

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Tuesday 25 June 1996

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chairman:**

Mr H. Becker

**Members:**

Mr K.A. Andrew  
 Mrs R.K. Geraghty  
 Mr J.A. Quirke  
 Mrs L. Rosenberg  
 Mr D.E. Wade  
 Ms P.L. White

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*


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Employment, Training and Further Education,  
 \$172 976 000

**Witness:**

The Hon. R.B. Such, Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education and Minister for Youth Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr B. Stanford, Chief Executive, Department for Employment, Training and Further Education.  
 Dr G.W. Wood, Director, Vocational Education and Training Division.  
 Mr D.C. Carter, Director, Group Corporate Services.  
 Ms C. Tuncks, Manager, Employment Division.  
 Ms T. Flynn, Manager, Youth SA.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have a few opening remarks to make. As most member would know, 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 composition of 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 12 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, if desired, of about 10 minutes but no longer than 15 minutes. There will be a flexible approach in relation to giving the call for asking 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.

Subject to the convenience 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 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 House of Assembly Notice Paper.

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 make a brief opening statement if he wishes.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Yes. The portfolio of youth affairs is very important, and it is one to which I have a great commitment, as has the Government overall. Prior to entering Government, we made a conscious decision to create a Ministry of Youth Affairs which is, by its very nature, a separate portfolio. I am pleased to say that this year, as part of a further recognition of the role of Youth SA, Cabinet agreed, through the budget process, to increase substantially the funding to Youth SA—in fact, a net increase of \$335 000, which amount represents in total a \$1.1 million allocation specifically for Youth SA. Youth SA traditionally has been funded as an offshoot of DETAFE, and whilst in budget and accounting terms that is still technically correct what we see now is a very significant increase and recognition of the specific role of Youth SA.

This Government has introduced many new initiatives relating to young people against the backdrop of a general message that South Australia's young people are fantastic. We have a few rascals who, from time to time, go off the rails, but it is our commitment to bring them back into the mainstream as quickly and as easily as possible. We are trying to convey to the community the message that young people are an important part of the community. I have said it several times before, but often people talk about young people only in regard to the future, which is correct, but they are also part of the present. To reflect that message we have provided opportunities for young people to be on Government boards and advisory committees. We are in the process of finalising a ministerial advisory council so that young people can give advice direct to me. We have introduced the Youth Parliament which, as members would know, is run in conjunction with the YMCA, but we provide significant funding to that. This year's Youth Parliament will be held next month and represents a continuation of that very exciting function.

The Youth Expo this year will be incorporated within the South Australian Royal Show and will focus specifically on aspects of high technology, in particular accessing the Internet and related activities. The Government has supported the Youth Media Awards for the first time, which were very

successful in highlighting the constructive role the media can play in portraying young people, and we had a significant interest in that. We are committed to running the Youth Media Awards next year, and planning for that is currently under way. We have instituted Proclamation Day awards in conjunction with SA Great and, for the past two years, youth awards have been a part of Proclamation Day awards.

They are some examples of the tangible efforts we are trying in an attempt to send a message to the community that young people are important and to try to bridge what is often categorised as a 'generation gap'. In addition and just as importantly, I attend many youth functions—and tomorrow I am attending one in the northern suburbs where young people can present views directly to me—and I have also organised many functions in country areas. It is important for young people in South Australia to convey a message directly to me, as Minister, so that I can relay that message to Cabinet to have an influence in policy and decision making. In short, our commitment to young people continues. Indeed, we intend to intensify and expand it wherever possible as an ongoing demonstration of our support, faith and confidence in the young people of South Australia.

**Ms WHITE:** Given the constraints of time, I will just start with questions. I refer to the Program Estimates and Information, pages 427 and 428. To begin with, I want to clarify the context within which we must assess the expenditure and priorities outlined in the Youth SA and Youth Employment aspects of the budget. The Premier often states that South Australia's economy is outperforming other States and that employment growth is strong. The Government's budget speech went so far as to claim strong growth for South Australia and said that this is the new South Australia, confident, competitive, creative and caring. However, I put to the Minister that South Australia has the highest youth unemployment of any State, that our participation is the lowest of any mainland State and that, as a result of the depressed state of our economy and predictions of slow growth, undue pressure is being placed on our young people and on family relationships and, because community support agencies are being cut back, while the demand for those services to young people is increasing, there is real concern for our future. With which assessment of our State does the Minister agree: the upbeat view of the Premier and his Government or the particularly gloomy scenario that I have given?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** That was a smorgasbord of a question and I will do my best to answer it. There is no room for gloom in South Australia. We need to put youth unemployment in its proper context. Unfortunately, Mr Murdoch got it wrong as a result of someone in his audience at the meeting conveying to him a misleading impression of the status of youth employment in this State. In simple terms we have about 100 000 15 to 19 year olds in South Australia and three quarters of those young people are at school, university or at TAFE. We are left with those who are working full time or who want to work full time. The figure of unemployment is below 40 per cent and we are actually talking of a figure of about 30 per cent of the 25 per cent. We are not talking about what the paper and various media outlets often portray. We are not talking about a large number of young teenagers being out of work.

