

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 19 June 1996

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**Chairman:**

Mr H. Becker

Members:

Mr K.A. Andrew
 Mr M.J. Atkinson
 Mr C.J. Caudell
 Mr M.R. DeLaine
 Mrs R.K. Geraghty
 Mr J.P. Rossi

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

 Transport, \$56 894 000
Witness:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw, Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts and Minister for the Status of Women.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Payze, Chief Executive, Department of Transport.
 Ms K. Leicester, Senior Accountant, Management Accounting.
 Mr C. McSporran, Senior Project Officer, Infrastructure Planning.
 Mr R. Frisby, Registrar of Motor Vehicles.
 Mr P. Edmonds, General Manager, Ports Corporation.

The CHAIRMAN: I have a few opening remarks to make. As in previous years, a relatively informal procedure will be adopted. The committee will determine an approximate time for consideration of proposed payments, to facilitate the changeover of departmental advisers. Changes to the committee will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure that they have provided the Chair with a completed request to be discharged form. 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 submitted no later than Friday 5 July to the Clerk of the House of Assembly. I propose to allow the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make opening statements of about 10 minutes but no longer than 15 minutes. There will be a flexible approach to questions, based on about three questions per member, alternating sides. Members will also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning, but supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule; in other words, I will not allow one person to have three or four supplementary questions. There will be three questions and then perhaps one supplementary question.

Subject to the agreement of the committee, members outside the committee who desire to ask a question on a line of questioning currently being undertaken by the committee will be permitted to do so once the line of questioning on an

item has been exhausted by other members of the committee. An indication to the Chair in advance from the member outside the committee wishing to ask a question is necessary.

Questions must be based on lines of expenditure as revealed in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments, Printed Paper No. 2. Reference may be made to other documents, including Program Estimates and Information. Members must identify a page number or the program in the relevant financial papers from which their question is derived. Questions not asked at the end of the day may be placed on the next sitting day's parliamentary Notice Paper. In other words, the practice of asking a whole lot of questions at the end of the day will no longer be possible.

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; that is, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the Minister, not to the Minister's advisers. The Minister may refer questions to advisers for a response.

I also advise that for the purposes of the Committee some freedom will be allowed for television coverage by allowing a short period of filming from the northern gallery. I now invite the Minister to detail any agreed program and to make a brief opening statement if she wishes.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I would like to make an opening statement in respect of the Department of Transport in terms of the debate on the total budget for the Department of Transport, which is \$418.6 million. This includes the functions of bus and depot management and Regency Park workshops transferred from TransAdelaide. In 1996-97 the Department of Transport presents its budget information in a new program structure, which reflects the newly defined roles of the Department of Transport; these roles being: leadership in the development of State Government transport policy; leadership in the development of integrated transport planning; management of the use of the transport system; and management of the transport infrastructure.

In accordance with its policy and management role of the transport system the goals for the Department of Transport in 1996-97 are to provide a transport system that meets the accessibility requirements of the community; provide a transport system which is efficient and reliable; provide a safe efficient transport system; provide a transport system in harmony with the environment; meet Government service obligations; and to be an organisation that supports all of the above operational goals. The Strategic Review commenced by the department in July 1994 continues to be implemented resulting in a number of changes.

The overall work force has reduced by 650 employees, even though a further 170 employees have been transferred into the department from other areas of the transport portfolio. Financial savings which were anticipated in the original Cabinet submission in relation to the Strategic Review are on track with permanent net savings of \$3.9 million likely to be achieved in 1995-96, with additional savings of \$4.7 million factored into the 1996-97 estimate.

Members will be interested to know some of the areas where these savings are occurring: line marking, 10 per cent; sign manufacture, 20 per cent; supply of asphalt, 18 per cent; and maintenance, 20 per cent. As a result, the Department of Transport has increased its level of payments for work undertaken by the private sector from 42 per cent in 1993-94

to 53 per cent in 1995-96. Another increase in this percentage is expected in the 1996-97 financial year.

The 1996-97 Department of Transport budget reinforces the Government's priority for road funding because of its importance to the economic development of South Australia and the creation of jobs. The total road funding budget is increased by 5.6 per cent, with the capital program increasing by \$32.5 million from 1995-96, which at any time is a fantastic result. At this time, with pressures on budgets generally, it is an outstanding result. It does include the Morgan-Burra Road, and I do expect questions on that.

Road users will enjoy the benefits of the following road investments that will be completed in 1996-97: the Henley Beach Road, South Road, Bakewell Bridge; South Road and Burbridge Road at the River Torrens area; Panalatinga Road; and Port Road, East Terrace and Phillips Street, which includes the replacement of the Hindmarsh Bridge.

Mr ATKINSON: Hear, hear!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The member is pleased with that, and that is also good news. Clearly, there is a lot of good-will at this Committee at this stage, anyway. Other works to be included are Main North Road and Hogarth Road in relation to the Golden Way; Salisbury Highway and the South Road connector; and passing lanes between Port Augusta and Port Wakefield. I indicate that all those projects will be completed this year and there are more on the way.

Major capital expenditures will be on the Southern Expressway, Adelaide Airport runway extension, the upgrade of the Mount Barker Road and sealing of the South Coast Road, Kangaroo Island, will continue in 1996-97, as will the Morgan-Burra Road, contributing to the Government's goal of providing infrastructure that will stimulate economic development and sustained growth in South Australia.

The Government continues to honour its commitment to social equity and the rural communities of South Australia by allocating \$6.5 million in 1996-97 for the continuation of the sealing of all unsealed rural arterial roads by the year 2004, those roads being in incorporated or council areas and not beyond.

The broader role of the department is reflected in its commitment to all transport system users, particularly unprotected users such as cyclists and pedestrians. The sum of \$2.5 million will be provided for cyclists' encouragement and education programs as well as increased bicycle tracks, and a further \$1.5 million has been allocated for the upgrade of all koala crossings.

From 1 July 1996 South Australia will implement common national heavy vehicle charges and will also be implementing components of the National Heavy Vehicle Implementation Package, which includes the adoption of uniform national licence classes. South Australia continues to support financially, and in kind, the National Exchange of Driver Information System, which will give all States access to national vehicle registration and driver licensing data by 1997.

Management of the Government's bus and depot operations continues on a commercial basis with the department leasing buses to public transport service operators.

Of the State's 74 jetties, 48 are classified recreational and are managed under the recreational jetties program. These jetties have been without a proper maintenance strategy for many years. In 1995 I formed the Recreational Jetties Working Party to prioritise the upgrading of jetties to the recreational standard, that is, 30 per cent of the initial commercial standard, prior to transfer of responsibilities or

at least negotiation of partnerships with local government. In the 1996-97 budget \$1 million has been allocated for jetty upgrading and maintenance, and this is in line with the Government's commitment to provide \$5 million over five years. Projects earmarked in 1996-97 include the casting of a concrete deck on the Granite Island Causeway at Victor Harbor.

The Government has reconfirmed its commitment to providing safer facilities for recreational boating. Today there are over 40 000 registered boat owners in South Australia to which, if one adds family crew and friends, would exceed 100 000 South Australians involved in boating on a regular basis, and there would be many more, I suggest, if safe facilities were available.

In 1996-97 an allocation of \$1.31 million will be made available for capital improvements to boating facilities from both Government and the Recreational Boating Facilities Fund. Facilities anticipated include all-weather launching ramps, safe havens, secure parking areas for vehicles and trailers and some additional navigational aids. In January, a \$25 recreational boating facilities levy was introduced that will assist councils to establish improved facilities along the coastline and in our inland waters.

The CHAIRMAN: I direct member's attention to page 183 of the Estimates and Payments and pages 273 to 284 of the Program Estimates and Information.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to page 279 of the Program Estimates, in particular the broad objective to contribute to the achievement of a comprehensive, integrated and efficient South Australian transport system, which provides facilities and services commensurate with need at a cost acceptable to the Government and the community.

My question relates to Australian National. The Commonwealth has commissioned a review of Australian National with its final report due today, 19 June. The Opposition has made a submission to the review opposing the cutting or sale of Australian National. About three weeks ago the Opposition asked the State Government whether the State had made a submission to the review. At that stage the State Government had not done so, but the Minister for Transport and the Premier both said that a submission was being prepared. However, yesterday the Premier under questioning did not say that a submission had been sent. Has the Government made a submission to the Brew inquiry into Australian National (I mean a written submission and not chatter with Federal Liberal comrades), and will the Government release the submission publicly?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I wrote to Mr John Sharp as it was appropriate to do in relation to the Brew inquiry and would welcome the opportunity to read that letter to the Committee. It was considered after discussion with Mr Sharp that this was the appropriate way to reinforce our determination that these matters be addressed on a Government to Government basis. In the meantime I spoke with Mr Brew, who is undertaking the inquiry, as did other representatives of transport in South Australia. For the benefit of the Committee, my submission, addressed to the Hon. John Sharp, stated:

Dear John,

Your decision to establish the Brew inquiry to audit the financial operations of Australian National (AN) Commission and the Australian National Rail Corporation (NR) has the potential to lead to a major restructuring of rail operations in Australia with significant implications for infrastructure, workshop facilities and employment in South Australia.

Accordingly, I have appreciated the opportunity over the past six weeks to meet on three occasions with you and your officers, and on a separate occasion with Mr Brew, to reinforce the South Australian Government's determination to ensure that the State continues to play a proud and productive role in the rail freight and passenger business well into the next century.

Your undertaking that the Commonwealth will work through all the complex issues on a Government to Government basis and not act in haste or unilaterally is particularly welcome. This will provide an unprecedented opportunity—

I emphasise those words—

for the State Government to influence the outcome, and we are keen to do so in the context of the Railway (Transfer Agreement) Act 1975 and on condition there is no expectation that the State will meet any costs associated with AN's accumulated and pending debt problems and longstanding redundancy program.

Members will be aware that AN, with the assistance of the Federal Government, has been funding the redundancy program for some time. The letter continues:

Not since the sale of the State's non-metropolitan rail system to the Commonwealth in 1975 has the South Australian Government had a similar opportunity to plan strategically for an efficient and cost-effective transport network that meets the State's aggressive economic development agenda. This frustration has been compounded by the former Bannon Government's decision not to participate as a shareholder and board member of National Rail, a decision that has frozen South Australia out of critical decisions which now threaten to compromise both established rail jobs and the Commonwealth/taxpayers' investment in AN's workshops at Islington and Port Augusta. In this context, I highlight NR's move in September 1995 and January 1996 to award contracts in New South Wales and Western Australia for the supply—and maintenance over 15 years—of 120 new locomotives, 'creating up to 1600 new rail jobs' in these States.

They are not in South Australia, but in other States. The letter goes on:

While AN itself acknowledges the need for further reform, the South Australian Government maintains that Australian National is still best placed, alone or in partnership, to use its resources, skills base and proven expertise to perform a strong and constructive role in a revitalised rail network. The South Australian Government is keen to seize the opportunity to secure a productive, prosperous future for rail in this State and so fully capture the benefits of the proposed Alice Springs-Darwin railway line—incidentally, a project which the Commonwealth undertook to construct in 1911!

I look forward to working with you to address all the issues arising from the Brew inquiry in order to maintain jobs and to achieve the best rail outcome for South Australia and in the national interest.

There are a few points that should be expanded upon in this submission to Mr Sharp. My advice in a formal sense from Government authorities familiar with such matters in South Australia is that it was appropriate for the Government to confirm with the Federal Government the basis on which we will continue to address these issues. I also took into account that the Brew inquiry was focusing on the financial audit of AN and NR. Until the Federal Government and the State Government receive the advice of Mr Brew on that financial audit, it is difficult to know exactly what we are dealing with in any rail restructuring options in the future. Also, I did not wish to make any suggestions or comments about AN's plans to restructure.

As the honourable member would be aware, those plans have been ongoing for some time, because AN presented to the former Federal Government, in particular, Mr Brereton, the former Federal Minister for Transport, two business plans which it never endorsed. So, that is one reason why AN feels that it is quite vulnerable at this time, because it submitted plans to the former Federal Government which were never endorsed, and it still wishes to pursue a restructuring program. I will not comment on those restructuring initiatives or give the Federal Government ammunition, fuel or heart to undertake any of those initiatives which the Government may

not see—the Opposition may not see—as in South Australia's rail interest. It has been the case for some years now that AN made decisions which did not consider the State's interest but which may well have been in the national interest. I do not see at this time that we should offer particular instances where we will support AN's plans for restructuring the organisation.

I make that point in view of the honourable member's comments about the ALP submission to the Brew inquiry. From South Australia's perspective, it was important that for the first time since we sold the railways in 1975—a decision, incidentally, which the Liberal Party did not support in 1975—this Federal Government has agreed to work with the South Australian Government to take into account State interests in decision making that affects Australian National or National Rail. As I said in my letter to Mr Sharp, that represents an unprecedented opportunity that this State has. My letter to Mr Sharp confirmed that undertaking, because it took some meetings with Mr Sharp to reach agreement on that initiative, but it is an extraordinarily important win for South Australia in the way in which we deal with rail issues in the future. It is also important to note, notwithstanding what is in AN's business plans for restructuring which it has submitted in the past or which it is prepared to contemplate now in the light of its economic troubles, the impact that NR has had on AN's operations.

I argue that it is worth noting for the record how irresponsible and almost reprehensible the Federal Government was in establishing National Rail without ever taking into consideration the impact on the other rail operation it owns, AN. It almost abandoned AN in its enthusiasm to establish National Rail, and it has been most interesting to see National Rail's willingness to compromise Australian National. I understand that NR owes at least \$40 million to Australian National, money which I hope before 30 June it will be able to pay; but it clearly will get into some debt problems itself. It is also important to know not only NR's history in not paying Australian National for services, lease of track and the like but its decision to contract to Western Australia and to New South Wales the manufacture of 120 new locomotives, creating, as National Rail said in its press release, 1 600 new jobs in those States. That absolutely ignores and overrides the already established jobs in rail in South Australia. No matter what happens as a result of the Brew inquiry and the outcome of any propositions that the Federal Government may put to the South Australian Government in relation to the Brew inquiry, there is no question, as the unions have acknowledged to me in discussions I have had with them on this matter, that a lot of jobs are probably vulnerable in South Australia at the present time because of the decision by NR to contract to New South Wales and Western Australia the manufacture and maintenance over 15 years of 120 new locomotives.

This is a golden opportunity for South Australia to negotiate in our best interests a win-win situation, something which South Australia has not often confronted in connection with rail, regarding our support for the Alice Springs-Darwin railway. That initiative, on which the Government has promised to spend \$100 million, will ensure that rail continues to prosper in this State. I am keen to negotiate a strong rail future for South Australia and, as I indicated in my letter to Mr Sharp, to capture the benefits of the proposed Alice Springs-Darwin railway line.

Mr ATKINSON: Is the Minister aware that compulsory redundancies in the Australian National South Australian

operation have already started? If so, are these changes contrary to the terms of the Commonwealth-State agreement; and, if the Commonwealth proceeds to make major changes to Australian National which will reduce employment levels, will the Minister use her authority in legislation to oppose the cuts?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The former Labor Minister in this State did not do so regarding the redundancy program that has been ongoing in Australian National for some time. I am not suggesting that that is all right. As I indicated, South Australia has been vulnerable in this field for some time. I know this matter is of concern to the honourable member because Islington lies within his electorate and he is an enthusiast for rail generally. It does not make it all right, but that is what has happened. AN has got used to operating in that way, as has the Federal Department of Transport, which does not care a fig about South Australia in many respects. The Federal Government did not consult the South Australian Government about the recent redundancies. For the first time in almost a decade, I pointed this out to the Federal Government and AN, both of whom recognise that the South Australian Government has rights under the Rail Transfer Agreement. Therefore, the Federal Government has indicated that it will formally seek South Australia's opinion on these matters. That has never happened in the past in respect of AN's ongoing redundancy program.

The most recent redundancies were in the furnishing and upholstery area with respect to railcars. The people who were made redundant had not had any work for the past six months and had apparently been idle. With the loss of these railcars and associated business and the completion of much of the upgrading and refurbishment of the Indian-Pacific following the refurbishment of the Ghan, it seemed that it was unlikely there would be further work in the future. So, that area of the work force was targeted.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer again to the program titled 'Transport accessibility'. The situation regarding eligibility for transport concessions when people travel interstate is something of a dog's breakfast—it is all over the place. Travellers to Victoria may find little difference in South Australia, but when they move into New South Wales they may find themselves in a different situation, which elderly people in particular may find distressing. What action will the Minister take to ensure that there is mutual, universal recognition of eligibility for transport concessions? Will the Minister raise the issue at the next national meeting of Transport Ministers?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I recall answering a similar question from the Opposition spokesman on transport. Both this Government and past Ministers of Transport have raised this issue in South Australia. It has met with no support in New South Wales and Victoria in particular and with little enthusiasm in Queensland, because they believe that they will incur enormous additional expense from such an initiative. The smaller States do not find it an issue that they could not accommodate. As I recall, there is one area where there is reciprocity, that is, the transport subsidy scheme for people with disability, and there is reciprocity for access cabs in South Australia and the equivalent in Victoria in terms of subsidies. But that is the only area where South Australia has a formal relationship in terms of reciprocity.

Mr ANDREW: I refer to page 284 of the Program Estimates. I note that in her opening comments the Minister made a brief reference to the department's strategic review, which aims to restructure the department's role as a funder,

purchaser and provider of services and, in doing so, would reduce the work force to 1 300 by December 1996 and make savings of approximately \$141 million over 10 years. Is the department on target to meet these outcomes, and in what areas of activity are the savings being made?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The department is definitely on target in terms of the cost savings. I made brief reference to this in my opening statement. I will reinforce that by saying that the net saving of \$3.9 million has been accrued in 1995-96, and \$4.75 million has been factored into the department's budget for 1996-97. This is in line with the forecast estimates of the strategic review report. Therefore, the department is on track in terms of those commitments. The proposal was to reduce the work force from 2 620 as at 30 June 1994 to 1 300 by the end of this calendar year. As at March 1996, the department employed 1 968.3 full-time equivalents. That includes 171 employees who have transferred from other areas of the transport portfolio. That figure of 1 968.3 employees means that it is 171 higher in terms of reflecting the department's overall progress in reductions because of the increase of transfers from other areas. Generally, there is sound progress in that field as well.

In terms of specific savings, there has been a saving of 10 per cent through the contracting out of line marking. The sale of sign manufacture has provided 20 per cent savings in terms of the supply of signs to the department, which is an excellent arrangement for the department, while also attracting a new business venture to this State. The department is realising a saving of 18 per cent for the ongoing supply of asphalt. That is in relation to the Marino hot mix site. As at 31 March 1996, 13 contracts for road maintenance have been called; nine have closed, six have been awarded. These six contracts provide a 20 per cent saving over estimated costs of the department delivering the same road maintenance services, while the department will continue through this contract to insist on the same or higher standards of road maintenance work.

The department's strategic review is a credit to everybody involved. I commend the CEO of the department, Mr Rod Payze, and all who work with him in management and throughout the department, because they have been extraordinarily loyal and industrious continuing their work while appreciating and absorbing the need for change, the nature of which I suspect is more profound, culturally, than any that the department has undertaken in its whole history.

Also, at the same time the department has negotiated a new enterprise agreement. There was about 84 per cent acceptance throughout the work force, which is one of the highest recorded in State Government departments in recent practice. There have been important partnerships with industry, and considerable changes in the registration and licensing field. There have been big developments at the same time in terms of quality management throughout the department as it moves to managing more contracts rather than undertaking the work themselves.

Mr ANDREW: As a result of this strategic review, is the department now spending more or less on road related expenditure?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is an important question, because one of the reasons for undertaking this exercise was to ensure that we were able to invest more in road construction and maintenance in this State. In addition to gaining new funds for various projects, we also wanted to make sure that the funds we had allocated were used most efficiently to get the best result. I am able to confirm that capital expenditure

in 1993-94 and recurrent expenditure in that year totalled \$282 432 000. The budget for 1996-97 is \$328 000 602. Certainly, new funds plus the best use of funds is ensuring that more will go to roads.

Mr ANDREW: Is the department still formally addressing the initiatives to promote the recruitment of women?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes it is, and it is an area in which I take particular interest. I am thrilled today to have present on my immediate left Karyn Leicester, who is responsible, as senior accountant, for ensuring that everybody in the department, including me, is accountable. To know that that job is entrusted to Karyn gives me enormous pleasure. It is probably the first time in the history of transport before the Estimates Committees that two women have sat at the top table, either answering questions or being prepared to answer. I am not promising that next year three women will be present because Mr Payze and Mr Frisby might get a bit nervous, and they have no reason to be nervous. Mr Payze might wish to comment on other initiatives being undertaken in terms of equal opportunity within the Department of Transport.

Mr Payze: One initiative of which we are extremely proud is the Sylvia Birdseye Undergraduate Scholarship for women. The department has been sponsoring graduate students at the University of South Australia Levels campus in all levels (years 1 to 4) of graduate development and then offering the successful scholarship winners employment with the department upon graduation. That scholarship is worth approximately \$5 000 per annum to the four women who are undertaking undergraduate studies. That scholarship is progressing very well. To the present time, approximately five female engineers have been offered to the department.

We also encourage women to consider non-traditional occupations in the trades areas, as well as the professional categories, and provide prevocational training and career information initiatives. We have developed within the organisation a number of training programs for general leadership development, with one program specifically titled 'Women Towards Leadership'. These programs have been designed specifically for women in the organisation, to give them confidence and skills to recognise their opportunities and to accept responsibility in their career development.

We also undertook a consultancy to examine various approaches to link work and family issues, which is extremely important to women in the labour force. We are now working our way through the recommendations of that consultancy to promote family-friendly strategies in the organisation. Those are a few of the initiatives of which I am extremely proud.

Mr ANDREW: I refer to Program Estimates at page 279 relating to the future of the Adelaide Airport. I note in the commentary on major resource variations that \$12.1 million will be spent in the next financial year on the Adelaide International Airport runway extensions. When will this work begin and, noting that the work on the extension presumably is about to commence in earnest, what work will be done to attract more international flights to and from Adelaide subsequently?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is a major project for the Government in terms of pursuing its economic development agenda for the State. Quite a number of initiatives have been taken already, including the release of the economic impact statement on Sunday 2 June 1996. That is open for consultation until the end of July. Meanwhile, detailed design work is being undertaken by the Department of Transport for road

and bridge works. That design work for both the roadway and the runway commenced this month and takes into account the EIS.

This work is being integrated with the relocation of the dog club, part of the Westward Ho golf course and the Patawalonga Creek. Parts of these works are to commence before the completion of the EIS; that work is being undertaken by the Urban Projects Authority. That same authority is undertaking golf course layout and relocation work. We have decided to keep the driving range in its present location, and that will save approximately \$700 000 from the original estimate of the project. Golf course earthworks have commenced and evaluation of the drainage issues is being undertaken by the West Torrens and Thebarton Drainage Authority.

The Glenelg/Patawalonga EIS amendment is now available for comment, and options for the outlet arrangements have been integrated with the runway project concept plans. A field trial is under way for settlement of the runway surface materials, and ordering of the new navigational aerial has been initiated. Those latter projects will be financed from the State's \$20 million allocation to this project.

In the meantime, the Federal Government has initiated an investigation with respect to noise abatement, and those findings will be considered in association with the EIS. Having indicated that range of projects, as I said, the design work for the bridge and roadway is under way.

These are off-airport works and will be the responsibility of the State Government's \$20 million allocation. Some construction on airport works will commence in February 1997 and earthworks will commence in May 1997.

In terms of international flights about which the honourable member asked, it is particularly important to recognise that, in addition to the 21 international flights coming into Adelaide at present, we have a difficulty which is not new but which we must continue to pursue, and that is getting the Federal Government to agree to allow further international flights to come into this State.

The International Relations Branch of the Department for Foreign Affairs is responsible for negotiating with airlines air access rights to Adelaide, or indeed anywhere else in Australia. The criteria of that branch make it particularly difficult for secondary or regional airports, such as South Australia, to be considered as a priority by airlines. This is not a new issue, but it is one which I have taken up aggressively with the new Minister for Transport because I am hoping that, with the change of Government, we may see a change of reasoning in this area.

It is the State's view that the International Relations Branch within the Department for Foreign Affairs—and I think some assistance might be provided by Mr Alexander Downer, the South Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs—might give South Australia credit for regional economic benefits through the Federal Government's discounting or giving away aviation rights.

We will continue to pursue this because, unless we are successful, we will find it increasingly difficult, whether it be with Singapore later this year or with further initiatives with Malaysia next year, to secure all the services required for this State to push economic development both in passenger and freight terms.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the Committee that at the beginning of proceedings I read out the procedure regarding supplementary questions. There will be a flexible approach to the asking of questions based on about three

questions per member. Members may also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question in order to conclude a line of questioning, but any supplementary question will be the exception rather than the rule.

Mr ATKINSON: Hear, hear! The Government needed reminding.

The CHAIRMAN: I will allow the member for Chaffey one final question.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I refer to the Program Estimates at page 279. The Minister will be well aware that the Government's major initiative in transport policy commitments has been the undertaking to seal all rural arterial roads in incorporated or council areas in the State over a 10 year period concluding in 2004. What specific progress has been made to date?

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Chairman, on a point of order: to what question is this supplementary?

The CHAIRMAN: It is a new question. My ruling is based on about three questions. I will let the member for Chaffey get away with it this time, but that is it.

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Chairman, on a further point of order, the idea of a supplementary question is that it is cognate with the previous question. This is an entirely new line of questioning, and I ask you to rule it clearly out of order as being a fourth question.

The CHAIRMAN: The previous two questions were supplementary. There was a question and two supplementary questions which I objected to. This now makes the third question. I will not allow a recurrence in the future.

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Chairman, I hope that like cases will be treated likewise so that, if the Opposition adopts the same line of questioning as the member for Chaffey has done, we, too, will be permitted to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Spence will find that yesterday the Opposition was satisfied. The member for Price can attest to that. Of course, I wish to encourage and help new members. However, we have strict guidelines that we want to maintain.

