouraging people to work when they have had difficulties. For too long, large numbers of people were left in a situation where they were simply off work. The department has actively sought positions for those people within the department and in other departments. We have 20 people working in positions other than those in which they were previously employed in Correctional Services and 33 are working in other Government departments. In part, that demonstrates to the Opposition some of the ways in which the police concerns can be addressed with regard to providing other career opportunities. Six people are working in supernumerary positions and there are only seven people not working. We are obviously turning our attention to those people to assist them back into the work force.

Mr QUIRKE: I draw the Minister's attention to the correctional services regulations which were proclaimed in May of this year. Does the Minister concede that the privatisation of the Mount Gambier prison will be unable to proceed if the regulations are disallowed? What will be the budgetary implications if those regulations are disallowed?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: No, I do not concede that the workings of the Mount Gambier prison would be stopped if the regulations were disallowed by the Upper House. This is one of the kind of issues that I find particularly childish about the approach of some people to politics. I add up front that I am not talking about the member for Playford in this regard. If the member for Playford was shadow Correctional Services Minister, this childish game might not be going on at this time. Any member of the Opposition or of the Australian Democrats is perfectly free to call me to get a briefing on matters which are before the Parliament or in regulations.

The department undertook a review at the time the Private Management Agreements Bill was drafted, and found in analysing regulations and legislation that since 1982 there has been a problem with the correctional services legislation in that no-one other than an employee of the Department for Correctional Services can even talk to a prisoner. This means that, if the department has contracted a psychologist or social worker, about whom we have been talking with respect to counselling sex offenders, those people could be charged if they spoke to those prisoners. So, too, could doctors, nurses, dentists, educators, ambulance officers, fire officers and even police officers, because they are not employees of the Department for Correctional Services.

So, a mistake was made when the Act was drafted in 1982. It is not the first time that a Government has made a mistake in drafting a Bill. Parliament often looks at legislation to rectify mistakes, or it is aware that regulations have been introduced to rectify mistakes. The regulations to which the honourable member refers are just that—regulations to rectify a mistake. It so happens that Group 4 staff also fall into that category. If they are not employees of the department, those other than the three employees of the department cannot legally talk to prisoners, just as those in all our other institutions cannot. So, it was our view that the regulations had to be fixed. It would not have mattered if the contract had gone to the Department for Correctional Services or to the existing Mount Gambier staff to manage the new gaol. Whatever happened, we had to introduce those regulations to solve the problems.

If the regulations are disallowed, we will introduce them again, on the same day. We must do so, because we have the problem in all the other prisons. At the end of the day, the regulations are gazetted. If they are disallowed by the Upper House, we will have to gazette them again because we need to ensure that the protections are in place under the regulations for all the staff who work with prisoners in the other seven prisons around the State. It is a bit of a childish game—a bit of one upmanship. Frankly, it wastes my time, my department's time and the Government's time, and there are a few people in the prison system who will not be too impressed with the Labor Party and the Democrats if they reject those regulations so that we have to reintroduce them.

Mr QUIRKE: On 23 June this year the *Advertiser* ran a story about allegations by Group 4 that the Mount Gambier Prison was poorly designed. If the Minister or Group 4 has serious concerns about the redesign of the Mount Gambier Prison complex, which was recently completed, why was not something done about it over the past 12 to 18 months? How much will it cost for the Mount Gambier Prison to be redesigned to the satisfaction of Group 4?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: I am absolutely convinced, knowing the member for Playford as I do, that he did not write that question. I will answer the question assuming that it was written by the shadow Minister for Correctional Services. It is a dream question that Ministers do not expect to get served up in Budget Estimates. The Mount Gambier Prison was commenced by the previous Labor Government, and it was to be a 56 bed prison of cottages. I will navigate members of the Committee through Labor's Mount Gambier Prison. There is a series of cottages to accommodate 56 people spread over a large area of land. That area in other countries or other jurisdictions might accommodate 600 prisoners. Because they were widespread, the cottages required more expensive plumbing connections. It is very difficult for staff to see what is going on in a cottage or a house. There are four and five bedroom houses. One goes through the front door into the lounge room and there is a kitchen on the right with a refrigerator and a stove. Down the corridor there are bedrooms to the left and bedrooms to the right. At the end of the corridor there is a bathroom and laundry facility.