The Premier and I have said that figure is unacceptable, that there are still far too many people unemployed. In reality, we are looking at an unemployment rate for young people which is generally below the general rate. Members need to

bear in mind that the figures given for youth unemployment are an expression of the youth labour force, which is those working or who want to work full time. For young people, part-time work is not a helpful aspect of the figures because many young people work part time while they are at school, university or TAFE. The ABS figures only talk about full-time employment for teenagers. We have to remember also that they are expressed as original data and are not adjusted for factors such as young people leaving school. The recent increase in that rate to 39 per cent is a reflection—and it happened in many preceding years—that young people at university, TAFE or school after first term or thereabouts decide it is not for them and they put their hand up for a job. Under the definition, they have to be actively seeking work, which means asking a relative for a job, going to the CES or something like that. We need to hit this on the head—the Premier did in his estimates hearing.

Whilst we are saying that the level of unemployment amongst young people is unacceptable, it is certainly not a situation of doom and gloom. The doom and gloom often referred to relates to people who do not have any skills to offer potential employers. This is why we as a Government have increased the training provision in the budget—to make sure that our young people get the skills that will get them a job. South Australia has had a higher level of youth unemployment for longer than most other States because our manufacturing industry went through a dramatic restructuring as a result of tariff changes. We are coming to the end of that process. Our manufacturers are focussed on export opportunities and are now taking on more people. We are seeing that at Mitsubishi and also at Holden's. However, it is happening in other industries as well. It is a dangerous message to be conveying to our young people that it is doom and gloom, because it is not. There are plenty of jobs if you have the skills. As a young person, experience can be gained through part-time work at take-away food outlets, and so on. I disagree totally with the member for Taylor's inference that it is a bad scenario. It is a very positive one, and I am happy to correct Mr Murdoch, just as I am happy to correct the member for Taylor.

**Ms WHITE:** Thank you, Minister, for your correction. I find it extraordinary that the Minister says that there is no room for gloom and that he disagrees totally with my statement. I point out the Minister that his own Program Estimates (page 438), under Issues/trends, states:

- South Australia retains the highest rate of youth full-time unemployment nationally. South Australia's labour participation rate remains the lowest of mainland States. Predictions of slow growth, especially in retail industries in mid-1996, evidence pressure on young people, family relationships and concerns for our future.

- Public and community agencies reported reduction in resources and increases in demand for services to young people.

That gloomy scenario is the same one I put to the Minister just now—one which he chose to reject totally. Perhaps the Minister would like to reconsider his answer to my question or step away from the integrity of his budget papers analysis of the current circumstances.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We are not saying that the situation is satisfactory. I have indicated that both the Premier and I have said that we do not regard the current level of youth unemployment as acceptable, and that is why we have introduced special programs to deal with it; for example, the 1 500 trainees we are taking into the Public Service. We have managed to recruit about 432, so we still have over 1 000 positions to fill. If we fill those 1 000 positions, that

would make an enormous dent in the number of unemployed teenagers. We have also introduced a program called the Selfstarter Scheme to help young unemployed get their own business. We have introduced contract compliance so that builders and others who work in the civil construction area have to comply with certain employment training criteria in terms of obtaining Government contracts. We have a whole range of other programs designed to ensure that there are opportunities for young people. Even though this Government inherited a level of youth unemployment that was much higher than it is now, we acknowledge that it is still unacceptable. South Australia was for too long highly dependent upon manufacturing and got caught with its pants down when the tariff restructuring process was in full flight. That is why we as a Government are restructuring to get into areas such as information technology. We are encouraging aquaculture and viticulture. We are trying to diversify the economy, because South Australia traditionally had many of its jobs in the one basket, and that is a very vulnerable situation in which to be.