Mr ANDREW: Mr Chairman, I am continuing on the basis of my experience in last year's Estimates Committees.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the honourable member not to dispute the Chair. The system has been changed.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Finally, at what value is it proposed to continue in 1996-97?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The 1995-96 program was allocated as follows: the Burra-Morgan Road, \$3.3 million; the Hawker-Orroroo Road, \$1.1 million; the Mannum to Bow Hill Road \$400 000; and the Kimba-Cleve Road \$500 000. However, during the year we were able to increase the funds and provide for additional work on these rural arterial roads. We provided \$350 000 for the Elliston-Lock Road and a further \$250 000 for the Kimba-Cleve Road; on the Blyth-Brinkworth we provided a further \$500 000 and on the Snowtown to Magpie Corner Road a further \$200 000. Work which will be substantially completed in 1995-96 includes 20 kilometres of the Burra-Morgan Road, six kilometres of the Kimba-Cleve and Blyth-Brinkworth Roads; five kilometres of the Snowtown to Magpie Corner Road; three kilometres of the Elliston-Lock and the Hawker-Orroroo Roads.

The field cost expenditure of the Hawker-Orroroo Road was revised from the budget estimate of \$1.1 million down to \$400 000 to enable survey and design for the full length of the road to be undertaken. For this coming financial year, subject to availability of funds, the following commitments will be made: for the Burra-Morgan Road, \$3.1 million; for

the Hawker-Orroroo Road, \$1.1 million; for the Snowtown to Magpie Corner Road, \$500 000; Kimba-Cleve, \$400 000; and Elliston-Lock, \$400 000.

As I said earlier, I was pleased when rain fell a fortnight ago and more recently because some dirt roads in country areas have not been graded because of the long dry spell. They did not become impassable but became intolerable. I know of mothers taking kids to schools and buses generally where punctures and vehicle costs have been much higher than they should. However, there was nothing we could do about the situation because of the lack of rain. The sooner these roads are sealed, the better it will be.

Mr De LAINE: My questions relate to page 279 of the Program Estimates. The Minister answered a recent question about the Adelaide Airport runway extension. What option has been decided upon for Tapleys Hill Road to accommodate the runway extension? Is it a diversion or a tunnel?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The member may recall that when the Adelaide Airport proposal was initially put to an environmental impact statement two options were being considered. Those options are now called a long tunnel and a long deviation of Tapleys Hill Road. As a consequence of the economic impact statement there is reference now to four options: a long and a short tunnel and a long and a short deviation road. The one that is considered the most practical is the short deviation road.

Many people grizzle about having to undertake environmental impact statements, but one of the benefits on this occasion was to give people more time to think through some of the issues. Through excellent work by the Department of Transport, Rust PPK and the Federal Airports Corporation we have been able to look at a different approach. Even you, Mr Chairman, are happy about something that is happening at the airport.

The CHAIRMAN: Not yet.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But you have reason to be happy. I think everyone on the Committee would agree that you at least have reason to be happy, even if you do not wish to be happy. The reason is that this short deviation road will no longer impinge on the baseball field. Mr Chairman, you will recall making representations to me with the Baseball Association of South Australia asking that the road not impinge on the baseball infrastructure in this State. You also made representations on behalf of a family whose son's ashes had been spread at that site. The family was concerned that the road would impact on that.

The CHAIRMAN: I am very grateful for the Minister's doing that. They might even call one of the diamonds 'Di's diamond'!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is the most favourable option in terms of environmental impact and cost, namely, the short deviation road for Tapleys Hill Road. Public comment on the EIS is open until the end of July. If members would like me to provide a copy of the EIS I would be happy to do so.

Mr De LAINE: The former Federal Labor Government made a commitment to provide funding for the \$138 million upgrade of the notorious Adelaide to Crafers section of the Mount Barker Road, which has been a problem for many years. Given the election of John Howard's Coalition Government and his recent announcements regarding Commonwealth cuts, will the Minister assure the committee that the funding for the project is secure and will she detail to the committee what discussions she has had with her

Federal counterparts regarding this and other road funding projects?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The situation has not changed from what applied prior to the election where both the former Labor Government and the Coalition Government both promised this road but neither have given the critical stage 3 approval. We applied for it from Mr Brereton and did not receive it. We have sought again the approval and have not yet received it. We have in the meantime received approval from the Federal Government for a number of projects: first, the pilot tunnel, which is being executed at the moment and which is critical in terms of making an assessment of what is in the Mount Lofty Ranges so that people in terms of tendering know what they are working with; and the department will have more control over assessing the tenders. Secondly, a big conveyor belt is currently being built across Mount Barker Road at about the site of Devil's Elbow and that is shifting soil from one side of the road to the other for soil compaction in the lead up to the tunnel, which we have no reason to believe the Federal Government will not fund. I do not have funding approval, but I have no reason to believe that it will not fund it. When the Premier returned from the Premier's conference, the COAG meeting, after the weekend he made a statement that he believed that funding was secure in terms of both the airport and Mount Barker Road. Mr Payze may wish to add more.

Mr Payze: The stage 3 approval is a formal process required before we on behalf of the Federal Government can let the major construction contract for the road. These preliminary works are necessary to be concluded to enable us to put together the necessary contract documentation to get the best price from these contracts for the main project. However, I assure the committee that design work is continuing and, as soon as we get stage 3 approval, we will be in a position to let out the work to public tender.

Mr De LAINE: Will the Minister give a guarantee that there will be no Commonwealth funding cuts for transport related projects generally and, if not, can she give the committee an indication, based on information from Canberra, of what will be the size, nature and scope of the cut?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am awaiting, like every other Transport Minister in Australia (and like every Minister generally), the outcome of the Federal budget. I cannot comment further at this stage.

Mr CAUDELL: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 279, on transport accessibility dealing with road train trials. On 1 December 1994 a 12 month trial commenced with road trains operating through Port Augusta south to Lochiel. The trial has since been extended to 1 July 1996. Is it proposed that the trial be extended again and, if so, for what reason? From next month will road trains be permitted to operate south of Lochiel through to Port Wakefield and Adelaide?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Earlier this week I gave approval to a recommendation from the Department of Transport that the trial be extended for a further 12 months to July 1997 for two reasons: first, funding from the Federal Government (and I thank the former Government for assisting us so promptly with funding for this initiative) provided for 10 passing lanes between Port Augusta and Port Wakefield. The last of those passing lanes will be opened at the end of July this year. It is very important, in terms of road trains and other road users, that the Government is entirely confident that there will be responsibility from the heavy vehicle industry and from road users generally in the use of these

passing lanes. I want to be entirely confident of that before we get rid of the trial and have road trains, which are very large vehicles, utilising the road through Port Augusta, Lochiel and Port Wakefield to Adelaide. It is an expression of caution by both the Department of Transport and myself and it is highly necessary.

Secondly, in the past few days we have also approved the appointment of a consultant and expressions of interest will be called for a consultant to undertake a study for the continuation of road trains to Adelaide itself. As part of this consultancy the following matters will be addressed: the social and economic impacts of double road trains operating between Port Augusta and Lochiel and Lochiel and northern Adelaide. The consultant will be asked to consider appropriate routes for double road trains to specified destinations in the northern Adelaide metropolitan area. The consultant must also consult with key stakeholders, which includes local councils along the routes, the RAA, the South Australian Road Transport Association and local members of Parliament.

The consultancy is anticipated to take some four months. I noted in an article in the *Sunday Mail* on the weekend that there is a proposal from the Northern Adelaide Development Board for a \$7.6 million marshalling yard for heavy vehicles in the northern area of Adelaide. That proposal is one that I would anticipate the consultant would examine. It is also important, in terms of the efficiencies that can be generated for transport and industry by the use of road trains, that we ensure that we also speak with the Ports Corporation as we should look at efficiencies in terms of transport infrastructure with road, rail and port facilities and how we can use road trains to advantage with our other established transport infrastructure.

I should also note that while road trains can appear scary when they come up behind a car the guarantee is that almost half the number of heavy vehicles are on the roads at any one time. There are big efficiencies in savings for the operators, industry, rural communities and consumers generally, and we want to explore those issues.

Mr CAUDELL: With the introduction of the new heavy vehicle charging scheme from 1 July 1997, I understand that the system of issuing permits to allow road trains to operate under certain conditions will be abandoned. If so, how does the Government intend to enforce the present 90 km/h speed limit for road trains?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is an important question. Road trains operate in this State under a permit system, and one of the conditions is a limit of 90 km/h on the open road and 40 km/h through Port Augusta. With national standards and registration in general, A-trains will be registered and pay vehicle registration charges. Therefore, they will be legitimate forms of transport on our roads and, like any other vehicle, will work at the speed limit that is designated for a particular road.

The dilemma was that, while the national reform seemed terrific in terms of deregulating and getting rid of administrative burdens for truck operators, road trains could have travelled not at 90 km/h on the open road but 110 km/h. Some, like most motorists, are likely to go faster within a range of about 10 km/h over any designated speed limit, so we faced the possibility of about 118 km/h, and that prospect appalled me. Therefore, after a lot of discussion with Licensing and Registration, I have agreed that a *Gazette* notice be submitted before 1 July when the new registration charges come into force pointing out that the limit for road

trains is 90 km/h. Mr Frisby may wish to comment further on this important issue.

Mr Frisby: Under the scheme of conditional registration which will be introduced from 1 July, it will be possible to include a limit on any vehicle as a condition of registration if that is deemed necessary.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We have that option in addition to the notice in the *Gazette*, so we will have two ways of enforcing the 90 km/h limit. Many heavy transport operators would like us to increase the limit to 100 km/h, but to this stage that has been resisted.

Mr CAUDELL: Dealing with the Southern Expressway, I commend the Minister, the Department of Transport and its project managers for the level of consultation that has taken place regarding that project. I understand that a recent survey by the Southern Development Board has reinforced the Government's contention that improved access to the south, particularly the Southern Expressway, will be an important catalyst for the creation of jobs in that area. What was the outcome of that survey and when will the tenders be let for the three main contracts for the construction of stage 1 of the Southern Expressway?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I was particularly delighted to see the outcome of the survey which was conducted for the Southern Development Board. The results will be released this week in the Messenger Press as part of the ongoing communications about the expressway. Mr Lindsay Haylock, the board's executive director, has advised that there is a dramatic increase in the number of businesses wanting to relocate at Lonsdale and that this has resulted in the creation of approximately 600 new jobs in the past six months. What is particularly interesting from the survey, as highlighted by Mr Haylock, is that there was no question in the survey relating to the new road development, yet 25 per cent of the replies in the survey, which was mailed to all southern-based industries and businesses, expressed support for the expressway and indicated that it was important in their decision to relocate or expand within the southern areas in the past six months and in the future. Members will be used to sending out surveys, but they do not often get unprompted advice or opinion on a matter not noted in the survey. However, in this survey 25 per cent of the respondents, of their own volition, mentioned the Southern Expressway.

Mr Haylock has advised that many of the relocating businesses are small to medium-size South Australian companies which are undergoing rapid expansion phases and have outgrown their current premises close to the city. He states that these companies need more staff and more space. He also said that there is some perception about the south generally that access is a big issue because it is too far from the Port and the airport, that businesses generally have held this view and that it has retarded job creation in that area.

Formal work on the expressway was to commence on 3 September. However, when I realised that was one day after my birthday, I suggested to the CEO, Mr Payze, that the best birthday present I could have would be to have work on the Southern Expressway start on 2 September. I understand that is now the starting date. Even before formal work is started on 2 September, this positive feedback and practical support for the Southern Expressway has been realised in the creation of 600 jobs in the past six months. I think the member for Mitchell also gets a lot of positive feedback on this initiative, and he has been of great support to me in driving it.

Mr CAUDELL: On a point of clarification, I asked about the communication process. I understand that the Minister

received a gold award for communication. Will the Minister explain the receipt of that award?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I did not actually receive it. The company engaged by the Department of Transport, O'Reilly Consulting, received a national award for its communication strategy, which included a radio signal and regular communication. So, even before the expressway has been built it has gained national attention. It is important, too, because I know how much the member for Spence enjoys cycling, although I am not too sure about the member for Mitchell. The member for Chaffey and I have been cycling, and there is no greater cyclist than the member for Price who used to represent South Australia in cycling. When I restructure the State Bicycle Committee shortly he has promised to help me as a member of that committee. But the landscaping plan on the Southern Expressway includes a bicycleway. There will be a slower, recreational lane for the Chairman, the member for Mitchell and probably the member for Torrens and there will be a faster lane (a veloway) along the length and adjacent to the expressway for people such as the members for Chaffey, Price and Spence. The landscaping plan is fantastic, and Arts in Public Places and artists generally will also work on seating, lighting, signs, etc. I am really excited about it.

Mr Payze: In respect of the progress of works and when the next contracts are likely to be tendered, members would remember that we let a contract in December 1995 for the removal of very reactive clays on top of the escarpment. That work has been satisfactorily completed, which permits us to go to the next stage to let a contract for the construction of a bridge on Majors Road over the new expressway. That will permit the major contracts to travel underneath Majors Road safely rather than by the stop-go type arrangement on Majors Road. Tenders have been called and evaluated for that work. Of the five tenders received, I was amazed to see that all are within \$100 000 or less of one another. So, the industry is waiting for this work to start. The tenders that we can expect are very competitive, indeed. I would not like to be quoted exactly on the variations, but five were to my estimation, within \$100 000 of one another. That is quite remarkable. So, that is a \$1.3 million contract which will start very soon. The major works will comprise three main contracts. It is anticipated and expected that we will call those in July. As the Minister said, works will commence on or before 2 September.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to the Blanchetown bridge. Minister, can you assure the Committee that an open tender process is being used with the contract for the replacement of the Blanchetown bridge, budgeted to cost \$17 million, which was approved recently by the Public Works Committee and which is due to commence late this year?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am surprised by the question, because this project has been funded by the Federal Government, and it is a requirement of the Federal Government that there be competitive tendering for such projects. This question may have been prompted by the State Government's decision in terms of the Berri bridge where we did not go to tender because a project was submitted by Built Environs. It was submitted with unqualified support. It was not just a builder putting in a project: it was a consortium of interest that the then Economic Development Authority considered were reputable, and the Department of Transport, having assessed the costs and the engineering aspects, considered to be sound. It was on that basis, also with further support from the Master Builders Association, as I recall, that the Berri

project proceeded as an exclusive contract, not a tender contract. So, there is a difference in the Riverland area in terms of the two contracts for the two bridges that are to be let in the near future.

Mrs GERAGHTY: At a meeting in mid-March, the CEO of the Department of Transport is reported in the Messenger Press as saying that in spite of the Southern Expressway the Darlington bottleneck will remain. He reportedly said that the expressway will save a total of only 10 minutes on the sections of the expressway south of Darlington. Does the Minister agree with the CEO's reported comments? Will the Minister assure the Committee that the building of the expressway will not, in fact, worsen the Darlington bottleneck leading to further delays and driver frustration?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: With work that has been undertaken in the Darlington area there is no bottleneck now, and I do not believe that there will be in the future, other than the fact that at various times of the day traffic can build up anywhere in the system. As there is on any road with increases in population pressures, one can anticipate that, over time, there will be a life to the road structure. So, the Darlington roadworks undertaken by the Department of Transport under the former Government a few years ago were built in anticipation of what was then called the third arterial road but which is now called the Southern Expressway. The former Government, when it undertook those works, took into account its plans for the third arterial road which we have recalled and extended as the Southern Expressway. I know that it rarely happens to members of Parliament—it may never happen to the member of Torrens—but sometimes newspapers do misquote situations. Mr Payze did claim to have been misquoted and he did write to the paper about the matter. I am not sure whether the local paper printed the letter; but Mr Payze may want to elaborate now.

Mr Payze: The question asked of me at the public meeting on which I was quoted was taken out of context, in my view. The issue was a question as to whether or not the construction of the Southern Expressway would result in more travel being generated from the southern areas. My point concerned the fact that I do not believe that the implementation of a road project of itself generates travel, irrespective of whether people travel by whatever mode. The determinants for travel are generally social and economic, and relate to the place of work, the place of residence and any other location where social interaction is required.

When there is a quantum increase to road supply, such as the implementation of the Southern Expressway, it is generally accepted that people might of a very small time period change modes. Of itself, it is not likely to increase the level of travel. Therefore, I made the claim that, of itself, it was not likely to increase congestion through the Darlington area because the works which would be completed—and which exist now—prior to the implementation of the expressway would be sufficient to cope with that additional traffic. If there was increased population generation in the southern areas, as a direct result there would be increased travel. So, no-one can guarantee, as the Minister has said, that in the future there will not be congestion at Darlington, but it will not be as a direct result of the implementation of the Southern Expressway.

Mrs GERAGHTY: At the same meeting, Mr Payze is reported as revealing that a compensation package for disturbing Aboriginal sites in Laffers Triangle was almost finalised, but two months later (on 15 May) the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs put out a press release stating that formal

negotiations with the Kaurna people were beginning only that day. Which statement is correct, and have those negotiations been completed?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: At the time each statement was made, they were correct. What happened in the interval was that we were given a revised agenda by the Aboriginal community. At that point, we had further discussions, but we decided that we should also communicate with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I understand that the Minister hired a bus on the same day as the Brighton jetty was opened. He and representatives of the Kaurna Heritage Committee met with the Department of Transport and inspected the whole of the site for the Southern Expressway. There was goodwill present. I spoke with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs this morning about another matter. He raised this issue, and he said that he anticipates that he will be in a position to make a decision within two or three weeks.

Mr ROSSI: I refer to the heading 'Transport accessibility' on page 279 of the Program Estimates. I have received many complaints from elderly people in the Tennyson-Semaphore Park area about a bikeway which is supposed to be constructed along the coast to North Haven and Outer Harbor. The 1995-96 specific targets note that one of the department's achievements this year is the finalisation of a cycling strategy for South Australia. When does the Minister propose to release the strategy initiatives which are to be taken in 1996-97 to develop further the network of bicycle routes in Adelaide, and what will be the cost?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Work is being undertaken on the cycling strategy by Howard Holmes and Associates. I have seen a draft, and the final strategy will be presented to the Department of Transport executive on about 1 July and then forwarded to me. I am aware of the honourable member's interest in what we call 'the coastal way'. In our cycling strategy released before the last State election, we indicated that we would like to explore the construction of a coastal bicycleway from Outer Harbor to Seacliff and, hopefully, from Seacliff to Willunga using the disused Willunga railway.

There has been strong public opposition during the consultation phase by constituents in the honourable member's electorate, in particular. These matters, which are of concern to the honourable member's constituents and the member for Peake personally and his constituents, are being taken into account now by the department and will be taken into account by me. The consultant has found that it is technically feasible to build a coastal way, but we must also consider some of the political issues.

A further consultancy has been let to Dorrestyn & Co. in consultation with a steering group regarding the bicycle network in the metropolitan area. The arterial road component of the network is being assessed at the moment by the Department of Transport's Strategic Investment Planning Section. A further component of this network is a local road or path, which is being considered at present in conjunction with local government staff. Formal agreement is being sought. Regarding both those consultative processes in respect of local and arterial roads, we should have replies by the end of this month and be able to progress the work further. I am also pleased to advise that new copies of cycling routes around Adelaide will be available from September 1996. The funding of bicycle initiatives for the coming financial year alone will be \$2.5 million. I think that is an increase of almost \$1 million over the current financial year, but I will clarify that.

Mr ROSSI: In her opening statement, the Minister indicated that \$1.5 million will be allocated this year for the installation of a koala pedestrian crossing. How and where is this money to be allocated considering the Minister's previous answer to the question regarding the cycleway through Tennyson and Semaphore Park and along the coast? Pedestrian safety is an increasingly important road safety issue with 40 pedestrians having been killed last year and two so far this year. What further initiatives is the Government taking to address this issue particularly for older people?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is an important issue for the safety of people in the community. I am pleased that the Department of Transport has broadened its agenda markedly over the past 2½ years to look at the whole community use of roads, not only for cars but increasingly for bicycles and pedestrians. We are looking from the whole range of road users, and I do applaud the department.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, I think it has embraced with enthusiasm all these different road user issues. When I became Minister, I was particularly upset to learn how we were the only State in the nation that could not accommodate community wishes for better pedestrian access. The only form of pedestrian access that the department was able or prepared to accommodate was a fully activity pedestrian crossing, which cost a hell of a lot of money, at a time when we were looking at every cent. Therefore, we kept on saying to communities, 'We can't afford to spend money on a pedestrian activated crossing, but we will not approve any other form of crossing; therefore, you will have no crossing.'

We are now able to accommodate members' requests all over South Australia, whether it be in the Riverland. Much of the push for this came from the member for Chaffey. I know that the member for Spence is pleased that his representations have been answered positively, and we have a great pedestrian crossing. This is how the Department of Transport and I are working with the community, irrespective of political opinion and of the merit of the case. The member for Spence could never get this pedestrian activated crossing agreed to by the former Labor Minister of Transport. So I am pleased for his constituents.

With respect to koala crossings, last year when releasing the pedestrian facilities report in the electorate of Unley, I announced that all existing school zones and flashing light school crossings throughout the State would be upgraded to the new school zone, and that is 25 kilometres, with a koala crossing respectively. This will involve the replacement of signs at all crossings such that the required speed limit is 25 km/h, and that is emphasised with the signage.

The cost of upgrading the facilities at all schools throughout the State is a cost that will be borne by the State Government Department of Transport; that will be \$1.5 million this coming financial year. Four regions of the department will be managing this project to ensure that all these facilities are upgraded before the 1997 school year begins. All councils are being informed of the impending process. I recognise how patient Mr Payze is as CEO of the department when I sometimes get very enthusiastic about these projects, because he was not highly impressed that I had not passed before him my release before I made the commitment of \$1.5 million for koala crossings. Nevertheless, I made it, and he has found the funds out of this coming financial year's budget. Every electorate, irrespective of whether they be Labor or Liberal, country or metropolitan, will have these koala crossings,

which are safer, and improved signage by the beginning of the 1997 school year.

Mr ROSSI: As a child, I used to go down to Port Adelaide quite often on a Sunday morning to buy fish. The blessing of the fleet used to occur in September or October each year. I used to go to Jaffers to buy furniture and Quin's to buy fishing tackle, etc. However, in recent years, businesses, warehouses and shops in Port Adelaide have been closing down and moving out. The woolsheds on the wharf have been empty, only harbouring pigeons, etc. Of course, tourism was on the increase when ships came to Outer Harbor and travelled through the port, but under the Labor Government this has been negligible. The Ports Corporation has been in existence for over 18 months under a Liberal Government. What has it achieved? How does the performance of Port Adelaide compare with that of ports in other Australian cities?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will make some brief comments and then ask the General Manager of the Ports Corporation to respond in more detail. If the honourable member wants further information it can be either a question on notice or the General Manager can contact him. The Australian Bureau of Transport and Communication Economics conducts quarterly survey performances of all Australian ports, and it is my recollection that we performed very well.

Mr Edmonds: Consistently, South Australia or the port of Adelaide has performed well compared to the other ports in Australia. The average handling rate for containers tends to be between 15 and 25 per cent better than the rates in the Eastern States and significantly better than the rate in the West. The reliability of the port, which is of equal importance to shipping lines, is in excess of that of other ports around Australia as well. The performance of the container handling facility sets an example for the rest of Australia.

With regard to the other things that have been achieved in the port over the past 18 months, we have been very active in encouraging additional shipping lines to visit Adelaide. Adelaide is not well located geographically on the world scene, so we have to work particularly hard at it. We have been fortunate. We have had three major successes. In February we had the commencement of a weekly shipping service—in fact every six days we had a sailing to Singapore, with a group of consortia, consisting of the Malaysian International Shipping Corp, Nedlloyd and Mitsui, and that is a service into Singapore and Port Klang.

In April, another consortium visited Adelaide. I refer to the Australian Express Service, which consists of the Pacific International line, OOCL and Zim Navigation and which operates on a name-day service, at a fixed time slot every week to Singapore. Those two services have opened up major new opportunities for all producers in this State, but particularly citrus producers. More recently the Mediterranean Shipping Company introduced a weekly shipping service to Europe, something which we have been striving for. So, shipping has experienced some major advances. Adelaide is now averaging between 25 and 26 container ship calls per month compared with 15 to 16 at the end of the last calendar year.

Mr ATKINSON: The Labor Opposition wholeheartedly supports the construction of the Berri bridge, but we have some questions about the process. Why did the Berri bridge construction contract not go to open tender, on what date did Built Environs first approach the Government, or did the Government approach Built Environs regarding the Berri bridge?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I answered that question in speaking to a question from the member for Torrens about the Blanchetown bridge and the tendering arrangements. The honourable member might want to ask more questions. I could either filibuster and repeat all the information or ask the honourable member whether he would be prepared to refer to *Hansard*.

Mr ATKINSON: I shall refer to *Hansard* and perhaps take it up thereafter.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will go through the issues again but the honourable member may have other questions. Perhaps he could ask the member for Torrens whether she thought I addressed those questions in reply to her earlier.

Mr ATKINSON: I have a supplementary question. Was any mention made of the Hindmarsh Island bridge impasse before or during discussions with Built Environs over the Berri bridge project and, if so, what was the nature of those discussions?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Never, on my part, although I do recollect that representatives of the Gerard community and Built Environs indicated to me that they had both fully consulted and were in total agreement. I was informed that it had been important for the Gerard community to be a part of this consortium with all other parties prior to presenting the proposal to me. It was raised in that context but never raised by me.

Mr ATKINSON: Has there been any exchange of letters between the Government and Built Environs or its representatives, or mention in the Berri bridge contract papers regarding the Hindmarsh Island bridge and, if so, what was stated or agreed in those documents?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Not to my knowledge, but then I have not been involved in all the contractual arrangements. Mr Payze may have some advice.