These buildings in themselves are an embarrassment, in that they are not constructed simply of brick by itself on the walls but by brick and fibro. The constructing company volunteered to me that that had added a couple of thousand dollars minimum to each house, because of the different trades, the different materials transported in and it is more cumbersome to build with. Just an all brick construction

would have made savings on each building. It also volunteered to me that the heating system in the roof was the most expensive that it had ever installed in any Government building, and so expensive that very rarely is it used in domestic buildings, but if that was what the Government wanted it to do, that is what it would do. It was what the Labor Government wanted.

An even greater embarrassment was the fact that this was an institution for 56 beds. Commonly throughout Australia, and the rest of the world, new prisons tend to be not less than 150—and that is larger than Mount Gambier Prison still will be—but more often 500 to 700 beds because you can gain efficiency through economy of scale, deliver better programs and have more counselling staff on board to be able to administer services. Labor's Mount Gambier Prison built at a cost of \$8.2 million is a national laughing stock. As shadow Minister I went to the United States of America to visit prisons and meet with companies. They knew all about Mount Gambier Prison. Everyone had had a pretty good chuckle about it. While they may find it funny, it is serious—we inherited a white elephant.

We would dearly have liked to expand it to that minimum of 150 beds that most jurisdictions look at, but we could not fit them in conveniently. We were able to put in a 54 bed cell block, taking it to 110 beds. The design of the cell block was compromised a little through the shape of the land that we were left with, but we were able to build a pretty good cell block that Group 4 is comfortable with. It is the 56 bed houses that it is not too happy with, but it advised me in Mount Gambier that it will be able to work with them. The contract would have been even less than it is if we had had a properly designed facility. I go further: I have said this before, this Government, if we had inherited the 29 bed Mount Gambier gaol with no new gaol built at Mount Gambier, would have removed the department's custodial activities from that part of the State. We would have closed the old Mount Gambier gaol and we would not have built a gaol at Mount Gambier. The cost of our 54 beds was just over \$2 million compared with the \$8.2 million for the cottages—in fairness, including perimeter security fencing. I agree with Group 4 that it is not an ideal design, but it knows the design limitations. It had the opportunity to look at the prison before it moved in and it is confident that it can work within those design limitations.

Mr QUIRKE: As a general rule would the Minister comment on a proposition that has been put to me that, in effect, private management of prisons requires a specific design for all those particular prisons and, where it is to be successful, the design of the prison has to be such that the likes of Group 4, or whatever company it is that is dealing with it, has to feel comfortable with the particular facility. In short, prisons that have been put up with a prisons department such as we have had traditionally and historically do not lend themselves, in general, to private management.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: That is a reasonable comment for the honourable member to make. It is recognised in most Australian jurisdictions now, and certainly in the United States and the United Kingdom, and a growing number of jurisdictions that have introduced private management, that optimum results can be obtained where the private sector has had the opportunity to all of design, build and manage their institution. Of the three pre-existing prisons prior to Group 4's involvement in South Australia in operation in Australia—two in Queensland and one in New South Wales—only the New South Wales institution was designed,

built and now managed by the private sector company. The company is ACM (Australasian Correctional Management). The other two facilities in Queensland—Borallon, the first private prison to be opened under CCA (Corrections Corporation of Australia) and Arthur Gorrie Remand Centre opened under ACM (Australasian Correctional Management)—were not design, build, and manage situations. It is fair to say that the savings that we have been made aware of are not as great in the Queensland jurisdiction as they are in New South Wales.