We are not saying that employment for young people is as it should be, but we are trying to do something about it and have achieved significant outcomes in that area. Young people who do not get the necessary skills will have their chances of obtaining employment vastly reduced. That is why many programs which I have not mentioned, such as Kickstart for Youth and Focus on the Future, have been instituted so that we do not continue this long-term unemployment situation with young people.

**Ms WHITE:** One aspect which impacts heavily on the demand for youth services and the allocation of training funds is the number of students who opt out of school. In the statistical information supplement to the budget documents, released by the Department for Education and Children's Services in last week's Estimates Committee, figures show a 1995 year 12 school retention rate of an appallingly low 63 per cent. The Premier has publicly advocated raising the school leaving age to 17 in order to address these falling retention rates. I trust that the Minister takes my view that such a move will require an accompanied redesign of appropriate curricula for all those students. What is the Minister's position on whether the school leaving age should be raised?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The Cabinet has not made a decision on it and I have not seen any evidence that the Premier has committed himself to support for raising the school leaving age. There has been a range of speculative pieces in the media and—

*Ms White interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I am a member of Cabinet. Cabinet will make a decision because, as the member has said, it has significant resource implications. The important question is not so much how long you spend somewhere as what you do in the time that you spend at school, TAFE or university. In other words, it is a question of the appropriateness of the programs rather than the length of time that someone serves. That is the philosophy that underlies our commitment to training. We are trying to get away from a time-serving model, which is more appropriate to prisons, to one which is based on levels of skill and competency. The member for Taylor will have to wait until Cabinet considers such a recommendation. I am not aware that anyone has specifically put or is putting one to Cabinet. If they do, no doubt Cabinet will consider it. However, there will be significant resource implications, and the matter more squarely falls within the province of the Hon. Rob Lucas.

**Ms WHITE:** As a supplementary, I make the comment that the Hon. Rob Lucas has publicly rejected the proposal. Given that Federal Minister Kemp has stated that he believes there is reason to be concerned about the level of competency of students leaving high schools, does the Minister agree with that; if so, in what way does he believe our school leavers' skills to be deficient; and what should be done to remedy the situation to enhance those young people's pathways into jobs and effective traineeships?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Many innovative developments are taking place. The education and training system is so large that almost any generalisation is true by the very size of the issue that we are dealing with. DECS is working closely with TAFE to increase vocationally linked programs. For example, last week I was at the Para Institute of TAFE where students from neighbouring high schools were coming in and doing vocationally oriented programs. The TRAC program, which TAFE strongly supported, has expanded from 30 or so participants last year to about 500 this year, and next year it will have about 3 000. That program has gone from a retail focus to a more comprehensive vocational focus with students spending time in the workplace doing accredited training with qualified people.

The question of the skills that students have when they leave school is being addressed by the Hon. Rob Lucas. One of the difficulties and challenges that he has had to face is that he inherited an education system that needed quite a bit of work done on it, and that is why he introduced things such as basic skills testing. Sadly, some elements within the teaching fraternity resisted that. Clearly, the Minister is trying to identify and tackle early the learning problems that children are experiencing. I should have thought the community would welcome it and, indeed, I believe parents have done so. We cannot have people leaving at the end of the system unless we tackle the problems early on, and that is exactly what the Minister is attempting with basic skills testing and other early intervention programs. We have inherited a huge difficulty in terms of those still leaving the system who are a legacy of what happened to our education system during the last decade or so.

**Mr WADE:** I refer to page 438 of Financial Paper No. 1. It is obviously very important to consult with young people about Government initiatives, policies and proposals that will affect them. Given that we have a large and very diverse youth population, how does the Minister communicate and consult with it?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** There is a range of techniques, one of the most fruitful of which is the informal arrangement which involves travelling informally (not dressed in a suit) on public transport and talking to young people. There is that constant interaction. I have three young people in my family from whom I get plenty of unsolicited advice. At a more formal level, I have organised a number of forums. I mentioned earlier that a forum will take place tomorrow in the Para District. There have been several forums in the South-East, on Yorke Peninsula, etc. Young people give the feedback directly to me. We also have links through the Youth Affairs Council. YouthSA interacts closely with them, so we get information and input from youth workers and other representatives involved with YACSA. We are setting up the Ministerial Advisory Council, and we are fairly close to having people involved in that. Given the interest from people who want to be on the council, one of the challenges is getting to a point where only 12 representatives are

involved. Clearly, we cannot accommodate everyone who would like to be on the council.