Mr Payze: I cannot recall a letter going to Built Environs that would have made any connection with the Hindmarsh Island bridge. The only connection I could even contemplate would be that the proposed structure by Built Environs at Berri is very similar, in terms of its structural design, to that which Built Environs was proposing at Hindmarsh Island. I am certainly not aware of any direct correspondence on that matter.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I indicate that this project was signed off not just by the Department of Transport but also by Treasury, the Auditor-General and Premier and Cabinet. That degree of interest was considered necessary because it was an exclusive contract and we had not been involved in such issues of private finance of infrastructure in the first instance, and therefore all the risks had to be fully considered, including the department's risk in taking back a project that had been funded by another body which had not funded up front, as well as consideration of maintenance arrangements. All that was new to Government generally, and for those reasons many people were involved in consideration of the project—because we wanted to make sure that, in engineering terms, it was safe and that in terms of financial risks we were covered.

Mr Payze: This project has been formally examined by the Public Works Committee, which has recently reported to Parliament. I must state that the purchase agreement for this project has yet to be signed by me, as Commissioner of Highways. However, there have been a number of negotiations with the proponent on my behalf.

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

Mr ATKINSON: We were discussing whether there had been any contact between Built Environs and the Government about the failure of the Hindmarsh Island bridge project of which Built Environs was in charge. The Opposition is seeking to explore whether there is any connection between Built Environs at Hindmarsh Island and Built Environs being awarded the Berri bridge project without its going to tender. The nub of the question is this: the Opposition wonders whether the Berri bridge project is in any sense compensation to Built Environs for the terrible frustration it has suffered at Hindmarsh Island. It appeared to me that the Minister was ruling that out altogether—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Categorically.

Mr ATKINSON: —categorically—saying there was never any contact—written or oral—between the State Government and Built Environs about Hindmarsh Island in connection with the Berri bridge. Minister, are we clear on that?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It has never been an issue for me. It has never been raised with me by Built Environs in that context. Categorically, there is no association in my mind or in the negotiations with the Department of Transport on that point.

Mr ATKINSON: There has been no contact between the Government and Built Environs on that point?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is regular discussion with Built Environs in terms of the Berri bridge, but it has never been raised with me. I understand from the CEO of the Department of Transport, Mr Payze, that there have never been discussions or written advice, and it is not provided for in the contract, in terms of a pay-off for compensation. They are two separate projects that have been developed as discrete projects and assessed accordingly. In addition, the Public Works Committee highlighted the fact that, with the building of the bridge, the department is not even obliged to take it.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I have allowed that further clarification.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister seemed to be inviting Mr Payze to comment and I would be interested to hear his views.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I refer to the twenty-sixth report of the Public Works Committee of June 1996 concerning the Berri bridge. It was a unanimous report of all members, including two Labor members, the members for Taylor and Elizabeth. Under item 1.4, 'Project background', the report states:

The committee notes that this is a new funding procedure for design, finance, construction and commissioning to be undertaken as a package with no liability to the Government upon final purchase of the completed item.

The Public Works Committee noted that there is no liability. To suggest, as the member is now, that there is a pay-back or compensation to Built Environs for any frustration it may have experienced in relation to the Hindmarsh Island bridge is just totally without foundation, because there is no obligation for the Government, upon finalisation of this project, to even purchase the completed item.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand that. I want to make perfectly clear that, if someone comes to the relationship between Built Environs and the Brown Liberal Government and scrutinises all the available material, all the evidence—written and oral—of dealings between Built Environs and the South Australian Government, they will not find anywhere any evidence that the Government of South Australia avoided

the normal tender process to award the Berri bridge to Built Environs as compensation for its frustration at Hindmarsh Island. It is that matter that we need a straight answer on.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is what I have indicated. How could one even suggest that? Even a non-lawyer—perhaps because he is a lawyer he is confused on this point—should follow this since it says clearly that the Government is not even obliged to purchase the item upon completion. So, how could we have struck a deal in the manner in which the member suggests if we are not even obliged to purchase the bridge?

Mr ATKINSON: If there is a deal or a backhander, you are obviously not going to refuse to take the finished item.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is no backhander. That is why we are not even—

Mr ATKINSON: That is what I am driving at.

Mr Caudell interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, I think it is odious. I am not too sure why you are reflecting on your own members and their integrity in terms of signing off on this report, having noted that the Government is not even obliged to purchase this project. If the deal was done as the member suggests (perhaps that happens with the Labor Party or Labor Governments but not with this Government), we would not have such a provision in the contract.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Questions will be asked in the proper manner and in accordance with Standing Orders. The member for Spence has had his three questions and a bit more. The member for Chaffey.

Mr ANDREW: I refer to the Program Estimates at page 279 with respect to transport accessibility, particularly in relation to the operation of ferries. In March last year the department let pilot contracts for the operation of four of the 13 River Murray ferry crossings. At that time I recall the Minister said a committee would be established to oversee the process and that a review would be undertaken to assess performance after one year of operation. Members would be aware that a number of ferries operate in my electorate and I am particularly concerned and interested to see, first, that appropriate savings are passed on and, secondly, that the staff currently employed by the Department of Transport have their interests looked after and recognised. In that context, what was the outcome of that review and what action does the Government intend to take now in terms of the ferry services in general?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Before answering the specific question I would thank the member for the work he has done with the department, ferry operators employed by the department and also with union representatives from the AWU, because I know he has met with them in terms of plans that the union, the work force and the department have been preparing for the establishment of private businesses where current employees will be essentially small business owners. They have worked on these proposals with the AWU. Again, I acknowledge the member's role in this. The pilot contracts, of which there were four for the 13 ferry crossings, were let last year at the following sites: Narrung, Purnong, Cadell and Waikerie. The contracts were all for 12 months, with the option to extend for a further 12 months and that option has been exercised.

The pilot contracts for the operations of the ferries have been running successfully, according to the Ferry Consultative Committee, which has been established to oversee this operation, and all the pilot operators have indicated a

willingness to exercise that 12 month extension option, which I have indicated they have done. The Ferry Consultative Committee agreed to this, as did I. In the meantime, a number of current Department of Transport ferry employees indicated through the enterprise bargaining process, in which the department has been engaged, a wish to form small companies and submit bids for their crossings where many have been working for a very long time.

Significant support has been given to this employee initiative by the union and local MPs and I have also held a number of meetings and have a further one scheduled with Mr Bob Sneath from the AWU about this matter in the next week. In terms of these initiatives, eight employee groups have submitted proposals whereby they form private companies to continue the operation of their crossings under contract to DOT for a set period of time—three years plus an optional extension of up to three years. An independent consultant has also been engaged. That step was taken in December 1995 to review the pilot contract, as well as proposals from current operators and any other options for operation of the ferries.

The consultant's report is being considered by the River Murray Ferry Consultative Committee comprising the RAA and local councils. That was done in March 1996. As a result the committee has recommended various options being pursued, depending upon the circumstances of each crossing. Members may be interested to know that the consultant recommended (and I have agreed to) the following process: first, that at Berri and Goolwa the Department of Transport continue management of the crossings in view of the likely construction of bridges at these locations; secondly, that at Narrung, Wellington, Tailem Bend, Purnong, Morgan, Cadell and Waikerie the operations of the contract be let to competitive tender; and, thirdly, that at Mannum, Walker Flat, Swan Hill and Lyrup the Department of Transport enter into negotiations with the proponents of the management buy-up proposals with the aim of entering into a contract to operate these crossings. If these negotiations are unsuccessful, the fallback position is that these crossings also be let to competitive tender.

The negotiations with the proponents of the management buy-up bid have commenced with site inspections and clarifications of contract requirements. The proponents will be required to confirm their bids towards the end of June (in a couple of weeks) with a target date for contract commencement in September 1996. This is an exciting initiative and development within the Department of Transport. I hope that those negotiations are successful with the work force. I am also confident that all these measures will be implemented by the end of this year and that the overall annual cost savings to the Department of Transport and taxpayers will be \$400 000 per annum. Further cost savings would be generated once bridges have been built at Berri and Goolwa and we are no longer operating ferries at those sites.

Mr ANDREW: I refer to Program Estimates, page 281, regarding transport safety, in particular rural road safety. It is obvious that with the high incidence of deaths on roads in rural areas the Government has made significant progress in alleviating this problem and I congratulate the Government on developing a rural roads safety action plan. Will the Minister give a few details in relation to this plan, in particular on the progress being made to date with respect to the plan and whether the road safety audit program is related to the preparation of the rural roads safety action plan?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Again this issue has been an important one in the Riverland and an initiative taken by the department's Office of Road Safety last year in relation to rural accidents and identifying various factors was released in the Riverland on 2 February 1995 and subsequently a local task group was formed to conceptualise and develop a campaign strategy. The Riverland campaign ran through May and June 1995. What we learnt during this campaign was interesting: that the messages used regularly for drink driving campaigns appear to be more successful in metropolitan areas and the messages are not received in the same way or as effectively in rural areas. That is why we are targeting rural roads safety issues in the rural community.

The next phase of the campaign will be tried at Port Augusta during May and June this year. New television and radio commercials have been produced and will be integrated with the education enforcement component. An advisory community group has been formed to assist in the implemen-

tation of the trial. Market research has been commissioned to gauge the effectiveness of the campaign.

A workshop was held in the Barossa in early May to develop the South Australian rural roads safety action plan and involved representatives from the Department of Transport, the police, local Government, road safety generally and Aboriginal and rural community representatives. A task force chaired by Superintendent Bob Howie of the South Australian Police and including representatives from the Department of Transport, local government and the RAA has been formed and it will be reporting its findings and recommendations to the South Australian Road Safety Consultative Council in September 1996 and subsequently to me. It may be of some interest. I have a one page statistical table on a year to date country road toll as at 18 June 1996 for all years from 1985 and seek to have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Year-to-date Country Road Toll
(as at 18 June 1996)

Year	Type of Road User						All Road Users
	Driver	Passenger	Motor cyclist	Pillion	Bicyclist	Pedestrian	
1985	19	7	3		1	2	32
1986	21	9	9		5	2	46
1987	22	18	4		1	3	48
1988	16	15	3			3	37
1989	17	13	4		2	3	39
1990	14	16	6			2	38
1991	13	10	3		1		27
1992	16	13	1	1		2	33
1993	12	11	3	1		1	28
1994	11	7	3			6	27
1995	15	7	3				25
1996	16	6	5	1	2		30

Mr ANDREW: Finally, I refer to page 283 of the Program Estimates with respect to Government service obligations, in particular the issue of the boating levy. As from 1 January this year the Government introduced a \$25 levy per annum for all registered recreational boats in this State. Will the Minister expand on this levy, in particular giving specific response on what has been raised and comment on any reaction from registered boat owners. Will she give detail of what applications have been received to date by the Boating Facility Advisory Committee and what recommendations for funding have been forwarded to and/or approved by the Minister?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Since 1 January when the levy advice was sent to all boat owners about reregistering their boat, those boats being greater than 3.1 metres in length or with a capacity greater than five horsepower, the levy has raised \$489 000 as at 31 May. As provided in the Harbors and Navigation Act, this sum goes into a special fund dedicated to maintaining, improving and establishing recreational boating facilities in South Australia. A number of applications have been received and approved to date. At Port Wakefield, an additional lane for a boat ramp and parking improvements is to cost \$19 700, for which funding of \$9 850 has been committed. At Cape Jervis, site layout alteration, including a boat ramp, is valued at \$90 000, for which

funding of \$25 000 has been committed. At Goolwa the Ngarrindjeri Association has lodged an application for an additional boat ramp and local yacht club valued at \$50 000, for which funding of \$20 000 has been committed. At Swan Reach, for removal of the old decaying wharf and reinstatement of the bank, the total value is \$14 250, for which funding of \$7 125 has been provided. At Port Augusta West, new boat ramp additions are estimated to cost \$143 720, for which funding of \$47 000 has been committed. At Waikerie, a boating jetty and landing on the town's riverfront is to cost \$12 600, for which funding of \$6 300 has been provided. Other proposals have been received from Tickera, Tumbly Bay, Christies Beach, Blanchetown, Port Adelaide Inner Harbor, Port Adelaide Outer Harbor, Point Turton, Renmark, Normanville, Willunga, Foul Bay, Balgowan, Port Lincoln and Arno Bay, and they are being actively considered.

A number of consultancies are active and we should have the results shortly. One relates to the preparation of standard application guidelines and appropriate standard application forms to assist proponents in making submissions. A further one is the preparation of guidelines for the design and construction of recreational boat ramp facilities. The third is a two-part consultancy to prepare a register of all existing boat ramp facilities in the State, identifying location, ownership, conditions and efficiency estimates to rectify or

replace and relocate; and to take into account the locations and conditions of existing facilities and prepare a strategic guidelines document to assist the committee in judging preferred locations and priorities for new facilities when applications are received. A number of the projects are in the Chaffey electorate.

Mr ATKINSON: I should like to continue my line of questioning on the Berri Bridge. Given that the Government can generally raise capital more cheaply than most private companies, can the Minister assure the Committee that this deal will not in the longer term end up costing taxpayers more than if a conventional open tender process were used? In that connection, the Chairman of the Public Works Committee, the Hon. John Oswald, told the House:

This undeniable benefit flowing from the bridge is evidenced by local businesses and councils having decided to make an actual cash contribution towards its construction.

Will the Minister explain what he meant by that?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think it has been well explored in *Hansard* and the member may like to read it.

Mr ATKINSON: I was quoting from *Hansard*.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Allow the Minister to answer the question.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As I recall, when the consortium first came to meet me, there was an offer from the local council and the Regional Development Board to make a contribution. That contribution, which was their business, not ours, may have come from local business people. That was their issue to resolve, not ours, as long as the undertaking regarding the local contribution could be met. I have been given an undertaking that it will be met. I shall have to get the full details of all the financial matters and bring back that information. I do not have the comparisons to hand. I know what we have agreed to buy the bridge for after it is built if we are satisfied with it, although we are under no obligation to do so.

Mr ATKINSON: I now turn to motor registration. I notice that in bills going out for registration and licensing the Government is now revealing that it rounds up these charges. If cents are involved in a charge, the fee is rounded up to the next dollar. I commend the Government for making this rounding up process (which must be worth thousands of dollars) transparent, but have there been any complaints from members of the public about the rounding up of charges and how are the staff handling it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will get the Registrar to answer the detail of that question. My advice is that this has long been the practice of the Registrar; it is not something that we have introduced in the past two years. If you round up, you also have the capacity to round down or to do neither. We would not want to collect a few cents because administratively it is not worth the overheads and the trouble. The Registrar might like to reflect on that and explain the system.

Mr Frisby: It depends whether we are talking about registration fees or the refund of a registration fee when the vehicle registration is cancelled. In our calculations we may round up or down the registration fee for vehicles. The fees that we submit through the Minister are agreed by Cabinet and gazetted. As the Minister explained, we look for whole dollar amounts so that we are not handling small change in our registration offices. If we are implementing a CPI increase, the overall total revenue collected may not exceed or equate to the CPI increase, so there may be swings and roundabouts for some vehicle owners. Refunds are rounded

down if they are less than 50¢ or up if they are more than 50¢.

Mr ATKINSON: On registration, you recently announced on Country Radio a new scheme for previously unregistered farm vehicles being used on public roads within 40 kilometres of a farm. You stated that for the cost of compulsory third party, being \$5 (until 30 September, when it will cost \$20), farmers could register a tractor for up to three years. Are you aware that insurance companies will no longer cover damage to vehicles under public indemnity if a vehicle is registered? This will mean compulsory insurance policies would need to be paid for all vehicles at a \$55 minimum fee?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The recommendations in terms of premiums are made to the Government by the Premiums Committee. The Government has acted on those recommendations. The matter was taken to Cabinet by the Treasurer. I will examine some of these issues and seek clarification. The issue that the honourable member raises deserves some investigation.

Mr CAUDELL: I refer to the tourism road strategy and page 279 of the Program Estimates. The Liberal Party's transport policy promised to give priority to upgrading and/or sealing roads in important tourism areas of the State, including Kangaroo Island and the Flinders Ranges. What progress has been made to date on this promise, and what value is proposed in 1996-97?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: In relation to Kangaroo Island, funds have been found for this particular road, which is classified as a local road and is therefore a local council road. These funds have been found within the Department of Transport because of savings we have been able to make following the decision not to continue the *Island Seaway* service. A total of \$3 million has been allocated this financial year; \$4.7 million will be allocated in 1996-97. This latter commitment will include some funds for the Noarlunga-Cape Jervis road. The anticipated expenditure to 30 June 1996 is \$200 000 on Kingscote-Penneshaw; \$1.7 million on the south coast road; and \$500 000 on the Willunga to Cape Jervis road. There is also a contribution to the transport subsidy (\$600 000) which freight operators negotiate with the Department of Transport. That will reduce by 10 per cent over the next 10 years.

The total road length on Kangaroo Island is approximately 1 400 kilometres. The Department of Transport is responsible for only 100 kilometres of that length. As I indicated, the council is responsible for the rest. However, the council finds it impossible—and I do not think it is a lack of commitment but simply a lack of resources—to be responsible for sealing all of that road length. Therefore, the Department of Transport has taken this affirmative action measure with some considerable urging, if not direction, on my part. So, that is great news for tourism and for Kangaroo Island. It provides for much better use of funds which would have otherwise gone to Kangaroo Island in transport in the form of much heavier subsidies for the operation of the Kangaroo Island Seaway. In terms of the south coast road itself, the preliminary estimate for this project is \$12 million. Planning and design work for the first 4 kilometres up to and including Seal Bay Road has just been completed, and work is continuing on the Seal Bay Road to Rocky River section. The construction of the Seal Bay to Rocky River section is scheduled to commence in September this year and will be undertaken over three financial years with completion in 1998-99.

In terms of Flinders Ranges tourism road issues, work will be undertaken in 1996-97 which will involve resheeting the

road between Wilpena and Blinman to enhance the standard of the gravel surface. Floodways along the road will be improved by installing additional culverts and/or concrete floodways with depth indicators at major creek crossings. There will also be minor extensions to the existing seals at junctions within the Blinman township during this financial year. A longer term program for upgrading key roads is being prepared as part of the Flinders Ranges tourism road strategy, and that will be finalised in the near future. A working group involving key stakeholders, which was formed in late 1994 to help develop this strategy, continues to be responsible for this work. The group comprises representatives from organisations and groups involved in tourism and roads in the Flinders Ranges, as well as various other agencies including the Department of Transport.

Having been with the Department of Transport to some of these areas last year, I appreciate some of the issues. There was a big push to have many of the roads completely sealed. That would have cost some \$19 million. Compromises have been made, and this resheeting with a wet maintenance provides for a fantastic surface (in my experience on those roads) and will serve tourism and the community well. The department and taxpayers will also get value for money.

Mr CAUDELL: I refer to the tourism road strategy. There is a lot of concern in the Barossa Valley about the adequacy and safety of the road network. Is anything being done to address these issues in this important tourism area?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This was a commitment by the department. Tourism is an important issue for the Barossa Valley as it is for the local member and the member for Light. The Barossa Valley Way, which dissects the Barossa Valley through the Barossa Valley valley bed between Gawler, Nuriootpa and Lyndoch, provides a key link from Adelaide to this tourist destination, but it is inadequate in many areas. It experiences a lot of tourism traffic together with heavy vehicle traffic from viticulture industry and the like. In a strategic sense, the key freight route into the Barossa Valley is the Sturt Highway link to Nuriootpa from Adelaide and the Riverland. Whilst the need for the Barossa Valley Way to act as an important secondary route will never be overlooked, the primary focus of the upgrading will be on retaining the unique character of the road as a compliment to its main role as a tourist route.

Planning for the upgrading is only in the concept stage at the moment. Further planning will take place in the context of the development of a Barossa tourism road strategy which is anticipated to be completed in 1996-97. An amount of \$300 000 has been allocated this year for urgent minor road safety works.

Regarding the Krondorf Crossing, other initiatives are being undertaken to improve safety, to address overtaking lanes at critical locations and to look at limited upgrading of the horizontal and vertical alignments, always taking into account the impact on roadside vegetation.

The CHAIRMAN: In the works that have been outlined, what safety measures will be undertaken regarding the huge, beautiful, old red gum trees which grow along the Gawler to Lyndoch Road and which have claimed many lives?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Those trees are glorious, and they grow quite close to the road. In some areas, the road has made way for the trees. When I last travelled along that road, I saw memorials that had been placed near trees clearly to indicate those who had lost their life. There are, however, no direct plans to remove those trees. I indicated that the tourism strategy will be undertaken this year, and this matter will

clearly be an issue. However, the strategy is being undertaken on the basis that the environment and its beauty are not compromised. So, in any improvements to be made and if the road is to become a better asset for tourism, there may have to be a compromise between the environment, its beauty and road safety.

The CHAIRMAN: We might have to make some of the roads one-way and divert them around the trees.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That has happened on a section of road near Birdwood and Forreston where the road is divided around the trees. Mr Payze, would you like to provide some further information?

Mr Payze: I want to assure you, Mr Chairman, that in terms of this road, which does have some magnificent vegetation, no works will be undertaken without a detailed environment assessment of the consequences of doing nothing versus doing something versus the other options. It is only when you get into a position of being able to make those trade-offs that you can make a judgment. Those investigations will include detailed environmental assessments. In some cases, I do not think that we can make the road safe without removing some trees. So, a balance will have to be struck, and that will be difficult.

Mr CAUDELL: The absence of directional signs to help identify tourism centres and individual establishments frustrates many operators who argue that the Department of Transport does not cooperate to help to promote tourism potential and the product in South Australia. What is the department's policy on tourism signs?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member has worked in the tourism industry in the past and with the Minister for Tourism on his advisory committee, so he has a longstanding interest in this issue, which is one that has aggrieved many operators over a long period of time. Sometimes I suspect that they blame the department and the lack of signage for the lack of success of their business. However, I believe strongly that the department can perform better in this field. Again, it is a trade-off between road safety, tourism and working with the community in general, but sometimes those trade-offs and decisions are not easy to determine.

In cooperation with Tourism SA, the department has prepared a new tourism sign policy and strategy. For instance, signs will be erected on the way to Victor Harbor from South Road and Anzac Highway, because that is where many people begin their journey. It has never been clear coming from Adelaide, the north or Port Adelaide how to get to some of these important sites outside our city: it is only when you get to the outskirts of the city that you have a clue where you should be going.

Another initiative that the department has explored and will develop, possibly from this financial year, is route signs. Roads will be numbered. Instead of having big signs for destinations, the full length of the road will have route numbers, which I think will make it much easier for people to know how to get to destinations, whether it be Tennyson and Semaphore or the Riverland. That is an important tourism initiative in addition to having individual signs. It has taken a long time to get the right signage for the Cleland Wildlife Park. I think the department has finally got it right.

Mr Payze: The route numbering system, on which we will concentrate first in the metropolitan area and extend to the outlying areas, will include rural areas and interstate connections. Victoria has just completed recommendations for a hierarchical numbering system for its arterial roads right

across the State, and it is logical that we match that with South Australia so that the route numbering system is not dissociated at State boundaries, which would be quite ridiculous. So, we are working towards a national system and a metropolitan-based system.

Mr CAUDELL: Will this system be similar to the United States which has route 34, route 66, etc.?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes. I would like to record my thanks to Mr Payze, Mr Frisby and Mr McSporran for their assistance and, in particular, Karyn Leicester, who has been assisted by Ms Lorraine Arney, Ms Iva Hardwick and Ms Sharon Sasche. They are a pretty formidable foursome, and I would like to thank them for the time and care they have taken to prepare this information for me and the Committee.

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

Passenger Transport Board, \$127 133 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr A. Gargett, Chief Executive, Passenger Transport Board.

Mr J. Damin, Director, Funding.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to pages 46 and 184 to 186 of the Estimate of Receipts and Payments and pages 285 to 296 in the Program Estimates. Does the Minister wish to make a statement?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Passenger Transport Board has now been operating for two years, and the benefits of the Government's reforms to passenger transport are starting to show clearly. In January this year, the first competitively tendered metropolitan service contracts came into effect. The contracts were won by Serco in the outer north and by TransAdelaide's Lonsdale depot in the outer south.

In addition, in September 1995, the Passenger Transport Board entered into two negotiated service contracts with Hills Transit, a public corporation in which a private sector consortium of Australian bus operators plays a major role. One of these contracts is for metropolitan services based at Aldgate, the other for commercially operated country services based at Mount Barker. Not only did these contracts deliver savings to the taxpayer but also services were improved in each area.

As I have said before, I am keen to see contracted operators improve services and increase patronage. To encourage this, a major feature of the contracts is that the operators are paid partly according to the patronage they achieve. Over the four month period, February to May 1996, these three metropolitan contract areas have achieved a combined increase in patronage of .8 per cent compared to the same period last year. In contrast, patronage on the rest of Adelaide's bus, tram and train system fell over the same period. While this is very pleasing, I am only too aware of the enormous difficulty that public transport faces in attracting more use in the face of our changing lifestyles and factors such as declining household sizes, increasing use of car ownership, etc.

Another significant benefit of this change in the way in which we are doing our business is the introduction of the successful city loop service. This was funded as a trial of an accessible service during 1995-96. Funds are now available to continue the service due to the savings made through competitive tendering.

At a more general level, the Passenger Transport Board continues to work with representatives of people with disabilities to improve the accessibility of public transport. For instance, last year the transport subsidy scheme was extended to provide additional vouchers for people in employment.

The introduction of different operators in the metropolitan area has made it more important than ever to provide clear signage and good information to customers—and that is an area about which I am a bit obsessed—so that they can use the system as an integrated whole. To this end, the board took over management of passenger transport information services during the year, and in future all services in the metropolitan area will operate under the banner of Metroticket. Improvement in passenger information is a priority of the board, and I anticipate significant initiatives over the next year.

With regard to taxis, I hope all members would agree that standards have improved over the past 2½ years, in particular last year. The most obvious change is the smart presentation of drivers now that they are all wearing uniforms. As importantly, but less obviously, the quality of service provided is continuing to improve through better driver skills and improved vehicle quality. Hire cars provide competition for taxis in prebooked work, and this encourages both sectors of the industry to improve their performance and win business. However, there are some issues to resolve in terms of the relationship between the two, and I will have more to say about that later.