The Victorian Government has come to the same conclusion and has now awarded two contracts in that State for design, build and manage, and I believe that they both include finance. It has a third contract on call at this time. For those reasons it is our intention that the 500 to 700 bed facility that is to be built in South Australia will be design, build, manage and finance. It is worth noting that a matter of three weeks ago in the United Kingdom Group 4 won a 25 year contract for the design, construct, build, finance and manage of a new prison, the United Kingdom recognising the benefits that can be drawn from that arrangement.

Mr QUIRKE: Is it the intention to see all protectees ultimately transferred to prisons run by private enterprise companies?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: No, that is certainly not the intention. Obviously Group 4 will continue to get a large number of protectees because it is a convenient institution in terms of moving these people away from the mainstream, so it will get a lot of the more difficult sex offender cases to handle. But prisoners still will be interned within the rest of the system. The movement of prisoners will be carefully managed by the Prisoner Assessment Committee, which soon is to have new personnel, to ensure that we get the right treatment for all prisoners, looking at their psychological reports and assessments undertaken within the Government system.

Mr QUIRKE: Having been selected for the Mount Gambier Prison, will Group 4 be given preferential treatment over any other tenderers in respect of any new prisons to be build or in respect to the privatisation of any other prisons in South Australia?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Certainly not. This Government has given no preferential treatment to any tenderer. There is only one way to win a tendering contract for a private prison and that is to demonstrate to the evaluating team that it represents the best deal for the Government in terms of cost and programs. That is why Group 4 won this contract. The only way it will win a second contract is if it comes out on top in the same way, and if it does not that means another operator potentially enters the scene.

Mr QUIRKE: Has the Minister had discussions with Group 4 about the likely wages structure for warders at the prison (or a private facility that you discussed before) which the Minister hopes Group 4 will run? How does the Minister expect the basic wage and wages structure of Group 4 employees now at Mount Gambier to compare with those of current departmental employees?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Personally I have not had any discussions with Group 4 over its wages structure. I am not aware in detail of what it is paying its staff. I believe that its lower grade staff and managers are paid slightly higher and that its middle staff might be paid slightly lower because they are used in different ways, but that is up to the company to negotiate with the staff concerned. Some employees have gone from the existing Mount Gambier Prison to Group 4,

and I did not hear any of them moaning about their pay levels when I was there.

Mr QUIRKE: As a supplementary question, the Opposition has information that this was a source of problems in New South Wales, and we are alerting you and I guess the department to the fact that at least in New South Wales there was a discrepancy between Government and private employees doing the same job, and that that discrepancy led to a number of problems. There is a significant difference in wage levels between two persons doing the same job, which of course is one of the violations of any sense of industrial fair play.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Obviously, there are many components to the way in which people work. In the past, the department has had a heavy overtone to it. That has been considerably reduced in six of our eight institutions in recent times. It is my understanding that Group 4 pays a flat rate to its employees whereas Correctional Services pays a base rate and allowances. As I indicated from the outset, that is one of the advantages that are brought to the prison system through awarding a private contract: we have a company that pays salaries in a different manner. The annualising of salaries for correctional services officers, which has many similarities to a flat rate, actually forms part of the enterprise bargaining process that is being negotiated at this stage with correctional services officers.

Mr QUIRKE: I turn now to the question of the employment of convict labour. One of the questions that the Opposition would like to see sorted out is in regard to convicts who currently are paid for performing certain tasks. What is the position in this respect in Mount Gambier under Group 4, and what is happening in the remainder of our prisons?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: As I indicated in my opening address with respect to the remainder of the department, there have been significant changes to the way in which prison industries operate in this State. For too long we have had a situation in our prison system where prisoners have not had the opportunity to work. I well recall in a bygone Estimates Committee when I was the Correctional Services spokesman for the Opposition asking the then Minister (Frank Blevins) about prisoners undertaking work. It seemed that that Minister had a concern about putting prisoners to work because, in his words, they could take work away from trade unionists outside. What the Minister at that time did not understand was that there are other ways of introducing work into prisons. Rather than compete with the private sector, about which the Minister was concerned—and in fairness, there are situations in other jurisdictions and, indeed, in this jurisdiction where, in the past, there has been competition with outside enterprise—the solution is to work with those people.