Having young people on Government boards and agencies is another approach, as it is yet another way of giving young people a voice. I encourage young people to contact me directly. At the last Royal Show we provided the opportunity through 'Spend a minute with the Minister', and we will do the same this year. There is a whole range of formal and informal structures. I look very closely at what young people debate in the Youth Parliament. I have met with some of the Youth Parliament teams. I met with two teams from Marion last week, one of which has focussed on issues relating to the disposal of second-hand goods while the other has focussed on drugs. So, young people have a say on issues of relevance to them.

**Mr WADE:** I refer to the Focus on the Future program, which I understand is for 13 to 15 year olds who are at risk of dropping out of school and which I understand was piloted in 1995-96. What were the outcomes of this pilot project? What plans are there regarding this project for 1996-97 and its activities for 13 to 15 year olds who are at risk of dropping out of school?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** For the next financial year we will provide an extra \$250 000 in funds for Focus on the Future, targeting 800 participants in total. I created the program because there is a large number of people in the 13 to 15 years age group who are at risk of dropping out of school or who have actually dropped out of school. I visited some of these projects; indeed, I have been at the celebration. For example, at Reynella East High School a group of seven young people built a sports shelter. They were, I guess, euphemistically called 'trouble makers' at school, but in this program they were able to see the benefit of learning maths. They were able to apply practical skill; they designed and built a sports shelter for the school; and they had access to TAFE; so, they were made aware of career training options via TAFE.

At Naracoorte, in the South-East, they built a giant cubbyhouse for the kindergarten. I will provide some examples to put it into the human context: one of the lads involved in that project, who was a bit of a rascal, caught a taxi from his farm because he missed the school bus but did not want to miss out on being involved in the program. So, he paid \$30 out of his own pocket to make sure that he would be there to work on that project. Some of the other rascals—and I call them that in an affectionate way—brought their cousins along to show them what they had done in building that cubby house. For a lot of those youngsters it was the first time anyone had ever said, 'Well done.' One of the problems that many young people face is that they prefer a program which has a significant practical component. We have had no problem with the young people working on our various programs in terms of discipline and behaviour—they are absolutely committed and excited.

The program focuses on the whole person: it does not just put them through a pressure cooker skills program and release them into the school environment or elsewhere. It looks at their whole situation. If they need help with self-esteem or if they have problems at home, we try to pick up those through the program. It is already having a significant impact. Many high schools want to see it extended, and many primary schools have asked me if we can introduce it at their level. We can do that only in conjunction with and the approval of the Minister for Education and Children's Services. We find that in society today there are many young people who need

alternative options to help them focus, as the name suggests, on their future and show them the importance of education and training so that they do not join the long-term unemployed.

Without exaggerating some of the difficulties that some of these young people face, one of the lads in one of the programs with which I had recent experience had two broken legs resulting from violence from his father in his own home. Some of these young people face enormous hurdles, and we are literally saving their life with programs such as this. There are hundreds of South Australians who need this help, and that is why we have increased funding. We have had tremendous support from teachers and principals and the administration of DECS and other Government agencies who see that if we intervene early we can prevent these people from getting into serious trouble and literally going off the rails.

**Mr WADE:** I refer to the LEAP program, which is aimed at young people between 15 and 20. What are the employment and training outcomes for the LEAP program for 1996, and will there be a future LEAP program for young unemployed people?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As the honourable member may know, we act as brokers for LEAP, because it is a federally-funded program. It has a specific environmental focus. In the past year, TAFE obtained about \$3 million under that program. Many worthwhile projects have been undertaken throughout the State. The Land Environmental Action Program, as the name suggest, focuses on the environment, but importantly it gives young people skills and a sense of team spirit, and it brings them together as a first step in terms of getting them into the work force. I have seen evidence of some of those programs at Port Augusta and on Yorke Peninsula. They have built the Bird Walk near Murray Bridge and viewing platforms at Bool Lagoon. All sorts of worthwhile activities are provided by LEAP.

The future of LEAP is in the hands of the Federal Government, which has announced a new program called Green Corp, but we do not have any details of that as yet. During this year, we have 315 young people involved in LEAP. In terms of outcomes, whilst it is not the total answer to the unemployment of young people, it is certainly a first step to bringing them back into the system and giving them some structure and direction in their lives.