The Passenger Transport Board has been developing proposals for volunteer driver accreditation and has worked closely with local government and community organisations to do so. This has culminated in regulation changes and the release of a volunteer driver kit by the Local Government Association. After extensive consultation with country communities, the PTB has been working closely with the bus and coach industry to finalise a process of service contracts for country bus services. These are commercial services which previously operated under a system of route licences. The new contract arrangements require some facilitation of regional transport networks.

The board has been established on the basis of extensive outsourcing of support functions, which are obtained from both the private sector and other Government agencies. This has enabled it to operate with a lean staff establishment of 62 people which, compared to operations interstate and overseas, compares very favourably in terms of best practice.

A year ago, the Passenger Transport Board had only four appointed staff, two of whom are with me today, and they have survived the year. Over the past 12 months, we have built up to 62 established systems and procedures to operate efficiently and effectively. Within the next few months, it will reach its staffing complement, which will stop at 62. The proposed allocation to the Passenger Transport Board in 1996-97 is \$126.6 million. The board will receive income of \$81.906 million, which consists mainly of Metroticket fare revenue; taxi accreditation and licensing revenue; payments from public transport contractors for leased ticketing equipment; and passenger transport concession payments from other budget areas.

The board's estimated total recurrent expenditure in 1996-97 is \$210.52 million. Of this, \$187.6 million, or 89 per cent, are payments to metropolitan passenger services. The remainder is used to fund operations such as regulating and maintaining passenger transport standards, the transport subsidy scheme concessions for pensioners and students in country and provincial towns and the like.

We have a budget allocation of \$1.9 million. Of this allocation, \$500 000 will be required to carry out modifications to interchanges and bus stops to allow ramp access for wheelchair accessible buses. There is also capital expenditure for the Crouzet ticketing system and the replacement of Access Cabs.

The changes to the organisation of metropolitan public transport responsibilities over the past two years have been significant. The PTB has also been involved in a big distribution of assets between TransAdelaide and the Department of Transport, and complex financial changes have been involved. The cost to public transport is now shown in the board's budget as payments to operators. However, to compare this with the then STA situation in 1993-94 requires adjustments for Treasury funding direct to TransAdelaide for input cost disabilities, Department of Transport management of the O-Bahn, and service changes and inflation over this period.

I am pleased to say that when this analysis is done and, even after allowing for the increased overhead of contracting (in relation to which there are benefits that outweigh those costs) and certain major items not fully and commercially accounted for in the past, there is a real saving of \$23 million per annum in the cost of public transport delivery in 1996-97, which is a sensational result and wonderful in terms of the implementation of a very different policy base for the delivery of public transport in this State. The Passenger Transport Board currently expects to be able to announce the results of the current tender round at the end of July.

I am also able to indicate that, over the next year or two, the Passenger Transport Board will be working to place the rest of the State's regular land transport passenger services onto contracts, as required under the Passenger Transport Act. A lot has been done over the past year, but a lot more needs to be done in terms of revitalising and invigorating public transport in this State, and the PTB is playing a major and successful role in that outcome.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 292 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister confirm that British Bus PLC is one of the final tenderers for the operation and management of the outer north-eastern bus service, which includes the O-Bahn service, and what does PLC stand for?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As that is part of the tendering system, I had better refer the question to either Mr Gargett or Mr Damin on the basis that the Act very specifically states that the Minister must not be seen to be involved in the awarding or non-awarding of tenders. I have been scrupulous to stay out of this process. I do not know myself—I have not asked and I do not know. I am quite keen to learn, now that the honourable member has asked the question.

Mr Gargett: I can confirm that British Bus is one of the tenderers. I really cannot say much more than that. 'PLC', as I understand it, is the British designation for a proprietary limited company.

Mr De LAINE: Is the Minister aware that British Bus, a privately owned company, is under a cloud in Britain with a serious fraud office investigation of the company's banking arrangements? It is reported that the company has now

shelved plans for a stock-market float for at least two years because of continuing uncertainty surrounding the serious fraud office probe.

Mr Gargett: The only real comment I can give, because these are matters that will be taken up in the tender evaluation, is that all such issues are addressed in looking at the capability of companies and their record. I cannot answer more fully than that because we are in the middle of the tender evaluation.

Mr De LAINE: What are the statistics relating to metropolitan passenger journeys over the past four years and the predictions for the coming year? The TransAdelaide figures are not much use because they do not include the Serco statistics, and the Passenger Transport Board gives only this and next year's figures.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is a fair question from the honourable member, and it is one I have asked myself. In 1992-93 the STA recorded 49.1 million passengers; in 1993-94, 48.3 million passengers; in 1994-95, 46.4 million passengers; and in 1995-96, the estimate is 45.3 million passengers, which figure includes TransAdelaide and Serco. The board's estimate for 1996-97 is 44.2 million passengers.

The big fall in the figures for the year 1994-95 arose from a decision in another area of Government (education) not to continue with schoolcard, which had a dramatic impact on public transport patronage—an impact we have had to wear, unfortunately. That decision is contrary to all our efforts to increase public transport patronage, but we are having success in that regard. With respect to services in the hills contract area (as provided for from 24 September), when one compares May 1996 with May 1995, Hills Transit has recorded a 7.8 per cent increase. Services operated by Serco in the outer north contract area since 4 January show a 5.2 per cent increase in total boardings, after comparing total boardings for May 1996 with May 1995.

In terms of the outer south, a contract has also operated since 14 January but by the TransAdelaide Lonsdale depot, which recorded a 2.2 per cent increase from May 1995 to May 1996. The remaining non-contracted areas presently being operated by TransAdelaide increased in total boardings by 4.2 per cent when comparing May 1995 and May 1996. The industrial action by drivers of TransAdelaide—and I indicate that that did not include Lonsdale depot drivers, although their patronage was overall affected from Lonsdale because of the industrial action generally—involving the non-validation of tickets by passengers on services operating mainly within the non-contracted service areas on 15, 16, and 17 May, was the main cause for the overall decrease in patronage.

Drivers employed by Serco, Hills Transit and TransAdelaide Lonsdale did not participate. Drivers have told me that there was confusion about whether passengers were or were not to pay. It may be of interest to members to know that, during early industrial action when buses were not running at all, passengers gave great praise to the bus drivers of Serco, TransAdelaide Lonsdale and Hills Transit because services continued to operate but, when further industrial action occurred involving drivers from other depots who suggested that passengers do not pay, the drivers who were not involved in that industrial action were abused because they continued to work and asked people to pay. The life of a bus driver is not particularly easy and I have great respect for them generally.

I indicate that Serco, Hills Transit and TransAdelaide Lonsdale did not participate in industrial action. We have

taken all those matters into account in our figures. The estimated boardings on services where passengers did not validate was 593 000 or 10.1 per cent of the May total. The increases that I have outlined today are an experience that no Minister for Transport has had in this place for at least 12 years in being able to outline increases in public transport patronage in this State. So, it is a pretty historic day and I am pleased to have the opportunity to do so.

One reason why we are recording this increase is that the contracts let provide incentives for the operators to go out and market their services better, generate more business and encourage more people because they are being rewarded for the number of passengers they carry, which has never been the case in the past; and they make sure that as many people as possible validate their tickets. I should indicate that it is not good news everywhere, because in May there was a decrease in total boardings on trains, minus 4.9 per cent. That was the only decrease recorded. Tram patronage also increased by 5.9 per cent.

Mr ROSSI: I refer to competitive tendering at page 292 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister provide an update on the competitive tendering process, including rail and trams? Will the Minister outline the major benefits arising from this new way of delivering services?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A lot has happened since Parliament passed the Passenger Transport Act in early 1994. A number of provisions in it were agreed to after conference in terms of guarantees to TransAdelaide for the opportunity to control at least 50 per cent of services operating to 1 March 1997 based on patronage levels in the year ended June 1993 and also the maximum number of buses per contract which dictated the number and size of the parcels that can be let for contract. As I indicated earlier, two have already been let by competitive tendering, Outer North and Outer South; the Hills area, based at Aldgate, is a negotiated contract and we have three areas out for tender now, Outer North East, Inner North and some routes from Elizabeth, bus routes TL3, TL10 and the 560. The tender valuation committee is meeting now. The results of that work will be known in the last week of July. I understand that the Passenger Transport Board has written to the tenderers involved in that round advising them of that date.

That was an important initiative. One thing we learnt from the last round of tenders, when we just gave a month as the date when the decision would be made, was that many in the work force assumed it would be the first of that month. That was not possible and it was later in the month but we raised expectations that the decision would be made early in the month when it was never contemplated that that would be so. We have advised the unions and all tenderers that the decision will be made in the last week of July. I have met with unions and others interested in this process some time ago, I think it was January, and said I would be keen to have a review of the progress to date after this current round of tenders is known because at that stage 50 per cent of the old STA bus fleet will have been tendered and it would be appropriate for us to look at the progress made. There will be a recommendation to that effect to the Cabinet subcommittee that addresses contracting and competitive tendering issues.

In terms of rail and tram, I have given consideration to the responsible agency, whether it be TransAdelaide or PTB, in terms of looking at the efficiencies re competitive tendering or contracting out of services, and at the present time TransAdelaide is preparing a brief for a consultancy to look at contracting out rail issues. All that work should be

completed before the year is out in terms of any consultancy on that matter. That is generally an update of where we are in the competitive tendering process.

Mr ROSSI: When I first entered Parliament there was some idea the Government was going to issue more car hire plates to the industry. At the time taxi drivers were complaining to me that they were paying up to \$100 000 for licences, yet car cab and other hire plate vehicles were getting a licence for much less. I travelled to New York between March and 5 May this year. I noticed that they had the two systems of taxis and hire cars. Taxis charged a flat rate plus so much a kilometre, while hire cars charged so much per hour. Apparently hotels were leasing hire cars to pick up people from the airport and bring them to the hotel. I refer to the taxi industry, Program Estimates page 295, and an *Advertiser* article of April 1996 headed 'Taxi anger as hire cars move in'. The reaction from the taxi industry was prompted by competition from a new hire car operator, Smart Car, which planned the next week to introduced the first five of up to 100 hire cars in Adelaide within 18 months. Does the Minister accept that the taxi industry has any grounds for complaint about the operation of hire cars? If so, what does the Government and the Passenger Transport Board propose to address the taxi industry concerns?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The taxi industry does have cause for concern. I met with them.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They asked me to meet with them. That is what I did, because this Government has a good relationship with the Taxi Industry Association as I do as Minister. We canvassed a variety of concerns. Some of their accusations arose from their belief that hire car operators are blatantly flouting the law by acting as a taxi by taking kerbside hailings. You would agree with that, Mr Chairman. In part so do I, but it is getting proof that one can substantiate in prosecutions that is particularly difficult. The Passenger Transport Act clearly states that plying for business is the right of taxis alone and they pay a very big price for that right. The honourable member mentioned in his question \$100 000. In fact it is \$150 000 in the latest round of tenders. They pay dearly for the few rights they have as outlined in the Passenger Transport Act.

Other operators of small passenger vehicles such as hire cars are confined, in terms of powers under the Act, to pre-booked business. This issue has become a big focus of concern, in part because of the rapid increase in the number of hire cars since Frank Blevins, as former Minister of Transport, deregulated the industry in 1991. The taxi industry and everybody else was up in arms. There has been a rapid increase in the number of hire cars since the industry was deregulated.

Mr ATKINSON: You don't agree with that?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I do not intend to stop the number of hire cars. Are you suggesting that we stop the number of hire cars entering the field?

Mr ATKINSON: I might not get the portfolio after we win the next election.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I suspect you have done your dash already. This was not such an issue earlier this decade, but it is now. At the end of May there were 485 hire cars and 905 general taxis, excluding Access Cabs and stand-by plates. There are half as many taxis again as there are hire cars. In terms of plying for hire, the PTB needs to be able to substantiate the evidence that a hire car has been hailed from the street. Such evidence is often hard to get so that we can

prosecute the case because passengers are not always prepared to cooperate and we cannot pursue them too strongly against their will in terms of gaining such evidence.

However, when we do get evidence we have found in recent times that it is then hard to get such evidence accepted because of the way in which the regulations are drafted. Regulation 7(11)(l) of the Passenger Transport Act is clearly too restrictive and allows the PTB to prosecute the operator only—the owner and not the driver. We must clearly be able to prosecute the driver also or at least withdraw their accreditation, because part of the accreditation as a hire car operator is to ensure that they know the rules and regulations. It is very clear that hire cars cannot ply for work. The PTB will have regulatory change in this field very soon.

Another big field of confusion here is that in good faith the old Metropolitan Taxicab Board established an arrangement called 'endorsed establishments' where hire cars could, at nominated establishments of their choice, sit outside to accept 'pre-booked' services. This has been abused in some areas. It is also a huge grievance to the taxi industry because it is so hard to know whether they are actually sitting outside an endorsed establishment or just sitting generally and pretending they have that endorsed establishment status. For that reason, because of the abuse and uncertainties, the Passenger Transport Board has taken the initiative and has placed a moratorium on the practice of granting further endorsements. In the meantime I have asked the Passenger Transport Board to consider the benefits of requiring hire car drivers to carry a copy of their endorsed establishment in their vehicles. I also believe that grounds exist for us to assess why any operator should have these endorsed establishments continued when they renew their accreditation. Those measures would overcome a lot of the hassles in the industry presently.

Another scheme that the PTB has worked out over the past year with the taxi industry is that of authorised officers. This is a pilot project where management people within a taxi company have been authorised to look at and report to the PTB on matters about which they are concerned or matters that they wish to address within their own company. When I met with taxi companies recently it was the most extraordinary experience, if one knows the history of the taxi industry, because they were of one voice in wanting to promote taxis and were also wanting with one voice to extend this authorised officer scheme to apply across companies and not just within the company.

I am prepared to run with that scheme and we will be extending the authorisation and bounds of operation for authorised officers. That can be on a pilot basis to ensure that it works in everybody's interests. I am only prepared to do so and to show faith in the industry by doing so because of the clear goodwill and excellent spirit within the industry and sense of responsibility which I did not see in my six years as shadow Minister. It is fantastic and a credit to the industry in this State. They want this authorised officer arrangement to be extended beyond hire cars, which is not appropriate at this time, but we can keep the option alive, depending on the outcome of authorised officers operating across the taxi industry. The taxi industry wants the PTB to employ more investigators and inspectors as there are two each of those officer positions. I do not think it is necessary to do so at this stage pending us acting on the other matters that I have outlined.

There is a sound basis for the taxi industry's concern about the fall of standards in hire cars. Victoria recently acted to

insist that hire car operators are only able to operate two models of vehicle—LTD and Statesman. You would not say that that was the standard operating in South Australia presently and there is no question, if one notes what is happening in the industry, that the standard has fallen. We will look at the hire car standards, at the issue of roof signs and at confining such to taxis alone and not for operation by hire car.

The PTB is working with the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs to investigate and prosecute hire car operators who portray themselves as taxi businesses in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book. I hope that, with the cooperation of Yellow Pages and enforcement by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs, we can stamp out that deception by some in the hire car industry. These initiatives will enable us to reinforce the standards set out in the Act for the operation of taxis and hire cars.

Mr ROSSI: I should like to commence by saying that I have had excellent service from the Minister's department and all her agents with any problems that I have had in my electorate. I should like to ask a question that a constituent raised with me only last week. My constituent, an 80-year-old lady from Woodville West, was crossing Trimmer Parade to go to the Findon Shopping Centre on the corner of Findon Road and Balcombe Avenue when she was hit by a car. The trouble is that she has vision on the outside of the pupil but not in the middle part, so she could not see the traffic very clearly. She asked me whether I could help by getting her a subsidy Access Cab, or some other organisation to pick her up and take her to the shopping centre. In that regard I refer to the Transport Subsidy Scheme, Program Estimates, page 291, 'Concession and Community Accessibility to Passenger Transport.'

The South Australian Transport Subsidy Scheme was introduced in 1987 to provide subsidised taxi rides for people with disabilities. My constituent was told that she was not eligible for Access Cabs. The scheme is much in demand with membership anticipated to rise to 36 000 in the next financial year and costs increasing to \$5.093 million. I understand that there are demands to broaden the criteria further to include people with vision, intellectual impairment and mental illness. Is this so?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As the member was relating the experience of his constituent, I seemed to recall that the member for Torrens has also written to me about this issue. At present, the criterion for eligibility is confined to physical disability which would prevent a person being able to use public transport; for example, the inability to get up steps and that sort of thing. As the member has been advised, a person with intellectual impairment, mental illness or visual impairment is not eligible. There is a demand for the scheme to be extended to embrace people with those forms of impairment or disability. Equally, I get a huge demand from country members and residents to extend the scheme to country areas. The pressures are great at a time when we are coping with a general aging of the community with physical disability problems.

As the member pointed out, the scheme is expected to increase to a membership of 36 000 this year. When it was established in 1987 by the former Government—I think the Hon. Frank Blevins was Minister—only 300 people were eligible, so there has been a massive increase in membership of the scheme in nine years. We have sought to accommodate that increase in membership, which is estimated to cost \$5.093 million in this financial year.

The Government has increased membership by extending the terms of the scheme to accommodate journey to work for people who are in regular employment and who have a physical disability. There are nearly 200 people who receive such assistance. So, that initiative has been taken. Quite a number of people in the scheme use it regularly. Others, who would like to use it much more often and regularly, write to me and say that the number of vouchers (64 for a six month period) is not adequate for their needs.

I am well aware that a number of reviews have been undertaken in the last nine years. I am loath to see yet a further review, but some policy decisions have to be made about whether or not the scheme is to be confined as it is now or extended to embrace further categories. If it is embraced, do we adjust the subsidy arrangements where we find that there is not such a need or where it has not been used for some time? Perhaps we can examine those issues to see whether we can extend it within the current costs or at some considerably greater cost. All this could be considered as part of policy decisions. I would be loath to see yet another review in this area, but I will consider the issues that the honourable member has raised. I cannot accommodate him or his constituent at the present time.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to the Program Estimates at page 292. Could the Minister ensure that in future years the statistics for the Passenger Transport Board are included in the Program Estimates?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As a suggestion for us to do better next time it is very good, and we will do so.

Mrs GERAGHTY: What action did the South Australian Government take to try to prevent Pioneer from moving its Adelaide maintenance section to Sydney with the resultant loss of 15 mechanics' jobs and the loss of a valuable contribution to the provision of safe and well maintained buses?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not aware that Pioneer ever formally or informally approached us before making the decision. I was informed of the decision by separate memos from both the PTB and TransAdelaide. As I recall, the advice from TransAdelaide incorporated news that Pioneer would be either using or would consider using TransAdelaide's bus maintenance work force to do that work in South Australia. I clarify that I was told of the decision after it had been made. There was no approach by the company to the Passenger Transport Board prior to the decision being made. As I recall TransAdelaide's memo, there was no reference to TransAdelaide prior to the decision being made. The only reference was that the decision would be made and whether TransAdelaide could assist with maintenance in future. I, like the honourable member, regret the impact on the work force.

Membership:

Mr Cummins substituted for Mr Andrew.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Long distance bus drivers have complained to the Opposition that bus operators are forcing them to break the rules, gravely compromising their own safety and that of passengers. They say that it is only a matter of time before there is a major tragedy in South Australia but that operators who operate in a highly competitive market instruct their drivers to break the law and take the view that the detection rate for breaches is minimal.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The issue of bus driving hours has been before the Transport Ministers' conference and the National Road Transport Commission for some time now in terms of seeking uniformity of provisions across Australia.

I do not recall the status of the reforms proposed at the present time, but I will provide that advice to the honourable member. It is not a matter directly that is regulated by the PTB but, clearly, it is of concern to the PTB, because if safety is compromised for our passengers it becomes an issue of some alarm. I will seek further information for the honourable member in terms of the status of those regulations, which there is effort to reform across Australia and which could apply on a national basis in future.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Minister, are you concerned about increasing evidence of non-compliance with rules covering the number of hours that long-distance bus drivers are allowed at the wheel without a break? How many detections were made over the past two years? Has there been any change to the resources applied to the detection of offences in this area?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The area of inspections, as I implied in the last answer, is within the province of the Department of Transport and not the PTB, because the drivers to whom the honourable member refers generally work for interstate coach lines. Therefore, that is why the driving hours of buses is being examined on a national basis for uniformity. I will take those questions on notice and bring back a reply.

In terms of the first issue, there is definitely some concern; otherwise the National Road Transport Commission and Ministers would not have the issue before them at the present time.

Mr CUMMINS: I refer to non-metropolitan bus service contracts, Program Estimates at page 292. Last year the Passenger Transport Board undertook an extensive review of the operation of country bus routes and services which took into account future service needs, contact requirements of the Passenger Transport Board and the impact of the national competition policy. Why has the Passenger Transport Board resolved to adopt exclusive contracts or competitive tendering for the issue of the next licence due by 1 July 1996?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A number of options were canvassed with members of Parliament, community groups, the bus operators themselves and local councils. They ranged from total deregulation to a non-exclusive licence, competitive tendering and exclusive regional contracts. Competitive tendering was not considered for country areas, even though it is being applied in the metropolitan area, because of the small number of people who are carried on these buses and the low returns to operators generally because of the small population base on which they operate. The proposal which is to be pursued by the Passenger Transport Board and which has extended the life of the current contracts by three months to the end of September is for exclusive contracts, but definite performance criteria will be incorporated in them.

One of the issues that will be required by the Passenger Transport Board is the establishment of regional consumer forums so that the views of potential customers can be considered as well as those who travel now on country bus services. As part of that consultation process, they will also be required to look at developing linkages with the main bus route that they operate. This issue has been raised by women in country areas, in particular, because as we all know the age of people living in country areas is rising but the number of people generally is falling, and resources in regional towns are being consolidated. Many people are isolated from services, and this is of concern to women who live in country areas.

We believe that the concerns of these women, in addition to the feedback that the PTB has received in general, have been well accommodated in the new contractual arrangements that will be entered into with operators. Current operators will be given first right of refusal to take up these exclusive contracts on a five-year basis with a right of renewal depending on performance. So, while there will be exclusive contracts, there will also be considerable pressure for them to perform. Depending upon their performance, they will have a right of renewal; otherwise the contracts will be tendered in the future.

Mr CUMMINS: I refer to wages and conditions on page 292 of the Program Estimates. Why did the Government not agree that the Passenger Transport Board award wages be a standard condition applying to all bids for the current round of tenders?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There were a number of reasons for this. I recall writing to Mr John Crossing about this matter, because he came to see me in April and May as a representative of the Public Transport Union to indicate that the union wished its award to be the basis for the further consideration and letting of contracts for services. Perhaps it would be of benefit to indicate what I said to Mr Crossing at that time. I said that the evaluation process for all tenders considers a wide range of factors before reaching its recommendations. These include bid prices, safety issues, service quality and whole-of-Government cost, and price alone is not a determining factor. The inclusion of whole-of-Government costs in the tender process provides TransAdelaide with every opportunity to submit competitive tenders and to continue to be heavily involved in the future provision of customer friendly services.

In terms of award rates, I noted that in line with Government policy all PTB tendered documents require potential tenderers to respect appropriate awards and conditions. There are a range of awards and arrangements registered with the Industrial Commission at present, not just the TransAdelaide Bus and Tram Operators Award 1995. There is no particular reason, in my view, why that award alone should be singled out for special treatment. A number of workplace agreements have also been negotiated and registered by the union recently. I wrote as follows to Mr Crossing:

Following your decision to sign the memorandum of understanding with TA in February 1995, operators at each depot have invested much time and hard thinking in preparing their own depot agreements. Each agreement prepared to date has been endorsed by an absolute majority of operators at each depot. I consider that to now ignore or override the majority decision taken at each depot would be to devalue all the work undertaken to date by operators at each depot. Also, to negate the agreements already in place at Lonsdale and Hills Transit would betray the operators who by their own choice, and in good faith, are honouring the terms of their contractual arrangements with the PTB.

I also indicated, in terms of union and Government responsibilities, as follows:

In workplaces it is usual for wages and conditions to be negotiated between the employer, the work force and the union. The PTU has the option of logging employers and pursuing agreements about wages and conditions. It is not for the Government to set these conditions.

Further, I made Mr Crossing aware that he made this claim after the call for tenders had been made. So, he was making a mid-tender bid. To withdraw the tenders or change the specifications as indicated in those documents would have left the PTB open to legal action or considerable compensation claims from all who had sought those documents, considering that all tenderers have to lodge a fee and pay for the documents.

Mr CUMMINS: I refer to taxi industry tenders on page 295 of the Program Estimates. In April 1995, the Minister released a five year strategy for the release by tender of general taxi licences, there being 15 in each of the years 1995, 1996 and 1997. What is the outcome of the release of the licences to date, and will there be a review at any time of the number of licences issued?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I seek leave to insert in *Hansard* a table of the highest tenders that have been accepted.

Leave granted.

Highest Tenders Accepted			
	1995		1996
	\$		\$
1	146 000	1	155 500
2	146 000	2	155 170
3	143 200	3	154 367
4	143 000	4	153 500
5	143 000	5	153 410
6	142 851	6	153 367
7	142 747	7	153 260
8	142 300	8	153 150
9	142 160	9	152 664
10	142 100	10	152 500
11	142 090	11	152 150
12	142 005	12	152 110
13	141 850	13	152 100
14	141 809	14	151 600
15	141 500	15	Tenderer has 7 days to accept licence

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The table indicates the strength of the taxi industry in this State. In 1995, when the top tender price accepted by the board was \$146 000, of the 15 tenders the price ranged from that figure down to \$141 500. This year, of the 15 licences available, 14 have been offered and accepted, the prices ranging from \$155 500 down to \$151 600. The fifteenth tenderer has been given six days to accept the licence; the PTB is yet to hear on that matter.

The strategy I released last year indicated that 15 licences would be tendered last year, 1995-96, and the third year, 1997, after which there would be this review. Essentially, the review has started now with the Passenger Transport Board gathering information through a baseline study conducted by the Transport Systems Centre at the University of South Australia. This project has been managed by Dr Ian Radbone, with Mr Greg Fenn, the Manager of the valuations unit within the PTB to be an overseer. A project reference group consisting of industry members and members of the South Australian Taxi Association has been established and has been meeting since November 1995. The project will provide a comprehensive quantitative profile of the Adelaide taxicab industry. The industry seeks this before any decision is made on the number of licences to be issued from 1998 and 1999.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to Program Estimates (pages 291 and 292). Page 291, under 'Issues/trends', states:

Concessional travel on metropolitan passenger transport services continues to increase as a proportion of total passenger journeys due to the ageing of the population and a general increase in people in receipt of welfare payments.