The whole benefit of having contracts, such as the one we have under way with Curia, is that the department is working with the private sector to introduce work into prisons. As part of the process involving the introduction of that work with Curia, the department spoke with brick manufacturing companies based in this State and elsewhere to determine their view. It put to those companies what the department intended to do and asked for feedback. I am pleased to say that they said that it was a niche market and that it would not affect them in any way. That included a mud brick manufacturing company already in Adelaide which uses a bituminous product. Again, it said that it was a niche market and not one with which it would compete.

Another industry recently started in the prison involves the department working with another private sector company. At the request of that company, I have been asked not to reveal its name until it sees the first products come off the production line and it is happy that it is a good deal. Then it will stand up and be counted. Again, this particular venture employs a considerable number of prisoners in Yatala.

In so far as Group 4 is concerned, the contract we have with the company guarantees prisoners six hours work per day for five days of the week in a variety of industries to enhance their skills. That is an important ingredient in the contract. For years the department could not provide work for the prisoners, and now we have contracted with a company that will guarantee six hours work per day for prisoners—and we are not getting up to six hours even for all those who are working at the moment—for five days of the week in a variety of industries. Commensurate with that, the prisoners will be paid an allowance. I do not have the figure in front of me as to how much it will pay but I am told by Group 4 that it will depend on the nature of the industry because it wants to give the prisoners incentive to move through the various industries.

Therefore, that means that we have underwritten an agreement in the contract that prisoners will work and will have access to funds to spend in the prison as products from that work, and there will be incentive for them to move through various industries. At this time I do not have the details from Group 4 as to who it is entering into agreements with to provide work within the prison. However, I am aware that it has been discussing an assembly of components for motor vehicles involving as many as 40 prisoners, and they will be components that are presently assembled in Asia, thereby benefiting in a small way the car manufacturing industry already based in South Australia. Obviously there is some farming land and I am aware that some five prisoners will be involved with organically growing vegetables and horticulture. Also there will be at least five positions involved in kitchens, cleaning and some maintenance. So that makes 50 prisoners all up, and they are the only ones for which I can provide work details to date. I do not have the detail of the final contracts in relation to the components for vehicles but I am sure that that will be forthcoming as soon as those arrangements are finalised.

Mr QUIRKE: In relation to the mud brick company and the niche market to which the Minister referred, can you tell us what are the rates of pay for the workers who are involved in that particular enterprise? Are they necessarily being paid by any award standards or are they covered by any of the safety nets that are involved in what is a clearly defined industrial area?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: An important distinction needs to be made here, and that is the difference between the amount which may be paid to the department by the contractor and the amount which may be paid to the prisoner. The arrangements we have with this company and the other one to which I alluded are that the award rate that would be payable in that industry goes to the department and from that amount the department then makes a payment to the prisoner. That is the way the department is making a profit from this operation of mud bricks and the other operation, because we do not on-sell the product: the product is on-sold by the industry involved.

The amount that goes to the prisoner for the mud bricks is \$5.25 per day with a potential productivity allowance, which depends on the number of bricks the prisoners churn

out. They can actually earn up to \$1 per day productivity for churning out extra numbers of bricks. So the incentive scheme is there for the prisoners as well but, as you can see, the rates they are being paid certainly are not the high award rates—they do not need them; they actually get pretty reasonably priced accommodation and meals where they are at the moment. However, the department is getting the award rate for those efforts.