**Ms WHITE:** When Kickstart for Youth was piloted in July 1995, performance contracts were introduced. Last month, in response to a question on notice, the Minister said that the employment outcome targets for the 1996-97 program were yet to be finalised, but would be between 40 and 50 per cent of total participants for each region. Can the Minister now provide that employment outcomes target for 1996-97?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The member for Taylor must recognise that in these sorts of programs—and whilst I am called the Minister for Employment I am really the Minister for Employment Programs—often we are dealing with the more intensive area of unemployment: people who have been long-term unemployed, those who have been extremely disadvantaged, young Aboriginal people, women, and people from a non-English-speaking background. So, these programs specifically target disadvantaged groups. We insist that the people who run them focus on the disadvantaged. Despite that very difficult challenge, their success rate is about 50 per cent. In 1995-96, 1 498 young people were involved, of whom 546 have gained employment and a further 25 to

30 per cent have gone on to additional training. It may not necessarily lead to employment in the short term, because many people have their eyes opened and go on to do further study, but in general terms we are looking at a success rate of 50 per cent, bearing in mind that we are targeting the most difficult area of the employment market.

**Ms WHITE:** According to the department's brochure 'Kickstarting Kickstart', future funding allocations for Kickstart for Youth will be decided based upon outcomes achieved, with regions exceeding those outcomes to be allocated additional resources and those not meeting those outcomes to have their funding cut. The information provided by the Minister last month in response to my question about specific outcomes of the pilot program in 1995-96 lists outcomes in terms of the number of participants who have been placed in employment. It is clear, based on the figures provided as at April, shows 20 employment outcomes out of 130 participants.

As a local member in that region, as the Minister would acknowledge, I know that one explanation might be that participants in that area might be less job ready than participants elsewhere when they begin the program. Does the Minister concede that employment outcomes do not adequately indicate the success or otherwise of such a program, and can he assure the Committee that funding will not be diverted away from regions such as the outer metropolitan and Mid North regions where large numbers of participants come to a program with poor skills to begin with?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** There is no intention to cut funding simply because in one area the challenge might be greater. The reality is, as I just outlined, that often we are dealing with very difficult situations for individuals. In the main, we are not dealing with mainstream young unemployed people but with those who have extra disadvantages. You must bear in mind also that about 30 per cent of young people have a significant disability of one kind or another. The reason for having performance targets is to ensure that we impose self-discipline on our staff in a general sense.

We are not interested in talkfests or playing games or trying to look good: we want results. Therefore, we want outcomes and results from any money that we distribute from our department. Nevertheless, allowance is made for the fact that in some districts and areas the challenge of bringing some individuals into full-time employment or leading them on to extra training will be more difficult than in other areas. We have provided additional money in every region for the next financial year, and the targets for this coming financial year are based on the current year's activities. I can assure the honourable member that there is no intention to cut funding simply because, in some areas, the going is tougher than it might be elsewhere.

**Ms WHITE:** Does the Minister have a concern that this new focus towards employment outcomes for Kickstart for Youth will force local programs to cream intakes, that is, will applicants who are least likely to achieve those employment outcomes be overlooked so that performance indicator targets will be met to secure future funding, because that would

disadvantage those worst off in the job stakes—those most likely to become long-term unemployed?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Performance requirements within agreements are designed to prevent that sort of approach, whereby people can easily and quickly get results simply by targeting the people most able to access the work force. It would make a mockery of the whole program to target those who could provide a quick outcome and come up with a phoney result, rather than targeting the disadvantaged. The reason for the tough requirements is to ensure that disadvantaged people are targeted, whether they be Aboriginal people, people with a physical disability, or whatever. The criteria, as I say, are built into those performance measures. Weightings are given where the workers are dealing with the disadvantaged, such as long-term unemployed, Aboriginal young people, and so on.

**Ms WHITE:** Will the Minister table those criteria for the committee?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I can provide the sorts of criteria that exist for that program. Generally, we have performance criteria for all aspects where our department spends money, and taxpayers would be pleased to know that that is the case. We do it in TAFE, in Youth SA and we do it certainly in the Employment Division to ensure that we get results.

**Mr ANDREW:** I refer the Minister to page 438 of the Program Estimates and, in particular, specific youth programs. I have a good number of young people in my electorate who are interested in being further involved in youth activities. Many are involved in local programs and organisations currently, so I am particularly interested to know what programs or activities Youth SA undertakes to provide young people with the opportunity to have specific involvement, and particularly having an input into the Government decision-making process.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The member for Chaffey, I acknowledge, not only has a good number of young people in his electorate but he has a lot of good young people in his electorate. I have spoken to many of them and have been very impressed. I have met many of them at forums, such as the Berri Hotel—in the context of a public meeting and not around the bar! As members would know, the Berri Hotel is a community facility: it is not a hotel in the traditionally narrow sense. I alluded to some of these aspects earlier, such as the ministerial advisory council, which will involve young people from the country and the city.