The Program Estimates (page 292) then states that next financial year patronage of Metroticket metropolitan passenger transport services is estimated to be down more than one million journeys. This is the Minister's third year and passenger journeys continue to fall—this time by a full one million journeys. Could it be that the increase in the proportion of total concession passenger journeys has a lot more to do with the decrease in working people—ordinary adults—using our public transport system than it has to do

with an increase in the number of pensioners and students using it? What is the explanation for a drop of more than one million in metropolitan passenger journeys in this your third year as the Minister for Transport?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I asked the same question of the Passenger Transport Board and was advised that it works on the basis of historical data. It also is very conservative, and they are figures that are not supported by experience; for instance, TransAdelaide would not—

Mr ATKINSON: But they are in there.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know they are in there. This is what was provided by the Passenger Transport Board, and I am indicating that I have questioned it about it, and they are conservative figures. They are based on historical data and the way in which it calculates those figures. TransAdelaide, in the preparation of its statement to this committee, has indicated that, while it has had to accept the PTBs calculations, it does not accept them.

Mr ATKINSON: Who does not accept them?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: TransAdelaide does not accept the figures that it has had to project for its patronage trends from the PTB. The honourable member may not have been present before when a question on patronage was asked by his colleague, the member for Price. I was able to indicate that it was a historic committee when a Minister for Transport could come in here and indicate the increases in patronage that have been evidenced in certain areas. However, that is not so in rail. There has been a 4.9 per cent decrease in total boardings on trains in the past month, but in all other areas there has been an increase. I was able to indicate, in terms of Hills Transit, a 7.8 per cent increase; and for the outer north, now operated by Serco, 5.2 per cent. Those are the figures produced by the Passenger Transport Board. It is now up to the operators to prove to the Passenger Transport Board that they are off the mark and that they will perform much better than the Passenger Transport Board predicts. As operators, that is what we are working towards.

Mr ATKINSON: Program Estimates (page 294), under 'Issues/trends', states:

Prices and distribution outlets need to be arranged to ensure the majority of tickets are sold off board and there is a high utilisation of multitrip tickets, so as to reduce on board transaction delays. That is a target I wholeheartedly endorse. However, on the same page, we are told that the number of ticket sale outlets will fall from 1 100 to 1 050. We also know that the Minister's schedule of price increases will reduce the discount for buying a multitrip ticket as opposed to a single trip ticket. On the one hand, the Minister tells us that the number of places one can buy a multitrip ticket will be reduced. On top of that, we know that the incentive to buy a multitrip ticket, as opposed to a single trip ticket, namely the discount, will be squeezed. Yet, at the same time, the Minister says it is necessary for there to be a high utilisation of multitrip tickets. I put it to the Minister that she is going in the opposite direction.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member has blatantly failed to report that, whilst the PTB estimates the number of ticket sale outlets falling by 50 (and there is a constant changeover of those outlets in any given year, anyway), the percentage of revenue from off-board ticket sales will in fact increase.

Mr ATKINSON: Well, I doubt that.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Then why is the honourable member worrying about—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member did not mention the percentage of revenue. Because he doubted it, is that why he did not mention it?

Mr ATKINSON: I doubt it.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The PTB has estimated that the percentage of revenue from off-board ticket sales will increase from 70 per cent to 73 per cent. Notwithstanding the reflection that the honourable member makes about the discount on multitrip tickets, it still remains the most generous in Australia by about 40 per cent for the price of 10 tickets. Even over a three-year fare strategy, where we reduced the discount initially from about 48 per cent to about 40 per cent, it is still the most generous in Australia. I am sure the honourable member—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member has an even more generous one, about which we will not reflect, but if one chooses to pay then the multitrip discount in South Australia is the most generous of any State in Australia. We will continue to market that but, for the honourable member's benefit, I indicate that I want a whole range of initiatives undertaken not only by the PTB but also by operators over the coming year. I want them to go out and sell public transport more aggressively and positively than they have done in the past.

For example, TransAdelaide's Lonsdale contract introduced information barrels at three or four bus stops in the Adelaide CBD. That is a great move but, in my view, it is far from adequate, and I have said to the PTB, TransAdelaide and Serco—and I will say it to any future operators, if there are to be any future operators—that they must perform much more effectively in advising people waiting at bus stops about the arrival of the next bus, so that people are not left out in the rain or heat, not knowing whether they have just missed a bus or if one is due to arrive in 10 or 20 minutes. On weekends people can wait sometimes up to an hour, unfortunately. We can improve a range of areas in the delivery of our services, such as informing people and selling public transport. That is why the Public Transport Board's forecast that there would be a fall in patronage is just the spur I need to prove it wrong and, damn it, I will work hard to ensure that I do.

Mr ATKINSON: Before I move to my third question, I point out to the Minister that, for some months, the number 253 bus stop on King William Street, stop W2, has not had the timetable information displayed. That does not affect me because I carry this timetable.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I make two points: the information barrels to which I referred are part of TransAdelaide's tender from Lonsdale, and the bus route to which the honourable member just referred is not operated by Lonsdale, so that is one reason why the barrel or other information is not there. I do not excuse that omission and that specific stop will have something displayed pretty shortly, so I would not wish the honourable member to raise the matter again. The very fact that the honourable member has a timetable that can be folded and is useable—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The others are dreadful. I could not stand the original timetables that were provided by the honourable member's Government. We have developed a more user friendly free timetable that one can put in one's pocket or purse. All these initiatives are trying to make public transport more user friendly than it has been in the past, but we still have a long way to go.

Mr ATKINSON: I compliment the Minister on having a transit link stop at Welland Plaza for the TL2 bus. It is one of her initiatives, and I thank her very much.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I seem to have done a lot to help the honourable member and his electorate.

Mr ATKINSON: Yes. My question is about taxis. Yesterday, during questioning of the Premier in the multicultural and ethnic affairs portfolio, it emerged that South Australia's future population growth will be very modest until about the year 2025, at least. The Premier revealed that there was a net emigration from South Australia of 6 500 people each year to other Australian States. Given that that information has only recently been before Cabinet, will the Minister persist with her rather rigid policy of issuing 15 new taxi licences every year? Is that necessary in the light of the most recent population figures?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I certainly am sticking to the strategy: 15 last year, 15 this year and 15 next year, as I outlined in answer to an earlier question from the member for Norwood. I also indicated that we have always said that a review would be undertaken after the third year, but that review has already started with this research program on a baseline study being conducted by the Transport System Centre at the University of Adelaide. I also believe there is good reason for the additional licences, which are not just related to population issues; demand can be generated from a range of other areas, and the contracting out and partnerships between public transport and taxis are positive options for taxis attracting more business. We have already started with the introduction of Night Moves. We have made arrangements with Lonsdale—

Mr ATKINSON: Speaking of that, what is happening with the Sellicks Beach—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Is that an ancillary question? With some imagination taxi owners can generate much more business for themselves rather than sitting around and complaining that there is no work, because there is work. They can go out and win that work. Many of them are attracting more business, such as the introduction of Night Moves at Lonsdale South, which is a new venture between public transport and taxis, and many more initiatives can be developed. The honourable member interjected a moment ago. I do not know whether it was a supplementary or ancillary question, or a question I should not bother about, but it is worth acknowledging that a relationship or partnership can easily be developed between taxis and bus operators farther south of Noarlunga to provide a better system.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is before the Public Transport Board at the moment, and includes the involvement of the Southern Region of Councils, as I recall.

Mr Gargett: We have funded a study being undertaken by the Southern Region of Councils. It provided us with a draft and made a submission to us for funding. That is the state of play with that project at the moment.

Mr CAUDELL: My question follows on from where the member for Norwood left off dealing with non-metropolitan bus service contracts. As to the bus service to Arkaroola, for passengers and freight, which was cancelled about two years ago, has any progress been made to establish or re-establish an alternative service?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Negotiations are being conducted with Premier Roadlines and the operators at Arkaroola. It is a fantastic advance because nothing has been happening in terms of freight or passenger service delivery

to Arkaroola for about two years. That is shocking in terms of one of our premier tourist resorts in this State. It should not be so inaccessible and I am pleased that the PTB has persisted with pushing this issue. I hope that through negotiations with Premier Roadlines we will soon be able to provide a regular service.

Mr CAUDELL: I refer to the Passenger Transport Research and Development Fund, Program Estimates page 295. In 1994 the Passenger Transport Research and Development Fund replaced the Taxi Industry Development Fund, which was established initially as a dedicated fund to support the taxi industry with moneys received from the tender of taxi licences. How much money is now in the fund? I understand that money from the tender for 15 taxi licences last year was not deposited in the fund, but does the Government intend to deposit the money from this year's tender bid in the fund?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, it will not be deposited in the fund. If we deposited funds from last year and this year, there would be about \$8 million in the fund, which stands at about \$4.6 million at present. However, the funds will be applied to the PTB budget for registration and licensing. They will still be used for the purpose of registration and licensing. A range of important projects has been funded in 1995-96 and I will run through them quickly, recognising that time is pressing. There was the Media Campaign for Greater Public Awareness and Improved Safety Standards within the Small Passenger Transport Industry: an application by the Licensed Chauffeured Vehicle Association for \$70 000; the 1996 Adelaide Festival of Arts sought \$300 000; the promotion of the bus and coach industry by Birdwood National Motor Museum involving \$110 800, and that is for restoring a bus to be used in the Thomas Playford celebrations and to be displayed at the Birdwood Museum in years to come.

That is one of the lovely things about transport and the arts: we find more and more positive associations between the two portfolios. Another project is the Mid-North Transport Brokerage Scheme where the Mid-North local government region sought \$6 754; the Willunga Basin Passenger Transport Coordination Scheme, which Mr Gargett mentioned earlier, involved an application of \$4 000 by the Southern Region of Councils; a review of coach tours, an application by the Bus Industry Advisory Panel for \$3 000; Role of Public Transport in Reducing Transport Energy Consumption and Greenhouse Emissions, a project involving \$6 000; traffic safety and the environment, the applicant being Vlado Kovacevic involving \$5 000; and the Riverland Passenger Transport Study, an application by the Riverland Development Corporation for \$5 000. The balance in the fund as at 31 May 1996 is \$4 666 481. I wish to thank not only officers at the table today but other officers within the PTB for their assistance in preparing this information.

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

TransAdelaide, \$17 908 000.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr K. Bengler, General Manager.

Mr W. Fairlie, Finance Manager.

Ms S. Hudson, Management Accountant.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have an opening statement. A remarkable transformation continues within TransAdelaide.

The Government operator will meet the stringent financial targets set for 1995-96 and the fruits of two years' hard work undertaken by all employees throughout the organisation is reflected in the figures before members. The Government policy of creating an organisation which sets the benchmark in the industry is being fulfilled and, for the benefit of the Committee, I would like to summarise some of the achievements and plans included in the forward estimates.

TransAdelaide was the successful tenderer for the Outer South area based on employees' determination to succeed and a willingness to implement workplace reform. At the TransAdelaide depot, despite industrial action impacting on services around their area, the depot is on target to meet the forecast improvements in patronage. There is genuine commitment to customer service, which is reflected in positive customer feedback. Sick leave has reduced by 20 per cent since the implementation of workplace reforms as employees work together to improve performance, and that is a fantastic result. New services in the outer southern region will be introduced in August 1996 based on employee and customer suggestions and I will be releasing details of these shortly. Head office overheads continue to reduce. In 1995-96 there has been a reduction of corporate employees in the order of 11.5 per cent.

When benchmarked against private sector industry and generally within other sectors TransAdelaide compares most favourably. Certainly it can be seen that 'behind the scenes' employees have embraced the cost competitive spirit to support the front line service providers within TransAdelaide. Work improvement teams have been created throughout the organisation ranging from depot operational levels through to various corporate areas to support a best practice program. Employees have taken over from the consulting group, which is providing assistance, and now manage the whole program. Employees are in charge of their whole program in terms of best practice after seeking initial advice from consultants.

Hills Transit commenced operation on 24 September 1995, combining the services of the Mount Barker passenger service and the TransAdelaide Aldgate depot. As with the outer south region, the Hills area has also shown positive signs since commencement of operations. Patronage is exceeding targets in the order of 3 per cent and targets are higher than performance at the time Hills Transit took over. Earlier I gave figures for further increases recorded by Hills Transit during the past month.

In addition, new customer service initiatives have been introduced and more are planned, based on specific customer surveys and focus group discussions. In December 1995 Night Moves Services were developed, which involved the innovative coordination of taxi and bus services. I referred to these services earlier in reply to the member for Spence on the greater opportunity for bus services and, in this instance, providing late night transport at a flat fare.

TransAdelaide has spent many hours working with groups representing people with disabilities to provide buses capable of meeting their needs. Alternative ramps were trialled to provide the most suitable option and the implementation of services with these facilities has met expectation, including the City Loop.

The recent report prepared by the steering committee on national performance monitoring, operating under the auspices of the Council of Australian Government, has validated the way in which TransAdelaide has developed its business. Performance indicators comparing total factor productivity highlighted the reforms achieved thus far and

show an improvement of 13 per cent, which is an outstanding result. The reported reduction in TransAdelaide patronage in 1995-96 is primarily due to the loss of the outer north contract. The patronage in 1996-97 is estimated by the Passenger Transport Board and incorporates a full year effect of the outer north contract and the balance includes a reduction in projected patronage as forecast by the Passenger Transport Board. As I said earlier in speaking to the Passenger Transport Board lines, it is the view of TransAdelaide that, while the Passenger Transport Board has forecast a minor decline in patronage, and this figure has been used for consistency by TransAdelaide, it is not expected to be the likely outcome.

Prior to the industrial action by employees and changes within the education system patronage trends had been reversed and show a far lesser decline than international patronage trends of minus 2 per cent. With the new contractual arrangements having substantial incentive payments for passenger boardings, one of the main challenges for TransAdelaide is to maximise patronage and it is considering a range of initiatives to do this. TransAdelaide is working to make public transport more attractive by providing better options and services to regular, occasional and non-users. Patronage is strongly affected by external factors—their structure, increasing car ownership, demographic urban trends and changing travel patterns. The public transport operator has little or no control over some of these factors. Therefore the challenge for TransAdelaide is to respond appropriately to regional trends by increasing the flexibility of its services to meet the diverse transport needs of both users and potential users in a changing environment.

In conclusion, I note that in an extremely difficult year of great change, with a mix of success and disappointment with the tenders, it is pleasing to report that TransAdelaide has achieved budget targets required by the Government. This comes on top of successive years of difficult targets that have been set and achieved. With the past initiatives that TransAdelaide has implemented, and further ongoing improvements through the Government's competitive tendering program, I am confident that the level of services being provided will not be compromised and in fact will be improved.

Mr ATKINSON: On 1 May last year a single line operation between Goodwood and Belair was established by TransAdelaide instead of the dual line. A decision was made by the Minister at that time to close three stations on the line—Millswood, Hawthorn and Clapham. Since these changes, has the number of passenger journeys increased or decreased on the Belair line and by how much?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I should place on record that the decision to close stations was not made by me but by the former Minister, the Hon. Barbara Wiese, in advice to Mr Bob Collins, then Federal Minister for Transport and Communications. That advice was sent on 2 June that, in accepting the arrangements—

Mr ATKINSON: That was a shame.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That was a shame, but she accepted arrangements on advice (as I have accepted advice in terms of train operation), and this was part of the terms reached between AN, NR and TransAdelaide for single line operation. My role was to nominate which stations and not the fact that stations would close. I did not enjoy my task any more than I suspect did the Hon. Barbara Wiese in nominating which stations would close. It is important to get it into perspective.

The patronage has fallen and it is not a very impressive record. It concerns me and the General Manager of TransAdelaide, Mr Benger. I have a copy of advice that will go to rail passengers in terms of the rail news. The Belair rail line is getting better and better with TransAdelaide overcoming many of the difficulties of single line running to provide improving services to customers. Passengers are coming back to the service, the trains are more punctual and a major upgrade is on the way. New figures show that the patronage on the Belair line is improving with the number of passengers now using the service heading back towards the levels seen before single line running was introduced in May 1995.

Unadjusted patronage figures show that in April 1994 there were 69 423 boardings on the Belair line and in April 1996 it was back up to 62 324. This compares with the extreme low of 46 502 in April 1995, when single line running was being implemented. Single line operating has caused TransAdelaide all sorts of hell, and it has caused me much anxiety. It has not impressed many of our passengers and we have lost a large number, but I hope not for good. The pick-up in figures of almost 20 000 in the past year is heartening news. It is long overdue good news on the Belair line. Because of our belief that we can do better on the Belair line in future, there will be an investment of \$300 000 on upgrading elements of the line and various railway stations along the corridor, but not the three which have been closed. That work will be undertaken in the next financial year. If we did not believe that we had to do better and that we owed it to our customers, we would not have made that allocation of \$300 000 for the coming year.

Mr ATKINSON: As a supplementary question, are the 69 000 and 62 000 monthly figures, or to what period do they relate?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I said that unadjusted patronage figures show that in April 1994 there were 69 423 boardings on the Belair line; in April 1996 the figure was 62 000; but in April 1995 it had fallen to 46 502. So, we went from 69 000 to 46 000 and up to 62 000.

Mr ATKINSON: That is in *Rail News*, is it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is in *Rail News*, and it is being issued now.

Mr ATKINSON: I commend the Minister on *Rail News*, which is an excellent publication. I never miss it. In prefacing my second question, I should like to say that the best single thing that the Minister has done since she has been in office is to put passenger service assistants on our trains. It has been an excellent initiative. It has made people who were nervous about their personal safety on trains, particularly late night trains, feel more secure. The passenger service assistants have done an excellent job, and I find them most congenial company on my trips on trains.

TransAdelaide says that there were 44 passenger service assistants on its trains by the end of 1995-96. Has there been any change in staffing levels of passenger service assistants and police on TransAdelaide trains from 1994-95 to 1995-96, and what is the anticipated number of PSAs and police for 1996-97?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The present number is 40. I understand that this month TransAdelaide will be advertising for more. Because of the voluntary decision of some PSAs to work elsewhere in the system, the numbers have fallen below what the General Manager and I would wish and, I suspect, what the public expects. Therefore, we shall be advertising more positions. I appreciate, as does the General

Manager and other rail staff, the member's positive reflections on the job undertaken by PSAs. We got up to 60.

Mr ATKINSON: I am greatly impressed by the reporting arrangements that TransAdelaide uses in its annual report regarding key performance indicators such as service quality, completed trips and passenger satisfaction. I understand that TransAdelaide takes great care to ensure that its statistics are completely accurate, even if on occasion they may highlight a problem. Is the Minister concerned that Serco may not be taking the same care in the gathering of statistics, with the result that in areas such as completed journey statistics it may be giving an over-optimistic result?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is a little awkward asking questions about Serco when we are dealing with TransAdelaide. The managements may not like each other, but I respect the courtesy shown by bus drivers of both organisations. I was quite anxious about that when Serco started. We asked for this competitive spirit, and some people have taken it to heart. However, we have been able to deal with it on the road without risk, and bus operators overall must be commended for that. I saw a TransAdelaide operator on King William Street the other day put his hand out the window and encourage a Serco bus to pull out and pass. There was goodwill all round, and it was great to see it.

I will make inquiries through the PTB about the figures that TransAdelaide and Serco keep, because that will be important in assessing the contract. Under the contract they are required to report in many categories, such as customer satisfaction and so on. I do not think it will be seen as commercially confidential information. I think it should be available, just as TransAdelaide's information is available. I will see what I can do in terms of providing that advice to the member. Records of accidents and other matters have to be maintained and all the information gathered through the Crouzet system.

Mr CUMMINS: I refer to the Program Estimates at page 303. With competitive tendering of bus services, are drivers worse off in terms of wages and conditions? I note that there is currently a claim of 20 per cent by workers. How is that progressing? Is all the focus on operators and at depot level, or are efficiencies also being delivered in administration and at head office?

Mr Benger: There have been two meetings with the unions on the 20 per cent pay claim. There has been a single bargaining unit formed from the union side, and it is negotiating with TransAdelaide on that claim. The unions seek a number of improvements in conditions, together with guarantees for matters that could be subject to revision or amendment by the Federal Government's proposed changes to Federal industrial legislation.

TransAdelaide has met with the union's single bargaining unit on two occasions, the last being 12 June 1996. TransAdelaide has put its position to that unit. Basically, the position is that there is a foundation for all parts of the industry (bus, rail, the metals and salary). We say that that foundation is based on current agreements that have been worked on at the depots and that that sort of foundation level should also apply to metals and the salary, as well as a starting position, before we continue with those negotiations.

In respect of the agreements with the unions, we had a preliminary hearing with the commission on Tuesday, and today there was a meeting among all the best practice committees and the union which examined the current claim and the agreements.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will answer the second question with respect to the head office working as hard and as diligently as the behind the scenes people, the operators and the depot work force. Over the past year there has been to date a reduction of corporate employees in the order of 11.5 per cent. This is in addition to the 16 per cent reduction in 1994-95. So, there was a 27.5 per cent reduction over a two year period. It is therefore very clear that head office employees are making significant progress to support their operational colleagues—the bus drivers and operators—in terms of winning contract work in the future.

Mr CUMMINS: From newspaper reports I understand that TransAdelaide has lodged bids for the three tenders now being assessed by the Passenger Transport Board and that it has done so in conjunction with an international partner, CGEA. Is this correct, and, if so, why?

Mr Bengier: One of the 11 bids that TransAdelaide has submitted for this current round of tenders includes a joint venture or partnership with the French company CGEA. We considered a partnership because of the benefits that CGEA could bring to TransAdelaide's tender bid in terms of economic development.

Mr CUMMINS: I refer to customer service and the Program Estimates at page 303. In the Minister's opening statement, TransAdelaide's reform agenda was highlighted to provide customer-focused services. What are some of the initiatives, and, in particular, how do they apply to women and people from non-English speaking backgrounds?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: TransAdelaide has refocused the whole way it works. The customer is the centre of attention these days, and that should not be surprising. It is interesting that, when one is a monopoly as the old STA was, one can become lazy. This may not be the intention but it is what I argue happened in the past. With competition, as any retail operator and football club knows—and as TransAdelaide has learnt—you have to perform; otherwise, you do not get support, and you have to keep a focus on your reason for being in business. In public transport, this applies to patronage and providing customer service. Therefore, TransAdelaide has done an enormous amount over the last two years in recognising that 59 per cent of its customers are women.

Mr Cummins interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not just because all the men are dead. There are a fair few around but we find that more women, nevertheless, are catching public transport. In fact, 60 per cent of our bus passengers are women; 48 per cent of our train passengers are women; and 64 per cent of our tram passengers are women. They are twice as likely as men to have no other form of transport. As women's roles in society have changed, so have their transport needs.

Issues such as women in the work force, child care, etc., have greatly affected the way in which we must deliver our services. TransAdelaide has conducted a promotion of women as customers and has provided customer friendly information. The 'Guide to Ride' column in the *Advertiser* and the *Rail News* are directed towards our customers, because we have learnt from speaking with women that they want more advice about what we are doing.

We should not assume, as we have in the past, for example, with *Rail News*, that everyone wants or does read the *Advertiser*. In terms of that information we can sell it via a whole range of other means such as *Rail News*. This information arose as a result of our speaking to women. We

have customer panels. The night moves bus service was an initiative, in part, from a number of younger women (and their parents) who did not necessarily want to drive home from the city after consuming a few drinks or have other inebriated people drive them home. The night moves service is fantastic in providing them with alternative transport late on Saturday nights and on early mornings.

Hills Transit has introduced mobile telephones on board their buses after 7 p.m. I understand that Lonsdale is considering doing the same. Again, that advice came from women. It may be that it was logical to do that but we had not done it before. A lot of work has been done in TransAdelaide employing women. The fact that Sharon is sitting at this table today is good news in terms of women on the move in TransAdelaide. In fact, 'Women on the Move' was also the theme of a national conference of which South Australia initiated the first two. It will be taken over by another State next year. They have generated a lot of national interest in addressing this question.

Also, in respect of customers, I think it important to recognise the work that TransAdelaide is doing with people whom they recognise as an important resource, such as staff who speak a language other than English and use these skills in serving its broad customer base. When TransAdelaide started this multilingual program, 28 staff volunteered, and training took place in February this year. Many people within the TransAdelaide system have a badge which shows the various languages they speak. We have Vietnamese bus operators, and at most depots there are Greek and Italian-speaking people as well. The whole program of interpreters is going from strength to strength, because during the second round 17 people volunteered. So, we are keen to continue this initiative, and it has certainly given pride to the operators who are doing this work.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 303 of the Program Estimates. The callous decision by the Brown Government to abolish free bus and train travel for schoolcard holders resulted in a drop of about one million passenger journeys by students in 1994-95, almost half the total passenger decline for that year. Have all these disadvantaged students returned to the system or are the family circumstances of some of them such that they have dropped right out of the public transport system?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not surveyed them, and I am not sure whether TransAdelaide has. Certainly, they would still be attending school, and I assume that they are walking or riding, using some of our bicycle lanes perhaps. The Minister for Education made the decision on grounds that the Government accepted as reasonable. This decision, however, had a big impact on public transport, and we acknowledge that we have to live with that. It is one of the issues that I mentioned in my opening statement: public transport often has to work with decisions which are made externally and not their own but which have a big impact on their operations. The past experience of TransAdelaide is that there were considerable difficulties in enforcing practice in the operation of the schoolcard and public transport. Some practices would not be of a standard that the honourable member would accept because they bordered on abuse or were abuse. Those matters are being addressed now.