Mr QUIRKE: They must sleep comfortably knowing that you tuck them in at night, too, Minister! My next question relates to staffing in the prisons, and that may involve Group 4 but primarily it involves the Government managed prisons. There was a dispute some years ago—and at that time the Minister may have been the shadow Minister, or it may have been before his time—about male/female management of prisoners. Can the Minister give us an update on that matter? At the time, if I remember rightly, the Liberal Opposition opposed male prison officers being present for certain functions in female facilities. I am not sure whether it was *vice versa*, but will the Minister or his staff advise us on this matter?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: A number of issues are involved, the first of which is the mixing of male and female prisoners, which I raised in Opposition as it was causing particular difficulty at the Port Augusta Prison complex. In turn, both prisoners and separations had to be put in place to ensure that there were no management problems with those prisoners. In addition, there was also the concern, which I raised while in Opposition, over strip searches. The policy for strip searching of prisoners in the department today is that they are undertaken only by officers of the same gender, which eliminates the concern that was there in the past and allows at least some dignity in the strip searching process which, in itself, is not a particularly dignified process for any prisoner to have to go through. It is also not a particularly dignified process for the staff, either.

Mr QUIRKE: I refer to the top of the second column on page 474 of the Program Estimates where continuing substance abuse is listed as an issue or trend. Will the Minister advise the Committee what is the latest in his efforts to eradicate drug use in South Australian prisons? Has he had any success in the past 18 months on that matter?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: The Committee would be well aware of the investigation into drugs in prisons embarked upon by this Government to bring forward a very serious problem. There is no doubting that the findings of that investigation were serious. We have a large number of prisoners who not only go into prison with a drug habit but also often come out drug addicted. This problem in itself is not just one that involves prisons, as the increasing use of illicit drugs throughout the community is a problem. However, that illicit usage of drugs throughout the community is the very factor that often leads to someone's going to gaol in the first place, either by stealing, extorting money to buy drugs to support their habit or committing a crime because they are under the influence of drugs at the time.

The department has assessed drug strategies in other States and has devised a new drug strategy in South Australia. The recommendations of the investigation into drugs in prison I can outline in detail. I can outline where we are at on every recommendation.

Mr QUIRKE: It would be good to get it on the record, unless it is too long, in which case I am happy for the Minister to take it on notice.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: There are 46 recommendations, so I will take the question on notice and provide answers on each recommendation. It is worth advising the Committee that to 31 March 1995 there have been 437 incidents of drugs detected within the prison system; this compares with 562 in 1993-94 and 511 in 1992-93. We had expected the number to be higher than 437 as at 31 March, and I am not prepared to say that it is less than it was in 1993-94 because there are still three months of figures to be added to the 31 March figure. It could be close to, or slightly higher than, that 562. What we are putting up front at this stage is detection. Until we detect everything that is getting into a prison, we will not begin to get the message over: 'You bring it in, and our officers will find it.' At the same time, we are about to introduce a new computerised weapon—for want of a better term—to combat the entry of drugs into prisons. The department is introducing a computerised sniffer dog—

Mr QUIRKE: An Alsatian?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: In case the honourable member is worried, I guarantee to the Committee that no dog will be out of a job as a result of the computerised sniffer dog coming into operation. Tony Kelly, who is sitting beside me, is the officer who introduced the Dog Squad in the first place, and that squad is being used more extensively.

We will be introducing a computer system which will actively detect drugs coming into prisons. Essentially, the department has entered into an agreement with an American-based company to trial a system which involves a computer and a sensor to detect drugs as they are being brought into prison.

The system will enable staff from the manager down to pass through the sensing system on their way into work. Visitors will be able to pass through the system and they will be aware that it is in operation as a result of signs that will be visibly posted in the visiting area. The system is presently operating in only one prison in Australia—I believe the Borallon Private Prison.

The department's initial research has found that the system has had some promising results. Its initial sensitivity was so high that it was capable of detecting a grain of marijuana in a person's pocket which had allegedly been there for three weeks. Its sensitivity has been fine tuned a little by the providing company, and it is capable of detecting cocaine and heroin as well.