We will pay and assist young country people to travel to be part of that ministerial advisory council. That measure is quite appropriate otherwise young country people would be disenfranchised from participating. We have almost finalised that ministerial advisory council. As I say, we have had such an interest from young people that it has been hard to get an age range, because we need to accommodate 15-year-olds as well as 21-year-olds. We also need participation from both men and women, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, non-English speaking and English speaking people, etc. It is important that we try to get that representation right.

The ministerial advisory council is just one avenue in which young people can be involved and, as I indicated earlier, we encourage young people to either write or telephone the department, or to speak with me direct. One avenue we have not mentioned today is Youth SAY, which is an opportunity for people working with young people through their organisations to express their concerns to us. We have already asked about 200 youth organisations in this State to survey the views of their young people on a range of

issues. That is yet another technique. Next year South Australia will conduct its inaugural Youth Week, which will involve local government.

We will be encouraging not only local government but other agencies to be involved in Youth Week. It will be a Statewide Youth Week, which will be an opportunity for young people not only to highlight their talents but also to express their views, to take part in mock council meetings, and other activities. We offer youth initiative grants to young people up to \$500 to develop their own character and develop activities for youth. The Youth Charter has been a little bit like an elephant's pregnancy—it has taken a long time. It sounds simple to come up with a Youth Charter, which is embraced by Government, but it has not been quite as easy and certainly not as prompt an exercise as I thought, but we have almost finalised that.

At the moment we are getting input back from young people and youth workers to see whether that Youth Charter, which will then be taken to Cabinet, is really a reflection of what young people feel, want and expect from Government in a reciprocal arrangement. With respect to the Okayama Youth Goodwill Mission, the Premier has recently indicated that he has been asked by the Okayama Prefecture whether South Australia will host a visit of Japanese young people later this year, and he has agreed to that. Just as a slight digression, we find that, because of the value of the yen, it is very cheap for young Japanese to visit South Australia but it is not so cheap for our young people to visit Japan. It has been more of a one-way rather than a two-way mission.

We also sponsor a Duke of Edinburgh Award, parts of which enable those who might not otherwise be able to afford it to participate. We assist them in terms of fares and other means to be a part of that very worthwhile scheme. We do many other things, but that gives the member for Chaffey a flavour of our commitment to young people.

**Mr ANDREW:** Further in relation to specific youth programs and page 438 of the Program Estimates, I understand that the Youth Parliament has worked well and that it will be held again in the second week of July this year. Will the Minister provide to the committee information about how effective that Youth Parliament has been and how he expects it to enhance young people's understanding of the parliamentary process? Will the Minister also reinforce the point that there is opportunity for country people to participate in this program?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The Youth Parliament was a commitment we made prior to the election, which we have implemented. To its credit, the YMCA—and members would appreciate that the YMCA membership now embraces both men and women—has been very committed to this process. At last count, about eight teams throughout the State participate in the Youth Parliament. Some council areas are very supportive—the Marion Council is sponsoring two teams. The program involves a camp as well as an eight month training camp—not full-time, of course. Young people select topics themselves: we do not tell them what to debate. One topic to be raised this year is that the age at which someone can become a member of Parliament should be lowered. That is a bit of a variation on the oft-raised question of the voting age.

The intention of the Youth Parliament is not to turn young people into parliamentarians, although some of them quite explicitly want to be members of Parliament. It is meant to be a training. They are given the luxury that we do not often accord ourselves in Parliament, that is, their vote is ultimately

on conscience grounds on all issues. They debate as a team but they vote according to their individual consciences. The Youth Parliament follows normal parliamentary procedure and involves a lot of effort by parliamentary staff and the support of the Speaker and the President, for which I am grateful. If members met the young people involved, they would see the benefit of a program like this. It is not meant to embrace every young person and obviously it is not feasible to do that but we are looking at ways of providing involvement of young people in the process so that those who do not want to be involved in such a lengthy program can get to understand and appreciate the parliamentary process. That will be a new initiative in addition to the Youth Parliament.