Mr ROSSI: I believe that Government schools are supposed to have equal standards of education and that there is no need to have students travel from one side of town to the other. I refer to fare fraud and evasion on page 303 of the Program Estimates. I travel, as does the member for Spence,

by train from Woodville Station to Adelaide Station. On a number of occasions I have seen passengers get on a train or bus and not pay their fare. Has the move to restructure the role of field supervisors and passenger service attendants had any impact on fare evasion or fraud in the public transport system? I believe there should be plain clothed officers on trains, buses and trams with a \$500 minimum fine for fare evasion. I refer the Minister to the transport system operating in Singapore. How many transit infringement notices has TransAdelaide issued this year and how many prosecutions has it pursued in relation to fare evasion and other offences?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There were 3 546 transit infringement notices issued between July 1995 and May 1996. Prosecutions related to offences occurring in the public transport system over the same period numbered 2 182. The honourable member will be pleased to know that we do not have to look to Singapore for answers in terms of the operation of our public transport. We do not have the same number of people concentrated in a confined area in order to efficiently and effectively operate our public transport as Singapore does. Singapore would have to have one of the best train services and underground systems. Its technology is the envy of almost every Government in the world, I should think, but it is not directly relevant to our experience.

For instance, on the northern line to Gawler there are stations that are almost in the middle of nowhere with green fields on each side. We have not planned well: we have planned for distance, not for a concentration of people. It is hard to get as many people as we would wish focused on stations that are at least within walking distance. We can certainly encourage bus links with railway stations, but where public transport is lightly used, for instance on some train lines, we must question what resources in addition to a driver we should invest our money in. So, there is not always a passenger service attendant or a field service officer on board. Fare evasion remains higher on trains than on other modes of the system. The latest figures from TransAdelaide regarding fare evasion are as follows: bus—1.7 per cent in 1995, and 1.6 per cent in 1996; tram—1.7 per cent in 1995, and 1.5 per cent in 1996; and train—2.4 per cent in 1995, and 2.5 per cent in 1996.

The restructuring to which the honourable member refers is important in respect of the way in which field supervisors work, because as a minimum they do checks on 100 000 passengers every four weeks, generally comprising 46 per cent train commuters, 46 per cent bus commuters and 8 per cent tram commuters.

There are regular blitzes or saturation checks on modes and routes. It is important that the field supervisors are not out only collecting fares and prosecuting the public but also educating the public. We have to do much more—and I have discussed this with the General Manager—to ensure that people are aware that, when they travel on concession tickets—and that is about 67 per cent of our passenger business—they must carry their ID concession card. Without doing so, we judge that person, if checked, to be evading fares. Fifty-seven per cent of the reported figure of fare evasion over the past year has been reported involving people who are not carrying the correct identification for the concession ticket on which they are travelling.

So we may be unwittingly harassing or upsetting a whole lot of our customers who are travelling on concession but without their card because we have not done enough to alert them to the fact that they should be travelling with their card.

If their tickets are checked without their card, we would assess them as fare evaders and committing fraud. I am not sure that that is the right assessment to make in all these circumstances. We have to do a fair bit of work in that area. If we do address that issue effectively, we could bring down these figures quite dramatically to half again of those reported levels if we were left not with 57 per cent of people but with only 7 per cent of people. If we could bring it down to that area, effectively we would be decreasing fraud. We could be increasing our revenue, too, through knowing that people are paying the correct fare rather than through prosecutions and fines because they are not carrying their concession cards.

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

Arts and Cultural Development, \$59 123 000.

Membership:

Mrs Hurley substituted for Mrs Geraghty.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms W. Pelz, Chief Executive.

Mr G. Boxhall, Director, Planning and Resources.

Ms C. Treloar, Director, Arts and Industry Development.

Mr G. Kling, Finance Manager.

Mr J. Bettcher, Manager, Program Services.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to pages 18 and 189 to 193 in the Estimates of Receipts of Payments, and pages 305 to 322 in the Program Estimates.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Government's reputation for placing a high priority on arts and cultural development is reinforced by the 1996-97 budget. It reaffirms the Government's commitment to a creative, vibrant arts and cultural industry which is widely appreciated by South Australians and tangibly recognised nationally and internationally. The program descriptions record a year of successful accomplishment across a diverse range of activities in the arts portfolio. The contribution of arts and cultural activities to South Australian life is too often taken for granted. I wonder how many people absorbed media reports relating to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' finding that attendance at cultural venues in South Australia is almost four times as high as sporting attendance. Mr Chairman, I suspect that you were one of those who contributed to South Australia's record of having four times as many people attending cultural rather than sporting events. This figure is important in the South Australian context, because Australia-wide those ABS figures show twice as many attendees at cultural rather than sporting venues, yet that is still a tremendous figure.

The 1996-97 arts budget continues to support the development and production of quality artistic and cultural activities, with a special emphasis on enhancing people's access to and enjoyment of these activities. Following the outstanding success of the Art Gallery of South Australia extensions (confirmed already by significantly increased visitor numbers), other cultural venues will be enhanced as part of the Government's 10 year strategy to restore and upgrade cultural institutions along North Terrace. The budget includes \$1.61 million for detailed planning for the Aboriginal

Cultures Gallery at the South Australian Museum. The Aboriginal Cultures Gallery will be a dynamic exhibition of the world's most significant collection of Aboriginal artefacts, many of which are at present not easily accessible to the public. The Government has also provided \$1.7 million for the upgrade of the Adelaide Festival Centre, which will include new seating in all theatres and improved acoustics in the Festival Theatre. The redevelopment will continue up to the Festival Centre's twenty-fifth anniversary in 1998. An initial allocation of \$1.3 million has been made to address urgent capital works at the State Library, and for a feasibility plan for the redevelopment of the State Library as a library of the twenty-first century \$200 000 has been assigned. These are exciting and important initiatives for South Australia, reinforced by the findings of the draft Adelaide 21 report released last month for consultation.

But the Government's commitment goes well beyond enhancing these cultural icons by emphasising the continued need to develop and promote artistic and cultural excellence for the benefit of the whole community. A tangible example of this commitment is an allocation from the Community Development Fund of an amount of \$250 000 towards the newly named Australian Festival for Young People (previously Come Out) for an expanded and re-energised 1997 Festival. Government is negotiating new arrangements for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Federal Government and the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra to ensure that Adelaide has the best and widest possible range of orchestral services available well into the twenty-first century. An additional \$550 000 will be allocated in 1996-97 to help provide the extra resources necessary to ensure that our orchestras present the music that Adelaide needs.

Two significant creative writing initiatives will be implemented in 1996-97: a joint venture between the State Government and the University of Adelaide to establish a Chair in creative writing; and the Flinders University will expand its undergraduate programs in creative writing and performance. Also there is a joint venture between the department, the Ngarartji Cooperative Multimedia Centre and the Australian Council to establish Australia's first ever Writer in Virtual Residence. This residency will happen in cyberspace—in the world of the Internet.

Further exciting developments are taking our artistic and cultural product to the world. Members would be well aware of the recent Adelaide Festival Centre Trust's success on Broadway with the *King and I* and the Tony awards, and next month the Minister for Tourism and I will be releasing a new cultural tourism strategy. We are taking leadership roles and the Australian Festivals Network has attracted over \$100 000 in support from the Federal Government in this area. In the area of film I cite the example of *Shine*, which was assisted with a loan to guarantee its production in South Australia.

The arts budget has increased in real terms in 1996-97, with all areas receiving some assistance, and all programs will receive some assistance towards meeting cost increases. However, I have been mindful of the Arts and Cultural Development Task Force recommendation in 1994 for more capacity to redirect funds into priority areas while maintaining initiatives to strive for standards of excellence, efficient management and increased revenue generation. Reductions necessary to achieve the third year of the Government's debt reduction strategy have therefore been targeted predominantly at achieving administrative and building-related efficiencies rather than having an impact on artistic and cultural product.

The intricacies—some suggest idiosyncrasies—of Government accounting may lead some people to the conclusion (and I hope from no person in this place) that the 1996-97 arts budget is a reduction on the previous year. Even a cursory examination of the budget papers will dispel that misconception. For example, just two one-off bookkeeping transactions account for more than \$3 million of the apparent reduction. For the information of members, page 189 of the line estimates shows the department's budget as follows: the 1995-96 estimate, \$68.837 million; the 1995-96 estimated outcome, \$70.023 million; the 1996-97 estimate, \$67.504 million.

The difference between the 1995-96 estimates, that being a figure of \$1.186 million, reflects a variety of budget adjustments made between agencies, financial year carry-overs and capital and recurrent lines over the year. Most of these cannot be accurately predicted and are therefore either zero based or conservatively estimated at the start of the year. The difference between the 1995-96 outcome and the 1996-97 estimate, being \$2.519 million, is the net result of removing one-off transactions and allowing for known reductions on the one hand and adding known increases on the other.

The major decreases are in terms of no further funding for *Shine* production transactions, accounting for \$3.048 million; reduced debt servicing charges, \$.2 million; reduced Commonwealth research grants for the South Australian Museum, \$.2 million, totalling \$3.448 million. None of these reductions has an impact on the department's ongoing budget. On the credit side, new funding has been received for the State Local Government Reform Fund, and the Department of Arts and Cultural Development costs supplementation at \$1.4 million; Community Development Fund, \$.4 million; the Salinet recurrent funding, \$.275 million, making a total of \$2.075 million. Offsets against this are debt reduction strategy of \$.5 million, zero based interest receipts of \$.45 million, making a subtotal of \$.95 million and a total of \$1.12 million. When this figure of \$1.12 million is set against the decreases of \$3.448 million, a net book reduction of \$2.5 million is recorded. However—and I emphasise this very strongly—as the \$3.448 million has no ongoing budget impact, the budget's actual position is an increase of at least \$1.12 million in 1996-97 over the 1995-96 outcome, an outcome which is not reflected in most portfolio budgets in 1996 and, therefore, is good news for arts in this State.

Membership:

The Hon. M.D. Rann substituted for Mr Atkinson.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Talking about cyberspace and virtual reality, I guess it makes me think about the Minister's press release for the budget which raises more questions than it answers. It says, for example:

Funding for all areas of ongoing artistic and cultural activity is maintained or improved.

However, if the cut to funding to the SA Film Corporation is included, the total recurrent expenditure on the arts has fallen by about \$5 million, or 7 per cent in real terms. Even if it is not included, there is still a significant real cut. Notable amongst these cuts in real terms are funding to Tandanya, which has been cut by 6 per cent; funding to the State Opera by over 3 per cent in real terms, or 9 per cent in real terms if the funding for *The Ring* cycle is included; the State Theatre by almost 7 per cent—and I understand they are particularly cross about it; the Museum by 8 per cent; the History Trust

by 4.5 per cent; and the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust by a relatively small 1 per cent, but that excludes the reduction in the grant given for debt servicing—and so the list goes on. Despite what the Minister has just said, there are companies out there who are screaming loudly but privately about cuts in their budgets.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am very keen to offer to the Leader of the Opposition in his role as shadow Minister for the Arts a more detailed briefing than I was able to give in terms of the opening statement. As I have highlighted, I was able to provide some detail but possibly not all that he would like in terms of assessing the whole budget and its impact on some arts institutions in this State. He would recognise that a lot of arts funding is still subject to assessment by peer advisory groups, that is, funding through the Development of the Arts budget. That budget, too, provides an increase of \$182 000, I recall, in funds this year for arts organisations.

I accept that for Tandanya there has been a cut of \$50 000, but that was made known to it on the day of the budget. There was a cut of \$50 000 to the State Theatre Company, and it knows that that is related to rationalisation of workshops and new ways of doing that business. State Opera was mentioned by the member as receiving a cut of \$100 000, but it never sought that \$100 000 in the coming financial year or subsequent years because it was a one-off payment and was always recorded as such. It would be unfair to continue to use that figure, but I would be happy at any time, as would people in the department, to give a thorough rundown of the arts budget to the honourable member or any of his officers.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In terms of grants for arts, I refer to page 180 of Financial Paper No. 2, which I spent a great deal of time studying. Grants for the arts were \$8.571 million in 1995-96 and will be \$9.131 million in 1996-97, which is an apparent increase of \$560 000. However, the Jam Factory grant of \$920 000 no longer has a separate line and has been rolled into the grants for the arts. This line also contains \$50 000 for the creative writing initiatives at Adelaide and Flinders Universities, and an extra \$250 000 for the Australia Festival for Young People, or Come-Out; and the line includes an unstated amount for increasing the number of players in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

This means that there is a reduction of at least \$660 000 in money terms, or close on \$1 million in real terms, in the funding available for grants to many arts bodies and individuals who obtain funding from this line—such as the Junction Theatre Company, Vitalstatistix, Red Shed, the Contemporary Art Centre, the Experimental Art Centre, Doppio Teatro, community radio, Arts for Public Places and so on—and in the important project grant allocation. What cuts will be made to these organisational and project grants? When will the organisations concerned know what cuts they will have to bear, and is the Minister concerned that cuts to smaller groups, individuals and organisations will erode the grass roots creative activity on which our whole arts activity depends for an exciting future?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Let me clarify the Jam Factory issue. It has been amalgamated on the estimated income for both 1995-96 and 1996-97. The fact that it is no longer a separate line and put into these figures makes no difference to the relevance of the figures. It does not reduce or in any way impact or devalue the increase that has been provided for the Development of the Arts line in 1996-97. It is complicated, but the basis of the Leader's statement is unsound. I should have offered this briefing before and I apologise for not doing so. I can understand why the Leader or his staff

have reached that conclusion, but it is not sound because the Jam Factory is included in both those areas. The increase for Development of the Arts is \$560 000 this financial year—an amount that most people would celebrate at any time, but particularly at this time when there are difficulties in all budget areas.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: We can talk about celebrating, but these companies are not celebrating.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is right; you asked more in terms of your question. As they have always done with the previous Government and this Government, they will lodge applications during June or July; they will be assessed during August or September; and the results will be known in October or November, at the latest early December. That has always been the pattern, and it will be the pattern again. I do not make those decisions: they are made by the assessment panels.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: There has been a great deal of idle speculation, gossip and some media speculation about the financial outcome for the Festival held earlier this year—a Festival which was an outstanding success culturally and in terms of the State's tourism and arts profiles. What advice has the Minister received so far in terms of the expected financial outcome for this year's Festival?

There was a great deal of speculation in the newspaper this morning and on some radio stations about threats by Telstra to cut funds in retaliation against the awarding of the Government's telecommunications contract to AAPIT. I understand that it was the first time that naming rights to the Festival have been awarded to an organisation—the Telstra Adelaide Festival. I understand also that the naming rights expire in June 1997, so the rights will be renegotiated, with Telstra being given first option on naming rights for the 1998 Festival; Telstra will have the first right of refusal, although negotiations for this year's naming rights settled the amount for the naming rights in 1998. Whilst it has not signed off on 1998, Telstra is saying that there will be retaliation in terms of its commitment to the State. There was a major commitment to the arts by Telstra with respect to the Festival earlier this year. Is the Minister talking with Telstra about its ongoing commitment; is she concerned that there will be retaliation in terms of sponsorship of the Adelaide Festival; and what does she see as the financial outcome for this year's Festival?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I thank the honourable member for his question and for his support of the Festival and the initiative of the Telstra naming rights. I do not believe that Telstra has ever had a better and more successful public relations coup than it did with the Adelaide Festival; the Chairman, the Chief Executive and all ranks of the organisation were thrilled with the association. Telstra certainly has an option to continue for the next two Festivals; whether it wishes to exercise that option is a matter for negotiation between the Adelaide Festival board and Telstra. I have no reason to believe that it would not be interested in doing so because it was a very cost effective and prominent form of advertising over an extended period.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They may do so, but I received no advice yesterday or today; I have had no advice to alert me otherwise. I have not made contact, but I would certainly intend this week to make contact with Telstra or, if I do not, it would be appropriate for Mr Andrew Kelly as Chairman to do so. The Leader would be interested to know that, because of the success of the naming rights initiative, even before the

end of the last Festival the board received two very promising proposals, in preliminary form only (and two makes it better for extracting good terms), from other credible Australian companies that wish to be associated with the Festival. So, we are not solely dependent on Telstra—

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Is United Water one of them?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not able to say that. Does the Leader see them as a credible company to be associated with the Festival?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am just asking—do not try to put words into my mouth; otherwise we will get onto as bad a footing as last year, and that would not be good for your smoking habit. Was United Water one of the companies involved in the negotiations?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have never asked or been advised, but I am aware that interest was expressed from two companies. Telstra has written and informed me and the board that it was extremely pleased with its association, and I would be happy, as would the Government and the Festival generally, if that association continued. However, they have to be comfortable with that matter and they do not seem terribly comfortable at the moment. We have had good relations with Telstra with the Festival, Brighton jetty and a whole range of things.

I would like to say a lot more in terms of the Festival. I do not have final figures for the Festival and have been advised by the Chairman that they will be finalised as at 30 June, when the accounts will be available for audit. I must acknowledge that in about January of this year the Chair of the finance committee said to me that they might need a cash flow from 1996-97 because they had planned, (so it was a deliberate strategy by the board) to spend more in 1995-96 than had been provided for because there were opportunities to secure sponsorship for the 1998 and year 2000 festivals. I agreed with that approach because the 1998 Festival already has 50 per cent of its sponsorship confirmed.

We were aware in January of anticipated overrun, but it was planned for and known. The final result has not yet been determined. It is also important for all members to know that any budget overrun that the Festival will experience will be fully met from the budgets allocated or known to the Adelaide Festival over its five year development period.

There may be cash flow from next financial year to help offset some known overruns this year, but additional funds will not be provided to the Festival above those that have already been planned for and known to the Festival as part of the five year development program. They have to be met in-house and managed within the forward agenda of funds, as I will not tolerate any other situation. While people are running around and getting a bit excited—and I appreciate that the honourable member has not done so and has continued in this place and elsewhere to support the value of the Festival for Adelaide—any budget runs will have to be managed within the Festival's known budget, which will not be supplemented from funds at the expense of other organisations in the arts.

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

Membership:

Mr Venning substituted for Mr Rossi.

Mrs Greig substituted for Mr Cummins.

Mr CAUDELL: With regard to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Program Estimates (page 312), I note that one of the specific targets for 1996-97 is 'to develop a new partner-

ship/relationship with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the ABC and the Commonwealth Government'. What is the nature of this proposed partnership? As I recall last year, the Government was exploring a different arrangement for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, namely, a merged model between the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the State Opera.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member's recollection is correct. At this time last year, we were looking at a merged model between State Opera and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and Mr Peter Alexander was engaged for that purpose. He produced a report, a copy of which went to the Opposition for information. After assessing the report, it was determined that the artistic benefits and cost savings that we aimed to achieve could not be realised.

Also, the upheaval associated with such a merger could have potentially distracted the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the arts generally from concentrating on what we knew we had to achieve, namely, an increase in the number of musicians in this State. Since that time, we have explored various options with the ABC in Adelaide and, more recently, the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra. We have always had discussions with ABC Orchestras here and in Sydney, particularly Mr Nathan Waks, with the former Federal Government and with the present Government.

We believe there is a real opportunity for South Australia to develop a model for local management of orchestras, as has not been realised elsewhere in Australia, through an association between the State and Federal Governments and the ABC. A similar model in Sydney is principally federally funded.

We would like to realise for the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra the introduction of a core of players, possibly eight or 10, which has never been achieved before. That would be on the understanding that those players were available to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra when it needed them for a big musical production. Some symphonies demand up to 90 players. For *The Ring* cycle alone, the orchestral demands are 110 players, so we would need to find another 20 players to augment a 90 person orchestra for those purposes. If we realised 90 full-time players between the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, augmented by 20 for *The Ring* cycle, the expense of the additional 20 would be met by the contractual arrangements between State Opera and the ASO.

Currently, the Symphony Orchestra has 68 players. To build up to 90 either within the ASO or on a partnership arrangement with the chamber orchestra will ultimately require \$1 million more a year. The State Government has found an additional \$500 000 this year as its contribution to the initiative. We need to ensure that that contribution is ongoing. We may require more, but that will depend a great deal on the success of our negotiations with the Federal Government.

Ms GREIG: I refer to the Program Estimates (page 312) and creative writing. Compared with other art forms, literature, particularly creative writing, has long been neglected in terms of arts funding support around Australia and in South Australia. What measures has the Government taken to support this critical field of arts activity?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member is correct in her assessment of literature and creative writing being ignored. It is a matter that this Government, with the new administration in the Department of Arts and Cultural Development, has taken to heart. The Government has

invested a lot of time, energy and commitment to increasing, within limited budgets and very tight circumstances, a whole range of new initiatives not at high cost but with much potential. One such initiative that I am particularly pleased with is the Colin Thiele literature scholarship for young people. The scholarship is worth \$6 000, which is being matched by a \$6 000 contribution from the Independent Arts Foundation. Ms Jessica Dames of the Independent Arts Foundation will chair the committee, which will comprise people of the qualifications and credibility of Gillian Rubenstein, a South Australian writer, and others.

There is a new Faulding award for multimedia, for which we thank the sponsor. There is a new Wirra Wirra Wakefield Press award for new, unpublished non-fiction. There is the new Premier's award for literature, which was presented for the first time at the last Writers Week during the Adelaide Festival. The award was presented to the overall winner of all the Festival awards. It was presented with funds from the Department for the Arts at Writers Week. So, there are three new awards. We have established two new scholarships with the help of the Independent Arts Foundation.

I announced in the budget what I think is a phenomenal partnership among the Department for the Arts, the University of Adelaide and Flinders University. At the University of Adelaide there will be a Chair in creative writing, the first ever in Australia. The advertisements for the filling of that position will be released soon. There will be a number of postgraduate positions created at Flinders University, and that will provide the most wonderful opportunity. If we put a real emphasis on creative writing in this State, we will do a lot to advance both the film industry and theatre. It does not matter how wonderful a performer, actor or technician is, because without a strong script the film or the play will be let down. The potential for creative writing is enormous not only for literature and films but for the add on value of what we can do to support the other strong art forms in this State.

I mentioned earlier the initiative of the writer in cyberspace. I appreciate the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition when referring to this in his opening statement. This is an important initiative, because it is a partnership, and this is what we are seeking to do through the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development. We need to feed in ideas and get funding support from a whole range of quarters in order to achieve everything that we want. We need commitment from others so that the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development is not expected to fund everything that happens within the arts world. We do not have the capacity to do it; nor do we think it is appropriate. We must extend responsibility to a whole range of areas and the writer in cyberspace is a further instance of this. It is a partnership between the Department for the Arts and Cultural Development, the Australia Council and the Ngapartji Cooperative Multimedia Centre. It will be an Australian first; it will be the first ever writer in virtual residence. It will not be a writer engaged at the Writers' Centre in the east end of Rundle Street: it could be a writer who is engaged from anywhere around the world, and their services, skills and talents will be available through the Writers' Centre in South Australia on this Internet cyberspace network.

The sum of \$70 000 will be provided by the Australia Council for this initiative, and it is thrilled to be involved in this multimedia exercise. Also, \$5 000 will be provided by the department as financial support for the writer. Applications will be called shortly for this 'appointment'. Very

shortly a writer will be holding workshops and classes through this cyberspace Internet system for young people. Those people will be supported through the South Australian Youth Arts Board at Carclew and the Department for Education and Children's Services. It is a wonderful initiative, which will complement a range of initiatives in creative writing that the department has encouraged and funded over the past two years.

Ms GREIG: My next question relates to the Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre (Program Estimates, page 312). I have read that the Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre has recently appointed a new general manager after six months without one, having had a consultant administrator for the past three months. Will the Minister outline the present direction of the Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am very pleased to do so. The Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre has been lavishly praised both nationally and internationally for its work and it has toured widely, but administratively it has been very weak for some time. As the honourable member noted, it has been without an experienced arts administrator for six months, although Derek Watt came from Canberra to provide valuable help in a difficult period. Mr Christian Haag has now been appointed as General Manager and we are very fortunate in South Australia, as is the company, to secure his services.

It is worth recognising that only last week Mikhail Baryshnikov, one of the most sensational dancers in the world after Nureyev, was in South Australia and specifically asked to meet Meryl Tankard, which, I suspect, must be one of the greatest compliments paid to her. It was certainly a great joy to everyone who loves dancing in this State that he made such a request. Later this year the company will perform by invitation at the prestigious Brooklyn Academy of Music. At present the company is on tour as part of a national Made to Move Australian Touring Program. I am really pleased that we have also secured the services of the Hon. Justice Margaret Nyland as Chair of the company. Justice Nyland took up this position after years of service by Mary Beasley and I thank Mary Beasley for her years of commitment to the company. Margaret Nyland is introducing fresh eyes and a new commitment, which is important in bringing stability to the company and securing the confidence of the Australia Council.

The company appeared to be a little vulnerable towards the end of last year because of an inability to organise budgets, and business plans in particular, for which the Australia Council provided \$100 000. That money had not been spent. It was a requirement of the Australia Council that a great deal of work be done very quickly, otherwise it would withdraw its funding. We avoided all of those circumstances and now Meryl can continue with her work and bring credit to this State and herself. Also, a major sponsorship has been secured since February, which will help bring some stability to the company. On the basis of stabilising the whole arrangement administratively, in addition to a grant of approximately \$750 000 a year, the State Government has recently confirmed that it will provide another special grant of \$9 000 towards a computer upgrade to consolidate the new management directions and professionalism within the company.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In the 1995-96 budget the State Theatre Company was cut by \$30 000 (an amount applied to support its librarian), the excuse being that the Minister was

investigating the amalgamation of the State Theatre Company in Carclew library which the STC maintains with the performing arts collection held by the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust. This amalgamation, as I understand, has not occurred. Is the proposal still being investigated? When is it likely to occur? If it is not to occur in the near future, will the Minister restore the cost of the librarian to the STC budget at least until amalgamation takes place?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I understand that the State Theatre Company has decided that it is such an important facility that it has absorbed the cost.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It is happy about doing that?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Whilst it may not be happy, it has been able to do so.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: By way of supplementary, in the 1996-97 budget the State Theatre Company has again been cut by \$50 000 in nominal terms or 7 per cent in real terms. Apparently this is anticipating the results of a feasibility study regarding the outsourcing of some of the STC's production activities to the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust. Currently, the STC workshops provide the STC with an income source. For instance, building the sets for Philippe Genty's *Stowaways* and *Night on Bald Mountain*, both of which are touring productions.