The system will be placed initially for a three month test trial by the department. It costs \$82 000 to purchase, so the three-month trial will cost the department \$15 000 with the understanding that, if the trial is successful, that \$15 000 will be counted against the purchase price of the equipment to allow the department to have the equipment on a permanent basis.

The technology was developed by the United States company to detect explosive powder being brought into military installations. Only recently the company became aware of the fact that the technology has other applications in respect of detecting drugs. We look forward optimistically to the trial as part of a major computerised weapons strategy to take on drugs in prisons. Any visitor who tries to bring drugs into a prison will know full well that the department has equipment which seems to have the capacity to detect those drugs.

Mr QUIRKE: Will the Minister tell us a little about the future of Cadell—or presumably its lack of future? Has he taken into account the impact that that will have on the local

economy, particularly on job opportunities in the area and on local educational facilities when that prison is closed?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: In May 1995, I received a paper from the department entitled 'Cadell Training Centre: Future Options'. That paper has been made publicly available and it has been distributed to local government bodies in the Cadell region, to the Riverland Development Corporation and to officers at the Cadell Training Centre, and it is generally available as part of the Government's undertaking to consult the community before taking any decision which would have an adverse regional impact. This, of course, was part of the Government's policy on coming into office: that any change to a regional economy of significance would occur only following local consultation.

The paper recommends the closure of the Cadell Training Centre. I do not expect the local community to be particularly happy with the prospect of losing jobs, and I would expect that, when I receive information back from the community, they will be putting up a pretty strong case for keeping the prison and those jobs in their community. At the same time, the members for Custance, Chaffey and Eyre have put strong representation to me on behalf of their communities to keep the facility open.

The bottom line is that the department has to recommend to Government the best option for Government expenditure, and the department has been able to demonstrate that significant savings can be made—as little as \$250 000 per annum but expected to be much more significant than that—through the closure of that facility and the amalgamation of the numbers into Mobilong Prison. The department's recommendation means that the loss of jobs in one regional economy would be a gain in another regional economy, namely, the Murray Bridge community in the case of Mobilong.

The number of prisoners on average from the Riverland region is usually no more than 4 per cent of the prison population. If we were to build the prison system from scratch today, we could not justify putting a prison at Cadell, but we have one there that provides jobs. Therefore, the impact on the community is paramount. If it were not for the impact on the community, if we did not have to consider that aspect, there would be no decision to be made and Cadell would be closed. If Cadell continues to remain open, the reason it will remain open is to retain those jobs in that local community, in the same way as there is a precedent for such a decision being made in Port Lincoln. The only reason that the decision was made to continue the Port Lincoln prison was to continue to provide those jobs in that community. Each decision is a site by site decision. This State has eight prisons that will house only 1 800 prisoners by the year 2000. Most systems being developed from scratch have no more than four prisons for a system of that size, and that is the inherent difficulty facing us.

Mr QUIRKE: From page 470 of the Program Estimates, under the heading 'Containment of supervision in prisons', the top figure in the table indicates that about 33 jobs have been lost in the area of security. The Opposition is concerned that cutbacks could lead to decreased outer perimeter security at Yatala, such as dispensing with guards in perimeter towers and with the outer perimeter security vehicle. Will the Minister assure the Committee that is not the case?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: This is another good example of the benefits that the private sector can bring. In no prisons that are designed, managed, and built by the private sector, of which I am aware, are guard towers constructed these days.

At the time Yatala was built and the guard towers put in place, the electronic surveillance capacity that is part of modern life was not available. The fact is times have moved on. New security methods are available and guard towers are not needed, so removal of those towers by the department is under way, and it will not in any way adversely impact on the security of that institution. The perimeter patrol of Yatala has been gone for three years and there has been no adverse effect on security.