**Mr ANDREW:** I refer the Minister to page 440 of the Program Estimates, Kickstart and Kickstart for Youth. My experience in the electorate of Chaffey is that locally the program has been very effective and has had a successful outcome percentage in terms of young people being involved in employment outcomes. With the change in the Federal Government there has been a public decision to freeze the program, but I presume that is only until we see the detailed outcome from the Federal August budget. Has this affected the outcome of Kickstart programs which are delivering training opportunities very effectively at this time?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** In terms of any Federal impact, the Premier has made it clear that we cannot and will not pick up programs that the Federal Government ceases to fund. Some of our programs obviously have a Federal component, often by way of a training wage. Irrespective of what the Federal Government does, we are still committed to Kickstart, which has been an excellent program. I acknowledge that the generic program was started by the previous Government. It is a good program and I have always taken the view that, if something is good and it works, you keep it and do not damage or destroy it for some petty or ideological reason. I have created son or daughter of Kickstart, Kickstart for Youth and we have further offspring with Focus on the Future. Essentially, Kickstart targets the adult population, although it has always had a 25 per cent youth focus. That is less significant now that we have a specialised Kickstart for Youth program. To give an example of how the program works in the Riverland, for export reasons the citrus industry needed quality control officers. Kickstart trained people who all found work and that industry is able to export quality produce.

Kickstart is different from most employment programs because we work from a reverse side in. We find the employment vacancies. Indeed, affectionately I call Kickstart staff 'employment ferrets', because they seek out the employment opportunities and we train the people to fit those vacancies. We do not train people and then hope they get a job: we know there are jobs there and we train people as tightly as we can for specific vacancies or industry vacancies that we know exist. We have also had great success in viticulture. Much of the viticulture plantings that have taken place would not have been possible—certainly the tending of the young vines—without Kickstart's involvement. As to Kickstart outcomes, there have been nearly 3 000 participants with a 70 per cent employment outcome; there has been 48 per cent female participation because one requirement is to try to ensure adequate involvement of men and women, and all disadvantaged groups are catered for. It has been a successful program to the extent that other States are copying it. Through Cathy Tuncks's division we have produced a how-to-do-it booklet so that other States can copy the scheme. It has been one of

if not the most successful employment program in Australia and that was acknowledged in a review of labour market programs about a year ago. I can give specific examples about the Riverland where we have spent \$89 000 in Kickstart dollars which attracted \$34 000 in Commonwealth funding, \$56 000 from industry and \$16 500 extra in kind support from industry. We intend to continue Kickstart and, as I indicated earlier, we intend to boost, through Kickstart for Youth and Focus on the Future, our commitment to training programs that deliver.

**Ms WHITE:** Can the Minister guarantee that funding to youth support organisations, which provide effective advocacy for young people, including the Youth Affairs Council and Shelter SA, will continue to be funded at their current levels?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** In terms of the Youth Affairs Council, we currently provide \$116 000. Recently, I authorised an increase to enable the council to move to better accommodation because some council staff were being intimidated by undesirable elements—not young people accessing their facilities but people in that geographic part of the city. I provided extra money to enable them to relocate. From time to time we also fund additional projects that the council does. We do not specifically fund Shelter SA and we never have. It would come under the Department of Housing and Urban and Regional Development, which I think is the funding body for Shelter SA. Certainly, it is not my patch. As to whether we are going to maintain funding, we have no intention to alter funding levels and we have a three year funding arrangement.

**Ms WHITE:** Even though Shelter SA does come under a different line, I trust you would advocate its support of young people. What is the Government's policy response to the Morris report into youth homelessness?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As suggested, it is really a cross-portfolio matter. Youth SA does advocate and interact with other agencies wherever we feel that young people need to have their voice heard and where we wish to see other Government agencies provide services to young people more efficiently. As to the Morris report, we are involved through the Federal Ministerial Council in various responses. Specific provision of shelter is not my direct portfolio responsibility, but we are very much interested in some aspects of young people being homeless or on the streets, including such factors as relationships in the home between parents and teenagers.

While we are not directly involved in front line activities, we have been very active in supporting FACS in its recent announcement and development of what it calls parenting programs, which are more than programs for young children, but also involves parent/teenager relationships. Western Australia has put much effort into this and we are now doing it. If we can improve relationships within the family we minimise the likelihood that young people will end up on the street and homeless. The Government strategy is to try to resolve problems of the family in the home and to encourage and facilitate break-up when it is absolutely the only alternative where people are genuinely at risk. Some young people choose not to be at home because they do not like the rules, and some are abused sexually, physically or emotionally. Programs such as the one FACS has recently announced, of which we have been very supportive, will help to reduce some of that potential conflict at home. It is an area in which many families and the community need to put a lot more effort because, as we know, when the hormones flow,

teenagers tend to become somewhat difficult. They often regard their parents as difficult and, if we try to smooth over that process, everyone will be a lot better off.