By way of supplementary, has the Minister checked with the AFCT that it can in fact carry this extra load of productions, maintenance and touring fitups and guarantee delivery of productions for STC deadlines when it has stated that it did not wish to take on any further staff? Secondly, if the as yet uncompleted feasibility study does not show that the STC can save money by outsourcing in this way, will the \$50 000 be restored to the STC to continue its current and very efficient workshops?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The answer to the last question is 'No'. I have no doubt that the State Theatre Company can realise productions for the State, for the enjoyment of members here and for the general public who attend productions, without an additional \$50 000. I also believe that, led by the department with input from the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust and from the State Theatre Company itself, and also with input from other people associated with workshops in the arts field, we will come up with a new way of doing business in the workshop area. They all experience highs and lows during the year. In periods of highs I believe there should be more flexibility in workshop arrangements so that, rather than doing as they do today, that is, engage outside assistance, the people who have already been paid for by the taxpayer come in and assist, so that we are not paying double which, when you look at the whole arts commitment to workshops, we are doing at the present time.

It will not be comfortable, in terms of the organisation itself, because change is not comfortable, but we will easily accommodate the change and the State Theatre Company, if it is willing, will easily accommodate the reduction in its budget of \$50 000. The honourable member will appreciate that the Government, as part of the pageant package earlier this year, also acquired about seven people and all the facilities from John Martin's for the production of the pageant. We have many skilled people in workshop in that area: from John Martin's, the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, the State Theatre Company, the History Trust, the Art Gallery and the Museum; and I believe that it is time we looked at how best to use those resources to keep those skills in South Australia but to support each other so we can actually go out and sell those skills to bring in other productions, and to

advertise well and loudly interstate and overseas the skills we have here.

Too often in South Australia we do not proclaim loudly the brilliant and unique way we do things, and it is about time we started selling that. I believe that, by focusing on workshops, pooling efforts and supporting each other, we will be able to do that successfully. That means change in this instance for a number of people, including the State Theatre Company, and I expect that it will accommodate that change in the best interests of its company and workshop facilities overall.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In terms of follow-up about the State Theatre Company, last year Robyn Geraghty (the member for Torrens) asked questions about subsidies per seat at the State Theatre Company and about complimentary tickets. Later, by way of a statement in reply, the Minister advised that the subsidy per seat (calculated by dividing grants provided by the seats available and seats sold), in terms of all Government grants, was as follows: the subsidy per available seat was \$21.74¢ and the Government subsidy per seat sold was \$38.08.

The Minister also mentioned that a total of 11 156 complimentary tickets were issued for State Theatre performances during the 1994-95 financial year. If 11 156 complimentary tickets were handed out (and I understand that there is a need for complimentary tickets for the media, dignitaries, and so on, including quite a number of public servants), how many tickets were actually sold by the State Theatre Company? We have all known for years that theatres have to dress the house. On opening night it looks terrible if the Minister and the shadow Minister arrive and they see that it is only themselves and a few friends attending. Quite often, in dressing a house, complimentary tickets are handed out to cafe proprietors and so on to dress the house and make it look good for the media that there, particularly on opening night. Whilst being a passionate supporter of the State Theatre Company, I believe that 11 156 complimentary tickets were a bit on the high side. Does the Minister agree? How many tickets were actually sold?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am keen to provide that information to the honourable member. I understand that this has just recently been provided to our Chairman, in his capacity as Presiding Officer of the Economic and Finance Committee, which is also addressing the issue. I receive complimentary tickets, but I also pay about \$500 a year to the State Theatre Company and feel that perhaps my tickets are a part of that package. I have encouraged the State Theatre Company to ask many other people, including members of Parliament and some public servants, because I have been very keen for them to 'sell' to as many people as possible who are involved in the decision making the value of the work that is done there, and so that those people themselves go.

Sometimes they make decisions without experiencing some of the work, and they will not necessarily buy the tickets themselves. Yet Ms Pelz, Mr Treloar, Mr Boxhall, others and I all go in fighting with Treasury and with my colleagues in Cabinet. So, the better educated they are, the easier the task will be and the better their understanding of the arts generally. I have encouraged them to do that, but I do not think I have encouraged them to the extent of 11 000 tickets. I would certainly hope that I was not responsible for what would appear to be an over zealous allocation of tickets. I also know that, in seeking to attract sponsorships,

the State Theatre Company has been generous in providing tickets to its patrons and supporters.

When I went to *Night on Bald Mountain* I met Neil Armfield and Carl Vine (who was responsible for the music). I also met Anna, who was responsible for the set, and a number of people (with their friends) who were involved in the production. They were also there *gratis*. I am not making excuses for it. I agree with the honourable member and the Chairman that we should explore it, and that is being done.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I would like to know how many tickets were sold during the past financial year in comparison with that financial year, so that we can see how many tickets the State Theatre Company actually sells compared with those 11 156 freebies. I have been a journalist, and I understand that you invite those people who will do the reviews and those sorts of things, but 11 156 tickets in a town the size of Adelaide seems to me to be extraordinary. Obviously, we hold a similar position.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes. I will obtain further information for the honourable member.

Mr CAUDELL: On behalf of the member for Norwood, I would like to ask a question in relation to the Adelaide Fringe (page 312 of the Program Estimates). The member for Norwood states that last March the Fringe transferred activities to the East End of Rundle Street. He is keen to know whether the Fringe could be relocated to Norwood. He says that Norwood has restaurants, venues for visual arts, many galleries, the Adelaide Central School of Art, performing arts, Norwood Hall, the Leigh Warren Dancers, the Odeon Theatre, etc. Are other sites being taken into account for relocation of the Fringe and, in particular, Norwood?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am aware of the member for Norwood's agenda, and I look forward to working with him in his new position as Secretary to me as Minister for the Arts. I know that I will be pressured on a regular basis, and also in Parliament, to encourage the Fringe at least to outreach its activities to Norwood. From discussions that I have had with Fringe organisers, I know that they are keen to pursue that option and believe that what the member for Norwood argues has merit in both the performing and visual arts fields. During the last Adelaide Festival, I visited a number of houses in Norwood that participated in the 'compost' exhibition. So, Norwood appears to be a natural base for outreach, whether it be the Festival or the Fringe.

The CHAIRMAN: I should put in a claim for the Thebarton Theatre.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Commercially, the Thebarton Theatre is operating very well, Sir, and I appreciate the assistance that you provide for me at functions held there and elsewhere in your electorate. The Fringe was supported by \$200 000 last year from the arts budget to set up the Star Club and for that to be its base. SANTOS and Mancorp assisted by providing temporary accommodation for the Fringe's headquarters during the Festival, and it is still there at the East End, in Rundle Street. Festival representatives of the board have met with the department and me, and they are keen to move on a permanent basis to the SANTOS Centre in the Mancorp building, which is to be renovated. That causes the Department for the Arts and me a bit of anxiety, because we would have to find between \$80 000 and possibly \$100 000 for that purpose.

They pay no rent at all now at the Lion Arts Centre, so it would be additional funds. We are very keen to support them, because that move has merits, but it is a dilemma in terms of juggling the funds in the arts budget. For that reason, study

is being undertaken at the Lion Arts Centre at the moment to look at other groups that could be moved into the Lion Arts Centre. We are looking at offsetting costs so that we can generate the funds that we would like to find to help the Fringe base itself in the East End of Rundle Street—which we would all like to see—so that it can be used as an outreach, not only for Norwood now but also for Thebarton. Whether it will get down to Marion I am not too sure.

Mr CAUDELL: We are not culturally deprived at Marion, but we would prefer to see it at the East End of Adelaide than at Norwood.

Mr VENNING: It is a pleasure to be on the Committee this evening. I am very pleased that Mines and Energy finished early so I could elevate my sights and satisfy my thirst for the arts. My first question is to do with the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, dealt with in the Program Estimates on page 319. The sum of \$1.7 million has been allocated to upgrade the Adelaide Festival Centre next financial year. How does the Adelaide Festival Centre propose to use these funds?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Adelaide Festival will be celebrating its twenty-fifth birthday in 1998, the same year as the very first staging of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* in the Southern Hemisphere. This will all be in 1998, so we must do something at the Adelaide Festival Centre to see that it shines in this very important year for Adelaide and for cultural activity. As part of an upgrade we are looking at the acoustics and the seating. As the honourable member noted, \$1.7 million is allocated this financial year as part of a program over the next two or three years, for which we will have to find a total of at least \$5 million, and we hope to augment that with sums from the private sector. I know that the Chairman and others wish to look at better use of the plaza to make sure that it attracts more people for more of the time and so it is not such a barren wasteland.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, much softer; you are quite right. We are looking at what rights exist in respect of some of the painted sculptural works. This is a bit controversial. Some people have a low opinion and some have no opinion of the work, but we may have to meet certain rights and obligations in terms of Hajek's work. It is the only area available for opening up for other activities, because it is above the car park and can therefore support more solid fittings. It is the only suitable place if we are seeking to establish more restaurants and outdoor activities, because vehicles can drive on it. Since its upgrade a few years ago, all the rest of the plaza is too fragile even to support a vehicle, so it cannot be used for any purpose other than walking. Just outside on the northern side of Parliament we could do so, and I think it would be fantastic, but we must look at some of the sensitivities associated with Hajek's work. We can do a whole range of things to really make that area live as it should for Adelaide and the arts.

Mr VENNING: I know that the Minister would be expecting me to ask a question about the Barossa Entertainment Centre. The Minister has been very much interested in its progress and, at this very moment, the walls are being erected and the project is well on target to be completed by the end of the year. Can any program be used during the opening period of this new centre, such as a gala-style exhibition, to let people know that this new centre will be a critical part of the art scene in South Australia? Could the department assist in a small way to stamp it as an arts centre?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Normally the arts are not funded through parliamentary question and answer but rather through a series of arm's length approaches from the Minister. Nevertheless, we have all received the message and we would be very keen to explore avenues that may be available to this initiative for the arts in South Australia. The Tourism Commission funded the centre to an amount of \$1 million, but we may be able to find something.

Mr VENNING: It will be a critical arts centre because the German people are very much into the arts and music.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Did you make lots of commitments during your preselection?

Mr VENNING: No, I did not; it is ongoing.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The Minister would be aware that I strongly oppose the carve up of Carrick Hill. In fact, I remember when the former Government talked about selling six blocks of land on one portion of the estate which was fairly unobtrusive the Liberal Party instigated a very spirited campaign against the sale of those six blocks. I must say that it totally convinced me we were wrong headed, and I remember how the Minister voted on that matter. Whilst I would be prepared to look at something sensible, I believe that 34 blocks are far too many, particularly in the area where, in my view, it would have a major negative impact on the visuals of Carrick Hill and its integrity both as a house and as an estate. It would look rather tacky: like a mansion with a housing estate tacked on the site.

Even though I know a select committee is currently looking into this issue, I can tell the Minister that the Labor Party will not support the carve up of a large chunk of Carrick Hill. We will certainly campaign in both the arts and heritage communities, as well as amongst the good and decent folk of Mitcham who have certainly convinced me by their letters and solicitations. Looking at the budget line for Carrick Hill, I note a proposed cut of \$105 000 for 1996-97. I realise that Carrick Hill retained all its admission receipts during that year, and currently it retains all but some \$70 000 per annum, which means a cut of \$35 000 being imposed on Carrick Hill.

An increase in attendance is being forecast of the order of 10 per cent, but it appears unlikely that such an increase in visitor numbers could make up for the \$35 000 cut. Any sale of land at Carrick Hill, even a tiny sale would, if it occurs, could not be expected to yield a large trust fund in the 1996-97 financial year. We must conclude, I guess, that Carrick Hill is to suffer a real cut in this budget, quite apart from increased costs due to inflation, wage and salary rises. Incidentally, the Carrick Hill Trust, although it obviously wants me to support it through our Caucus, to go through the Upper House, has not had the courtesy of writing to me. How can the Minister justify this 8 per cent cut to Carrick Hill when a director has finally been appointed after a vacancy of nearly two years, and when the board is expected to start implementing the development plan, the implementation of which will surely require greater and not fewer resources, particularly when it will not get its grand sale?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Fewer resources are not being provided. I am sorry that the honourable member misunderstands what has been stated in this Chamber when it operates as the Legislative Council and also at other times. What Carrick Hill has sought, and what it will achieve this year, is the retention of all its admissions. In the past, following a decision by former Premier Bannon, it has generated admissions, of which \$70 000 has been extracted and passed direct to Treasury. Carrick Hill has resented that because it

is seen as a disincentive for a whole range of initiatives that it may wish to take; and, therefore, it was not being rewarded for taking those initiatives through the gate, catering and a whole range of other things. We have said to the Carrick Hill Trust that, as it has sought, it will retain all admissions in the future.

So, to that \$346 000 to which the honourable member referred, one must add the \$70 000 gate takings that it will retain in the future, bringing it to \$416 000. In terms of maintenance of buildings, therefore capital, it received an additional \$38 000 last year for some abnormal but urgent work, and that was through the Arts Department budget. It does not require a similar amount this year for general maintenance, although there are some other urgent capital needs. Therefore, we get a slightly higher figure, \$454 000, if you take into account those funds which it is not receiving this year but did receive last year. That accounts for the changes in the budget line, so there is not a cut in any real or money sense.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Referring to the South Australian Museum, I guess it has been observed by many people, within both the Museum and this place, that the Museum is suffering a cut of nearly \$250 000, which is to be absorbed—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Suffering a cut?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Yes, according to the figures.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They are the Commonwealth one-off grants of last year.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In any event, it is to be absorbed by a reduction in operating expenses and sundries. There are also concerns about further cuts from the Commonwealth. On what was the Commonwealth project funding expended in 1995-96; why is it expected to be reduced in 1996-97, other than from the expected cuts from the Commonwealth on 20 August; and how will the Museum maintain programs and services with a cut of \$250 000 to its expenses?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have just received an update on advice that I had from the Museum some months ago. Last year it received about \$300 000 for one-off research projects. One was the secret sacred project, but I will obtain further advice for the honourable member. A few months ago the department was told by the Director, Chris Anderson, that it had not applied for some of the grants and that others were not continuing. That was a decision of the former Government, not this one. He thought the grants would probably come down to \$100 000, but the latest advice I have received from Mr Boxhall is that it looks as though, no matter what people say about the current Federal Government, the grants will again be around \$300 000. There will be an additional \$50 000, and that has just been approved by the Federal Department of Arts and Communications for the provincing of the skeletal remains project. There has been some verbal advice about \$140 000 for another Aboriginal project. There will be an additional \$50 000 in Australian Research Council grants—that has been conservatively anticipated by the Natural Science Division. It looks as though the Museum's budget will rise by another \$200 000, and the arts budget is looking better and better by the day.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Tandanya has suffered a cut of \$15 000 this year on top of the \$100 000 cut last year. This means it has been cut by \$115 000 in two years, or 18 per cent of its grant.

The CHAIRMAN: From where are you getting your figures?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: From a very close perusal of the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: I am looking at page 190: it is \$535 000 compared to \$550 000.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: My figures have been verified by established accounting procedures. If inflation is taken into account, it amounts to a 24 per cent cut over two years. No other major arts organisation has had to suffer this kind of cut from this Government. Tandanya has requested a capital grant to enable it to install air conditioning so that it can cooperate with the South Australian Museum and exhibit on a rotational basis, because much of the Museum's Aboriginal collection, as the Minister knows and as I have seen, is stored in the basement of the Museum. A huge amount of some of the best Aboriginal art and artefacts in existence is stored there, yet Tandanya's request for air conditioning has again fallen on deaf ears, with the excuse that the building does not belong to the Government but to the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

The trust has a tiny budget. It is a land-owning entity and the trust receives funding from the Government, so capital improvement money would come from the same Treasury pot. Further, I understand that, when she informed the Tandanya board of the \$15 000 cut to this year's budget, the Minister went so far as to indicate that the cut could be applied to the salary of a particular employee, the Coordinator of Resources and Facilities. I am aware that the board is understandably incensed that its authority has been bypassed in this way as it and not the Minister has the responsibility to determine policy for Tandanya within the allocated budget. It was the Minister who earlier talked about a hands off approach and non-interference from the Minister.

Why has Tandanya been singled out for such deep cuts over the past two years? Why has Tandanya been refused air conditioning when it could so obviously increase its ability to improve exhibition programs, and why has the Minister insulted the Tandanya board by indicating where cuts should be applied instead of respecting its responsibility to determine policy? What sort of long-term relationship does the Minister expect to have with the Tandanya board?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A good relationship, as I would have with any board that performs to accounting, artistic and its own performance standards. I make no greater exception for Tandanya than I do for any other board in the arts community, and I assume the Leader would make no exception for any board in terms of accountability of funds and where a board has established its own parameters for performance. I would expect him to believe that the board should perform: certainly that is my expectation.

The honourable member seems to be particularly interested in trying to promote the idea that there are cuts in the arts budget all over the place. I have corrected him on that count each time. He has suggested that there was a \$100 000 cut in the budget last year: that was not so. The sum of \$60 000 was a loan from some years before which Tandanya understood had to be paid.

There is this year a further \$15 000 cut, which was made after I had been reliably advised that the position was under serious review by Tandanya. They may not for their own reasons wish to acknowledge that now, but I was most reliably informed that was the case; I had no difficulty in helping them make the decision that I understood they wanted to make, albeit that they were having difficulties coming to terms to make it. The agenda may change: I am not fussed about that.

They will nevertheless have to live with the \$15 000 cut that has been made this year. It should come as no surprise

to them, because Tandanya was advised last financial year, and reminded again for the coming financial year, that the arts budget will fund arts related projects. I will not fund a range of activities at Tandanya which have no relevance at all to the arts. People should be told the truth at some stage, although I will not hold up this Committee outlining Tandanya's operation.

I am not interested in paying through the arts budget for a building supervisor when part of the building is now being used by a hairdresser. Some may claim that hairdressing is an art form: I am most reliant on my hairdresser to cut my hair well, but I do not expect that to be subsidised by the arts budget, and neither Aboriginal people at Tandanya nor this Parliament should do so.

It is also important for this Parliament to understand that there was a 12 per cent fall in attendance at Tandanya in 1995-96 as at 30 May 1996. There is much that the board could do, rather than concentrating on a range of activities beyond its arts responsibilities, and I suggest that it starts to address those issues. Tandanya has received one letter from me, and it has now received another. I suggest that it starts focusing on the real game, which is the arts.

Ms GREIG: My question relates to Program Estimates, page 312. Will the Minister outline what collaboration has occurred between the arts and transport portfolios over the past two years since she became responsible for both portfolios?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This issue is really dear to my heart. I mentioned earlier the responsibility of people in the arts not believing that the Arts and Cultural Development Department alone will be the whole focus of any financial support or their livelihood in general. On a personal level, it has been my salvation in the transport portfolio to be able to work in the arts. The creative individuals whom one meets in the arts have been very refreshing after dealing with some of the engineering issues: I must admit that, after dealing with some of the issues in the arts, one does love to get back to the solid sound engineering issues that have no emotion as so often the arts issues do.

On a personal level I love the association, but we have also been able to achieve a great deal on a practical level for artists, playwrights, poets and the like. For instance, there are now on buses under a program assisted through the State Library and TransAdelaide poems called 'Poems for Passengers', and we worked through Friendly Street and provided, through this program, one of the few sources of incomes that poets get in a year. We will be doing more in the next few months in terms of Poems for Passengers. There was a huge promotion between the taxi industry and the last Adelaide Festival and between TransAdelaide and The Fringe. I was really thrilled last WOMAD to see that the cycling community in South Australia really backed it. We provided secure parking in the Botanic Park. It was just fantastic to see the number of people who rode their bikes and found that they could leave them all day in secure surroundings and enjoy WOMAD without fear of their being stolen.

The Department of Transport has for the past 18 months featured, on an ongoing basis, work and public relations activities from all arts companies, whether it be the Migration Museum, the State Theatre Company, Unley Youth Theatre or The Fringe. Every time I go into the foyer of what is essentially a dull and boring building out at the Department of Transport headquarters at Walkerville I notice the wonderful arts display. We are following that up with group tours and a whole range of things, and that is good.

Art in Public Places is developing a much closer association with transport. Recently the Osborne Park railway station, with Margaret Worth with her coloured metal cut-outs, featured local identities, and that has been supported by Tubemakers and the Port Adelaide Football Club, but essentially it is public transport working with the arts.

It is wonderful that we will soon be releasing a new project in city south so that the dull area of Adelaide where the train runs from Victoria Square down to Greenhill Road will get funding support from the Adelaide City Council, TransAdelaide and Art in Public Places to do a lot more on the barriers with sculptural work and the like. That association is working well.

With the Southern Expressway and the Coastal Way bikeway, through Arts in Public Places and artists generally, I am keen to see that seating, lighting and big boards of information about the natural environment—the weather, the fish and the vegetation—and where the walkways and cycleways are should be done by artists. We can use transport dollars to provide information and services and then provide income to artists. It is a good association, as is that between the History Trust and TransAdelaide, which is now helping to preserve a lot of TransAdelaide's heritage collection. So, in a whole range of areas there are good associations with money and income coming to artists.

Ms GREIG: Thank you, Minister. It makes the southern gateway project look more promising.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, that is correct, and why not? That project is important to the honourable member, and I think I have written to her in the past week saying that if she can gain support from local councils in the area the Department of Transport will be keen to look at the project. However, we would like some commitment from the local councils initially.

Membership:

Ms Hurley substituted for Mrs Geraghty.

Ms GREIG: I refer to the Program Estimates (page 312), the Cultural Industries Business Council. The establishment of the Cultural Industries Business Council and the Industry Development Fund is recorded as one of the Government's achievements in the development of the arts in the past year. Who are the members of the council and what has the council achieved to date?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Ms Peggy Barker is a member of the council, as is Stephanie Johnston of Wakefield Press. The membership also includes Perry Gunner, Chairman of Orlando-Wyndham; Bill Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust; Julia Mourant, who is in promotions and marketing with Channel 7; Winnie Pelz; Tyrrell Talbot, General Manager of Southern Television and a member of the South Australian Youth Arts Board; and Lyn Travar, Business Development Manager, Centre for Manufacturing.

We intend to put two people from the tourism industry on the council. I recall writing to Lyn Leader-Elliott recently and receiving a reply of 'Yes,' and we also invited Scott Ireland, but I am not sure whether we have received a reply from him at this stage.

The key focus for the council have been export initiatives, and \$200 000 of new funds were provided this financial year. It supported the Jam Factory Craft and Design Centre to exhibit the work of 10 South Australian craftspeople and designers at SOFA, in Chicago, which is the major craft and

design market in North America. The very fact that we can even exhibit there is a credit to the Jam Factory, but the fact that we have sold well and have had further sales is wonderful news. The program is also assisting the Jam Factory to investigate a number of options in a very promising venture in Hong Kong.

The council assisted Wakefield Press to attend the Frankfurt book fair, leading to sales and contracts worth more than \$30 000 dollars and opening further opportunities for Wakefield Press in the longer term. It assisted the Greenaway Art Gallery exhibit at ARCO, which is Madrid's international contemporary art fair, and it helped Annette Bezor in securing an exhibition of her work in Spain in June.

The Cultural Industries Business Council has assisted Magpie Theatre Company to perform its highly successful *Verona* at the biennial Ibero-American Theatre Festival, which is one of the largest theatre arts festivals in the South American continent. We should be aware that Magpie, the youth theatre that we often take for granted, opened this festival in Bogota, and the President of Colombia attended, which was a bit distracting for some of the South Australian actors because he came in with sniffer dogs and rifles and everyone was put on edge. The performance started 20 minutes late, but it was nonetheless wonderful, because the performers had to wait while the President gave one of his long speeches. At least politicians in the arts here give speeches after the performance, not before it.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Except at the Art Gallery opening.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is true, but that was a different sort of performance.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I refer to Tandanya. I found the Minister's response fairly offensive when she said in respect of Aboriginal people: 'Don't they know this?' If you were talking about the State Theatre Board you would not talk about 'those white people'. The Minister mentioned the falling attendances with respect to Tandanya. That is all very well, but Tandanya did not give out 11 100 freebies as the State Theatre Company did. Tandanya did not receive that sort of subsidy. The Minister thinks that there is a good relationship—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: What are you trying to say?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I will tell you what I am going to say, because I am about to read the letter. The Minister said she has a very good relationship with Tandanya, but a letter dated 19 June 1996 from Katrina Power, Chairperson for and on behalf of the institute board, states in part—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not received that letter.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I think it sent out a few copies, because I have one. In fact, copies were sent to the State Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; State Minister for the Arts; Chairperson, SA Aboriginal Lands Trust; CEO, Department for the Arts and Cultural Development; CEO, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs; board members, National Aboriginal Cultural Institute; and so on. The letter states:

It is considered by the board that the Ministers responsible and other parliamentarians do not seem to be fully aware of the institute's successful progress, programs and achievements. The board resolved that: 'The board commences an information campaign with all South Australian Ministers [this is addressed to the Minister] and parliamentarians to increase the institute's profile, detail our successes and explain our needs.'

The letter continues:

It is considered by the board that the ongoing reduction of our State Government grants reduces our fundamental ability to effectively operate and become a centre of national or State excellence. . . The board resolves that: 'The board accepts under

protest the reduction of \$15 000 . . . in our State grant for 1996-97, but rejects the Minister's suggestion to decrease the salary of a particular board employee, on contractual grounds and as a matter of principle. The board will continue to formulate and approve the institute's annual budget and the board reaffirms it is the employing authority of institute employees.'

The letter then states:

The board believes that the position of observer is no longer appropriate and that the institute has been discriminated against because other SA cultural institutions are not requested to have ministerial/department observers on their boards in addition to governmental nominees.

The letter also mentions that that non-voting position was a temporary measure installed during the institute's financial crisis of 1991. Further, the letter states:

All emergency loan funds have, as of June 1995 been repaid, and unlike other bodies, 100¢ in the dollar was settled with the State Government. . . The board resolved that: 'The board withdraws the invitation for a departmental/ministerial observer to sit on the board as the Minister for the Arts already has four ministerial nominees on our board of 10 members. It was also noted that there are two other governmental nominees from the State Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and SA Aboriginal Lands Trust which provides for a majority of board members (6 of 10) as governmental nominees.