Mr QUIRKE: The Minister's two to a cell view seems to be okay. How many convicted prisoners and how many Remand Centre prisoners are placed two or more to a cell? How does this compare with the situation two years ago?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: At the time we came into Government there were 54 cells in E Division which were already doubled up. It may come as a surprise that there were not more. I know a lot of people perceive what goes on in prison by watching TV, and those who watch many TV shows often see two or three prisoners talking to each other in the same cell and may wonder why there is even an issue over this in the first place. The fact is that some prisoners benefit from sharing cell accommodation. Indeed, that was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody that, particularly people of Aboriginal descent, benefit by sharing cells and often more than two in that one cell.

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Port Lincoln is a good case in point. In fact, since this Government came into office a dormitory has been opened in Port Lincoln Prison with nine prisoners in there, from memory. The prisoners in the dormitory, to whom I have personally spoken, think it is the best part of the prison to be because they can all play cards at night. It is a bit hard to play cards with yourself in a cell. They saw positive benefits in being able to play cards in the cell at night in that institution. I am assuming no money changes hands there. They denied it strenuously when I asked them how much was on the card game. In so far as other doubling up accommodation is concerned, the Adelaide Remand Centre now has 89 bunk beds in it which have been installed by this Government. This Government also introduced 50 bunk beds at Port Augusta Prison. Not all of them are occupied. Indeed, as of today there are 19 vacancies. The Committee might be interested to know that each morning—in this case it was 8.31—I receive a printout of exactly how the bed situation is looking across our prison system.

It has not become as critical at the moment, but members may recall that when we came into office we had a situation where we had prisoners on mattresses on the floor. The PSA came up with its infamous quote that 'They seem to have in their presence a Minister who wants to rack 'em, pack 'em and stack 'em.' Unbeknown to the PSA, at that time we were carefully looking at exactly how we placed those prisoners to ensure that we kept any difficulties to a minimum as we opened up new beds. The new beds were the 89 in the Remand Centre and the 54 in Port Augusta. There are 19 vacancies in the Remand Centre as at 8.31 a.m. today and, by coincidence, there are also 19 vacancies at Port Augusta. It is fair to say most of those vacancies could be in bunk bed accommodation. So, deducing from that, as of today we probably have 70 cells in the Adelaide Remand Centre and 31 in Port Augusta in which there are two per cell. Of course, Port Augusta does have a high number of Aboriginal descendants interned and that institution particularly has benefited from being able to place two to a cell.

Mr QUIRKE: Has there been any increases in prisoner to prisoner violence in the past couple of years and in instances of rape? Has the Minister any tabulations on that?

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: Indeed, I do have figures with me and I am pleased to be able to reveal these figures to the Committee because the figures put an end to some of the nonsense that was put about by the union and by the Labor shadow Minister—not by the member for Playford who asked the question—about what is happening in gaols. We had Opposition shadow Ministers standing up in Parliament saying that there were assaults on prisoners and prison officers at a level unparalleled before—there were going to be riots; there were going to be fires. This was all going to happen 18 months ago. To date this financial year there have been 81 incidents of assaults between offenders and 21 incidents of assaults on staff.

If we look at assaults on staff, there were 21 assaults in 1994-95 and 35 assaults in 1993-94. That tells you that there has been a significant reduction in the past 12 months, despite the fact that we now have far more prisoners in our institutions. In terms of assaults between offenders, they went down in 1993-94 to 59 but have now gone up to 82, and bearing in

mind that we have 200 more prisoners in our institutions now than we had 1½ years ago it is not surprising that there are more incidents.

Assaults in most institutions went down. However, the increase in assaults between prisoners is mainly due to the Port Augusta Prison having 29 assaults whereas previously it had seven, and this is because that prison now has prisoners in it whereas previously it had about 70 empty beds. There have been some teething problems in the way prisoners are accommodated. It is not uncommon for there to be an initial increase in incidents between prisoners as staff work out the individual idiosyncrasies of prisoners and better ensure that they are accommodated so that they will not react. We are confident that Port Augusta will overcome those problems and that we will see assaults between offenders continue to reduce. I emphasize again that assaults on staff have dropped considerably.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.48 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 29 June at 11 a.m.