In addition, the letter states:

Indigenous cultural institutions are kept on the 'financial fringe' without support for basic capital/building needs viz air conditioning, maintenance and infrastructure operational costs. This inadequacy makes it difficult to comply with the ministerial request to operate and collaborate in joint projects of the State cultural institutions . . . The board resolves that: 'The board invite the SA Minister for the Arts, the SA Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Chairperson of the SA Aboriginal Lands Trust and the respective departmental CEOs to an extraordinary board meeting to discuss the relationships and protocols between the State authorities and the institute's board. It does not sound quite as rosy as the Minister suggested before she insulted both Aboriginal people and the board of Tandanya.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As one becomes used to the Leader, one often finds that he distorts situations to present the picture he wishes, and that is generally not the truth. I indicate—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is entitled to her rebuttal.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: When the Leader wishes to examine what I said with a cool head, he will realise that I expect the Tandanya board, as I expect any board in the arts, to perform to its own performance criteria and to the artistic standards we set. The board was cautioned last year; it has been cautioned again. It can take whatever position it wishes to take. I am not fussed whether the board writes to me in that vein and sends the letter to everyone or throws it from a plane: I could not care. The point is that they are entitled to communicate with me as they wish and I will consider a response. However, they must in turn consider the propositions that I have put to them.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Last year the Minister created a great deal of excitement by attempting to cut out all arts funding to Community Radio. When the sector complained vociferously, even having a large rally on the steps of Parliament House, the Minister backed down and restored 75 per cent of the previous funding. At the time they had to settle for a 25 per cent funding cut. The Minister indicated that this was a one-off general funding grant and that in future they would be eligible for project funding only, but it need not be equipment based. What is the funding allocation for Community Radio this year, presumably through the Cultural Development Committee; is the funding to be project based this year rather than a general grant to each radio station; and,

if the grants have not yet been determined, when are they expected and will there be a general announcement at that time?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The arrangement will be as it has been in the past. Applications will be called. I think I have written to all who have applied in the past and invited them to do so again. I have also advised them that a total of \$100 000 will be available for Community Radio project grants in 1996-97. They will be called in September with advice before the end of the year, and they will be considered by the expanded Cultural Development Committee, which includes people with experience in community radio. I would name principally the Chair, Jill Lambert, and Eric Ericsson had a lot of community radio experience in Western Australia before coming here to become Executive Officer of the South Australian Music Industry Association. The projects that they apply for will be arts related if they wish to receive money for them. I have also been alerted to the fact that within the \$100 000 there will be provision for the South Australian Community Broadcasters Association if it wishes to apply for program assistance, which is general purpose funding, for an annual program of arts and cultural development and promotion activities which address issues common to the sector.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: What is the Minister's attitude towards a move to triennial funding of arts bodies? When I was Minister with responsibility for training and in charge of regional development, I moved that way on a range of fronts with regional development boards and training organisations. What is the Minister's attitude to that? As a former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I do not believe that the Minister would speak about the board of the State Opera or the State Theatre Company in the way that she has spoken about the board of Tandanya tonight. It is a great shame for the State.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Leader has prejudged me. I count Aboriginal people among some of my dear friends. I was the first person in this Parliament to employ an Aboriginal trainee and later two trainees. The Leader wrongly judges me. If you had asked me questions about some of the other boards, I would have been pleased to be equally frank. You did not do so, and that is your choice. However, do not accuse me simply because you do not choose to ask various questions.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Don't get too excited. The Leader of the Opposition is not so perfect that he can go around commenting on the actions of others as he has this evening. If the honourable member chooses not to ask questions on certain boards, then he should not go around saying to me that I have sought to address Tandanya in a manner in which I would not address other boards because he has no basis for making such a claim.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Only your own words.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Perhaps a bit of fresh air is needed by the honourable member. I am very pleased to answer this question. There was a matter of commitment in the arts policy by the Liberal Government and it has honoured it and continued to excel in driving the arts forward in this State—and it is not an easy task when it has to pick up all the pieces that were left unfinished or ignored by the former Government, including a particular debt ridden climate but we are succeeding where they failed. The State Opera of South Australia has been offered and accepted triennial funding commencing 1995-96 through to the 1997-98 year

inclusive. It was intended that the same offer would be made to the State Theatre Company of South Australia, but due to its endeavour to transfer funding and financial reporting from financial to calendar year—an endeavour that I did support but without success—this has not occurred. Negotiations are well advanced, but this issue still requires resolution. It is intended to offer three year funding commencing 1996-97 to the State Theatre Company, the Jam Factory, the South Australian Youth Art Board-Carclaw, the South Australian Country Arts Trust, the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust and the South Australian Film Corporation.

Further, the Adelaide Festival may be placed on four year funding from 1996-97 because that is the basis on which we are operating in terms of its five year development plan to which I referred earlier. We are one year into that five year plan now. Annual funding agreements are now in place for all arts organisations in receipt of \$500 000 and above per annum in financial assistance. It is intended that a performance schedule be attached to those agreements, which is consistent with Australia Council requirements, and these agreements or deeds be titled 'Performance Agreements'. Where possible these agreements should be between three parties—the State, the Australia Council and the organisation involved. South Australia will be careful to ensure that its policy directions and prerogatives are not diluted as part of this process. It is the Government's intention that all organisations in receipt of \$500 000, or more, in the State funding be offered triennial funding by 1997-98. That is a most credible goal—and one that should be able to be achieved—and certainly will be of benefit to the arts organisations.

To achieve the benefits of training or funding it is necessary for, first, companies to commit three year business plans and indicative budgets to form the basis of the main assessment process; secondly, performance indicators covering the period to be agreed with the company; thirdly, quarterly reviews of progress; and, fourthly, annual acquittal of funds and an annual funding agreement to include confirmation or variation of performance expectations for the coming year. We have a commitment, we are doing well and we should have all companies in receipt of financial assistance over \$500 000 from the State on triennial funding by the year 1997-98. We are further advanced than most State Governments in that area.

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

Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts and Minister for the Status of Women—Other Payments, \$885 000

Departmental Adviser:

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

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination, and I refer members to pages 70 and 193 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I would like to provide an opening statement. Women's full and equal participation in a South Australian society is a key aim of this Government. While significant changes have taken place over recent years, there is still a long way to go to achieve real equality for

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

An international conference for business women will be held in Adelaide in August. The conference will be hosted by the Asia-Pacific Business Council for Women, with the Government providing executive support staff. This conference, the fifth of the International Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, will bring more than 500 women to Adelaide. These business women will come from all over the world, particularly from the Asia-Pacific region. A significant benefit to South Australian business women will be a business matching strategy to link the women entrepreneurs from overseas with our local women in business.

The budget for the Office for the Status of Women is \$854 000. This covers expenditure for the Office for the Status of Women, the Women's Advisory Council and the Women's Information Service. This Government has put in place a number of key initiatives, and these will continue to be pursued over the next year. The Women's Advisory Council has consulted widely with women in rural and metropolitan areas. The report released following these consultations contained a series of recommendations. The same report also highlighted that a number of recommendations had already been implemented and progress had been achieved on further recommendations. These recommendations in general will be acted upon by the Office for the Status of Women in collaboration with Women's Advisory Council members.

The Office for the Status of Women is working towards ensuring that, by the turn of the century, women will be equally represented on Government boards and committees. Currently, 29 per cent of board positions are held by women, an increase of 3 per cent since 1993. It is my understanding that, in other than the Commonwealth area, South Australia is more advanced than any other State in this field.

An executive search for high profile, able women suitable for appointment to category 1 boards, which is the highest level in terms of responsibility in budgets and salary in South Australian Government, has resulted in a 70 per cent success rate, which is great news for the women and those boards on which they are now serving. The Women's Information Service has been restructured in line with the needs of women of the 1990s. South Australia is rapidly becoming a centre of excellence in some areas in terms of evolving information technology and that industry in general. The Women's Information Service will provide a space where women can become familiar with information technology and access to the Internet. New communications technologies will enable workers at the service to connect their customers directly with other agencies for the price of one call. The Women's Information Service will host a national conference—Women, Creativity and Technology—in September this year.

An interdepartmental committee on policy initiatives for women has been established, chaired by the Director of the Office for the Status of Women (Ms O'Loughlin), and this

interdepartmental committee is enabling departments to take a whole of Government perspective to their programs and activities. The committee is divided into three working groups, and they are looking at equal opportunity issues, women as customers and enterprise bargaining.

In the next session of Parliament, I will release a women's statement to replace the women's budget. The statement will give the women of South Australia an account of what each department is doing to raise the status of women as both customers and employees. It will report on departmental programs and projects which will affect women and give an up-to-date analysis of the gender breakdown on Government boards and committees. This statement will also include a statistical update on the profile of women in South Australia and provide the basis for inclusive strategic planning and evaluation, with opportunities for benchmarking and highlighting best practice. Through the work of the Government—and I particularly commend the Office for the Status of Women—the women of South Australia are being given another chance to influence the future of this State.

Before we commence questions, I would like the opportunity to state on the record that I erred in making a reference earlier in answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition in relation to Tandanya. I indicated that a hairdressing salon had been established. I should have indicated that it was a proposal that was discussed by Tandanya. I understand that it did not finally eventuate. I would like the record corrected in that regard. I hope that there will also be an opportunity for the Leader to correct the record and remove the accusations he levelled at me about references to black people that I was reported to have made in my statement. I have perused *Hansard* and there is no such reference. I knew that there would not be and that he had made it up. Perhaps he may have the dignity and integrity to apologise later, but I might be holding my breath.

The CHAIRMAN: I invite the lead speaker for the Opposition to make a statement.

Ms HURLEY: The budget for specific women's programs this year is even more of a non-event than it was last year. There has been no effort to improve the lot of women who are not already well positioned in the labour market. There is no innovation and certainly no increase in funding. The only worthwhile innovation in the past financial year has been the establishment of a Women's Legal Service in Adelaide, which is funded exclusively with Commonwealth money provided by the former Labor Government, following the recommendation for the establishment of such a service in the justice statement released by Michael Lavarch, the former Labor Attorney-General. Shamefully, the Minister did not support the establishment of this service, even though it would not cost her Government a cent.

In terms of the projects with which the Minister will try to impress, there is really nothing new. The so-called breakthrough register continues, but we must not forget that that idea was a Labor Government initiative. The Women's Advisory Committee continues its work, although the extent to which the needs and concerns of ordinary women in the community are able to be transmitted to the Minister, let alone to the Cabinet, by members of the Women's Advisory Committee is really debatable. There is widespread concern about the focus of the Women's Advisory Council being unduly narrow.

The Program Estimates refer to a women's statement, which was first referred to in last year's budget papers, yet the Minister has been unable to produce this document this

year in time for examination and discussion in this Estimates Committee. The Opposition notes that the Working Women's Centre budget has been transferred to the Department for Industrial Affairs, and that raises a serious concern. Leaving aside the fact that its budget was slashed by the Minister during her first year in the women's portfolio, the real concern is the prospect of the Minister's losing any sense of concern for the good work carried out by the Working Women's Centre once it is no longer specifically on one of her budget lines. Indeed, this highlights one of the Opposition's grave reservations about how the status of women portfolio is being handled. The Minister does not appear to take sufficient interest in significant women's issues which happen to lie outside the small number of specific programs for which she is directly responsible. This was clearly evident when we went through the Estimates Committee process last year, and the Minister appeared to be only too happy to refer matters to one of her Cabinet colleagues.

The Minister for the Status of Women ought to be speaking out on behalf of all women in South Australia on a range of issues, whether they be health or welfare issues or whatever, and certainly fighting strongly with her Cabinet colleagues to retain those services for women which this Government seems to consider unimportant. Perhaps the lack of progress with this particular portfolio reflects the dismissive view taken by the Minister's Cabinet colleagues when women's issues are raised at that level. We can only hope that our questioning this evening will highlight some issues which the Minister ought to take back and seriously put before the Cabinet.

Ms HURLEY: My first question relates to policy. Will the Minister support, in principle, legislation to amend State equal opportunity laws to ensure all parliamentarians are covered for offences such as sexual harassment?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I understand that matter is still with the Attorney-General. It is being considered as part of the amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act following a review by Mr Martin last year. This matter was raised by the Women in Parliament Joint Standing Committee. I think its findings are excellent, and I am keen to pursue them.

Ms HURLEY: Will the Minister adopt recommendation 7.25 of the report of the Women in Parliament Joint Standing Committee, which states:

That the Government grant funding to the Office of the Status of Women so that they may run a campaign to encourage women to stand as candidates at the next State election.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I indicated earlier that I think the committee's recommendations are excellent. As resources allow, we will seek to work with members of Parliament generally and the Chairman of the committee, Ms Julie Greig, to pursue those recommendations. I think it is in the interests of the Parliament that those recommendations be taken further by me, but I do not think the responsibility rests with me alone.

Ms HURLEY: Has EDS taken over responsibility for information technology functions in the Office for the Status of Women, and has this led to any staffing changes?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Well, I cannot hear anything.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think it is lack of interest on the part of the Labor Party in the questions being asked and the answers being given. The member for Price, who has been here nearly all day, is also interested, but has found it difficult

to hear because of the Labor women in the gallery continuing to talk through the questions and answers.

The CHAIRMAN: We cannot hear it here.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is very obvious here. Throughout the whole day, this Committee has shown courtesy in listening to the questions and answers, and I should have thought that on this budget line Labor members, women in particular, could also show that courtesy. If they are not interested they could go home and get some sleep.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of the Attendant to warn the gallery. Most people know that no talking is permitted in the gallery, anyway.

Ms GREIG: Before raising the first of my questions in this important area, I record my thanks and appreciation to the Minister who, with the assistance of a committed staff team, has put in place policies and programs and ensured that they improve the status and wellbeing of all South Australian women. As a female member in this Parliament I know first-hand of the Minister's interest in promoting the interests of all women and her commitment in endeavouring to ensure that all available options and opportunities are in place for women and girls to participate and achieve in a broad range of areas. I am sure that throughout this estimates questioning we will see a lot of positive achievements by the Minister and the Office of the Status of Women that are a credit to our Government. Most of my questions concern the Financial Statement. What has been done to ensure that women have the opportunity to participate fully and equally in all spheres of our society?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As I indicated in my opening statement, this is a key objective of the Government, which has devoted considerable resources over a range of areas. Many women's issues are not always based on financial resources but rely on commitment to get things done. One of this Government's early commitments was the initiative to establish the Joint Select Committee on Women in Parliament, and I thank the member for Reynell for chairing that committee so ably and bringing down an excellent set of diverse recommendations for all members of this Parliament to consider in terms of ensuring that this Parliament is seen as an equal opportunity employer and also a comfortable place in which men and women alike can represent their constituents' interests. So, that women in Parliament select committee was seen as an important initiative by the Government. We will pursue the report brought down by the all Party committee and will not allow it to lie around.

As for women on boards and committees, I am not sure what exactly the member for Napier was getting at in trying to infer a lack of interest on my part in a range of needs and interests of women. In relation to the transport portfolio, one could not be more in touch with women's needs on a daily basis than be responsible for the public transport system. As I indicated in response to questions earlier today, this Government is the first in this country to establish a focus on women as customers for public transport and also women as employees within the TransAdelaide organisation.

A range of initiatives has been pursued as a result of that, including better lighting at railway stations, better seating at bus stops and shelters, better information provided at bus stops and timetable information. That information is now not only free but easily folded into handbags, pockets and the like. We now have telephones on buses and passenger service attendants on trains. That latter initiative was praised by the member for Spence. It was quite a distorted picture—and possibly deliberately so—of the initiatives that have been

taken across Government. I mentioned public transport initiatives, women in Parliament and women on boards and committees.

It might well have been, and I have never denied this, that the former Government established a register and saw it as an important objective. Apparently, because members of the Labor Party are no longer in Government, it does not seem such an important objective, as they seek to demean the effort the Liberal Government is making in this field, and it is a mighty effort. As I mentioned in my opening statement, 29 per cent of members on Government boards and committees are women, and that is the highest percentage of any Government in this country. I would have thought that this is not a point scoring exercise. If the honourable member were big enough and committed enough, she would see fit to recognise that achievement.

In terms of the equal opportunity issues raised by the member for Reynell, the changes made at the Women's Information Service—after full consultation with the community and an amended report, in terms of its recommendations, following further consultations with women—mean that we have a much better system to serve a wider range of women than has ever been able to access that service in the past. It is interesting that, where Government has succeeded on behalf of women, the Labor Party conveniently overlooks those successes, and it seems a bit petty minded to me.

In terms of the Women's Advisory Council, I made reference to its consultations with rural communities, and anyone in touch with the electorate today would have to acknowledge that, in terms of ensuring women's full and equal participation in society, major effort must be made to assist women in rural and regional areas with respect to service delivery, ageing of the population, access issues, education and even economic circumstances because of hard times on the land. There could be no greater cause for concentration of Government effort in encouraging the participation of women than in respect of the needs of women in rural areas, and that is why the Women's Advisory Council is comprised of fully representative and highly committed women. I do not think they will necessarily appreciate the reflections on their service to the State and women generally as a result of the honourable member's references today.

Ms Hurley interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Aboriginal representation on that committee will not reflect well on the interjection from the honourable member, if it was in fact picked up by *Hansard*. So, whether one looks at rural issues, women in Parliament, women on boards and committees, women in transport, the work that the Minister for Health is doing in terms of women's health and community centres, with recent initiatives in obstetrics and breast cancer that have recently been confirmed, whether it be education, higher education, or the schools system—

Ms GREIG: Parenting.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: —or parenting, with a \$1.1 million commitment recently announced as part of this budget by the Minister for Family and Community Services and the Premier, the spectrum is as wide as it should be because women's interests are broad, and they will continue to have the full commitment of this Government.

Ms GREIG: How have we fostered an appreciation by society of the value of work undertaken by women in the home, in child rearing, in caring for older people, and in voluntary community activities?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A moment ago the honourable member prompted me when she referred to the Parenting South Australia project, which is designed to ensure that parents have positive strategies for child rearing. This was launched recently by Minister Wotton and the Premier. It is a campaign which helps to demystify some of the most common concerns confronted by new parents in the early years of parenthood.

There is a whole range of items in what has been generally termed a parents' survival kit. While I am not a parent myself, I know that survival is often on the mind of most parents, mothers and fathers alike. The kit, which is available in a wide range of centres, provides a wealth of information on parenting and has been sought by the community, including women's groups. It is an important initiative in line with the Minister's concern about the initiative taken in terms of women working in the home, in child rearing and caring for older family members.

Likewise, the Premier announced recently a long-term plan for South Australia's older people, providing more than \$800 million in expenditure over the decade. More than \$300 million of this expenditure is in the form of new funding, taking up the recommendations of 'Ageing—a 10 year plan for South Australia.' All members would appreciate that any assistance provided for older people in our community necessarily is important to women, as women comprise the vast majority of older people and do so as the age profile increases.

This plan involves a whole range of initiatives from services and opportunities regardless of geographical background, colour, economics, and the like. There will be a coordinated approach by all Government agencies in providing housing, transport, education, recreation, community services and industry training; there will be a review of legislation to ensure the rights of older people are strengthened and protected in areas such as mediation, advocacy, complaints, age discrimination and financial protection; and there will be greater liaison with the private sector in the provision of services, establishment of a ministerial council on ageing to monitor the implementation of the plan and to provide advice on issues affecting older people.

I recall that the Minister, if he has not announced membership of that council this week, will be doing so. This campaign challenges negative stereotypes on ageing and encourages full participation in community life and in personalising support services where they are needed. In terms of personalising services, three of the women who work with me in my office are all seeking to do the best by me at the moment but at the same time have parents or parents-in-law with incontinence, dementia, in hospital with broken limbs or other complaints, and what is expected of women in those circumstances is massive in meeting the needs of their immediate family and the expectations of the older family relative. As I know from personal experience, they are demanding as they get older and are more demanding when they are not well, yet these women meet my expectations on a daily basis as well. Juggling all those demands is enormous. This plan and a range of other initiatives in terms of supporting and valuing the work of women undertaken in the home, child rearing and the care of older people is an important focus for the Government. Indeed, as our parents, aunts and others grow older and lack support, we become more conscious ourselves as we get older that this could happen to us. We must ensure that services for older people are even better in the future than

those which are provided now, if we do so only for our own selfish interests as insurance for the future.

The Office for the Status of Women is working on all those fronts and has been actively involved in the programs I have announced. It is working with the Office for Families and Children, the Office of the Ageing and, as I mentioned earlier, the Women's Information Service, which is one of the most important initiatives in terms of helping women in the home and elsewhere access and become comfortable with the new technologies because, with such information, they will be more powerful and effective in the community generally.

Ms GREIG: When we talk about attitude in this place, it is normally in a negative way, but out in the community there are women with attitude. Can you tell us what these women have been doing?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am thrilled to do so. There is at present the exhibition 'Women with Attitude' at Edmund Wright House, which is now the base for the State History Centre. It is part of a National Museum touring program. The National Museum suggested to Emily Heysen, with Ausmusic, and also to Warwick Cheatle, then with Ausmusic and presently with the South Australian Music Industry Association and now working with me as a contemporary music consultant, that we should look at adapting this statement 'Women with Attitude' to the music industry, because a lot is being done in the contemporary music industry in this State, but we should do more to promote the involvement of women and praise women's achievements in this field.

There will be a major conference on Women with Attitude in the next month, with key speakers from interstate, with Crisp, Fruit and others from South Australia also performing and reflecting on their experiences and outlining new directions that can be taken to ensure that their involvement and interests are being addressed. This is a first for South Australia and will be wonderful in attracting attention to women in contemporary music in addition to the issue of 'Women with Attitude', and we thank the Office for the Status of Women, the National Museum and others for co-sponsoring this important initiative.

Ms HURLEY: The Minister seemed to react sensitively to the Opposition's criticisms but we might add to that criticism that Status of Women's questions have been given only 45 minutes, quite a deal of which has been taken up with Dorothy Dixers.

Ms Greig interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: I have not had time to get through them. I remark on one thing the Minister said: that the Labor Party has been demonstrably supportive of appointments of women to boards and committees and has applauded each appointment. I wish that the 29 per cent of women on Government boards might have been reflected in Cabinet, where only one of the 13 Ministers is a female; the former Labor Government had three female members amongst the 13 Ministers and now has four female shadow Ministers, one of whom is the Leader in the Upper House. It is a touch rich for the Minister to say that we are not allowed to make a mild query about the Women's Advisory Council after her quite savage attack on the Tandanya board. I do not see why anyone should be immune from attack, given her remarks about Tandanya. Regarding the Women's Information Service, to which Labor has given demonstrable support, the Minister has proposed that the Women's Information Service be relocated to a shop front location on North Terrace, but will the relocation be funded so that the Women's Information Service will not

have to reduce services as a consequence of relocating, for example, by having to pay rent?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There will be no additional costs or cuts of service.

Ms HURLEY: Will an additional grant be provided if the Women's Information Service is required to pay rent.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes.

Ms HURLEY: Does the Minister acknowledge that funding cuts have forced a discontinuation of the three English as a second language radio programs currently produced by the Women's Information Service?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, it was not an issue of cuts: it was a deliberate policy position because an assessment was made, as part of the review based also on consultation with the community, that value was not being received from this program. I did not raise or introduce the point: it was part of a review and I allowed the community to determine the substance of the review and the recommendations. I deliberately was not interviewed as part of the process so that I could respond without agenda to the recommendations. As the Hon. Anne Levy was earlier in this session, the honourable member has been totally misinformed, and perhaps wishes to remain misinformed, about the nature of the change to the ethnic radio programs in respect of women.

The new initiative through Radio 5EBI FM will provide advice to women from non-English speaking backgrounds in 21 community languages outlining the services that are now available through the Women's Information Service and the Telephone Interpreter Service, and this is a joint initiative between these two agencies.

Ms HURLEY: How much did the Women's Advisory Council cost to operate in the 1995-96 financial year and how much will it cost to operate in the coming financial year? I would appreciate knowing how much the executive officer is being paid. Is that officer able to receive performance bonuses and what is the term of the contract?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I do not know whether you receive a performance bonus. It has never been applied to Ministers. The Director of the Office of the Status of Women does not and certainly an officer at ASO5 does not receive performance bonuses. There are only a few people at the EL level to whom it applies, but it is to be encouraged further. It is not available presently. The cost of council operations, the executive officer, community consultations and the publication was \$137 000 last financial year, and that includes accommodation and administration expenses.

Ms HURLEY: How much is the executive officer paid?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is at the ASO5 level.

Ms GREIG: I have written these questions myself. In honouring our commitment to the prevention of domestic violence, and in ensuring the safety of women and children escaping violence at home, what initiatives have been put in place and how are they working?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was not unnatural to anticipate that there may be a question on domestic violence and I have some notes on the subject. It is one of four areas on which the Women's Advisory Council can focus its activities and it is doing so in terms of an assessment of Government strategies at this time. The Office of the Status of Women is also working with other agencies with responsibility for domestic violence, in particular with the Attorney-General and the Domestic Violence Prevention Unit under his Crime Prevention Unit. There are proposals for the establishment of the Domestic Violence Council but they have not yet been fully approved.

Research has been undertaken to examine primary prevention strategies, targeting the intergenerational issues, and that includes abuse of older people; invention through schools to give children options in conflict resolution; and a whole range of support for men in accepting that violence is not an appropriate response to conflict. A review of women's shelters is currently being undertaken through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program and Family and Community Services has a domestic violence unit in its Office for Families and Children. This is an intergenerational approach to domestic violence, sometimes and more frequently today called family violence. This will be piloted in the northern suburbs through the Domestic Violence Unit in the latter part of 1996.

The CHAIRMAN: Questions not asked at the end of the day may be placed on the next day's House of Assembly Notice Paper, if required.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is interesting that, on this topic about women, we have had three-quarters of an hour but, on public transport, the Labor Party had no questions after 20 minutes. It raises questions about priorities.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.1 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 20 June at 11 a.m.