Today families do not have that continuity of experience in dealing with youngsters so, when people find that they have a large teenager on their hands, often it is a situation they find difficult to deal with. On most occasions, the young person is looking for boundaries, affection and they want to be wanted rather than being supplied with material goodies, as they are in some cases. It is a complex area. As I said, we are making submissions to the Federal ministerial council meeting in relation to the Morris report and looking to implement and support as many of the recommendations as we can, where we believe that they are reasonable and appropriate.

**Ms WHITE:** The Minister would be aware of the compounded difficulty that homeless people have in trying to access education and training. The Minister would also be aware of the good results achieved by Paralowie House in my electorate in providing homeless youth with supervised accommodation and support in accessing appropriate training in collaboration with local high schools to keep young people at risk in school, TAFE and job programs. However, with the Federal Government having frozen funds, Paralowie House—often proclaimed as a model for the rest of the State to follow—is in fear of closure. Why will the Minister not fund Paralowie House, particularly as its focus is on the most vulnerable youth whom the Minister nominates as a priority?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Youth SA is not a front-line delivery agency. As a general focus, we are there to advocate on behalf of young people. We often provide seed money to encourage and promote activities that benefit young people. We are not front-line youth workers or front-line funders of youth facilities. The issue to which the honourable member has referred is one with which we as a nation have to come to terms, that is, that traditionally young people have not been given a fair share of resources, particularly at the local government level, essentially because they do not have a vote. If we want to be somewhat cynical about it, we could say that we see wonderful facilities for those who can vote simply because of that fact.

As a community, all levels of Government need to look at this issue of adequate facilities for young people. To their credit, some councils provide youth centres, drop-in centres and sports facilities, but many do not. Some engage youth workers, but many do not. As I said, in terms of Paralowie House, we are not the front-line offices. To my knowledge, we have never been asked to fund it. I cannot recall ever having seen a specific request relating to funding Paralowie House. I understand that Kickstart officers work with some of the people at the centre. I will check this, but I have never seen a request to fund it, because we do not normally fund front-line agencies.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Program Estimates (page 438) mentions South Australia's involvement in a national project on income support for young people. There is a debate in the community about the amount of income support which young people need or which is justified and about the link or otherwise with youth homelessness. What is the Government's policy with respect to income maintenance for young people?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Generally speaking, that issue falls within the province of the Federal Government, in terms of social security provisions. Any additional funding would come through FACS. Income support issues specifically lie

either within the province of the FACS Minister in South Australia or more appropriately at the Federal level in terms of general income support. It is a very complex area, if you start talking about youth training wages, and so on, but I gather the honourable member is talking more about social welfare benefits for those who have some disadvantage.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** I am trying to ascertain this Government's financial commitment to homeless youth.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The honourable member would have to direct that question to the Minister for Family and Community Services. We give policy advice to other Government agencies, and we certainly provide an input to the Ministerial council of all Youth Ministers and Employment and Training Ministers. We have a close liaison with FACS. Income support is not specifically within my province.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** I want to raise the issue of something that is of great importance to me. Increasingly, high schools and community workers report that the reduction of support services in the community and the subsequent effect that is having on family breakdowns is impacting on young people to the extent that schools particularly are becoming aware of increased incidence of teenage suicide attempts. What measures is the Minister taking to address this very disturbing problem?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Youth suicide is of concern to me and to my department. We provide policy advice and input into decisions made by other agencies. The specific responsibility pertaining to youth suicide comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Health—and I am not trying to pass the buck. He is the Minister who is in charge of that issue and has been undertaking significant activity to try to help minimise what is often an unacceptable level of suicide not only in South Australia but throughout Australia, particularly for young males. I suggest that the honourable member pursue that with the Minister for Health if she wants more specifics other than a general answer which indicates that we are concerned and we make input on that issue to try to bring about change.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** The level of youth suicide really is a sad reflection on our society. Are any steps being taken within the Minister's area to address this problem specifically?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** This is an important issue which comes back to the point that I made in my opening statement. It is vital that within the community people do not continue to present a negative message to young people. If young people are constantly told that there is no future, that there are no jobs, and so on, that will compound the problem and create a sense of hopelessness. As I indicated in response to a question from the member for Taylor, there is no necessity for doom and gloom; the situation in the community is very positive. Our young people live in the most fortunate country on earth. There are tremendous opportunities, not only in self-employment but also in working for others.

This also relates to the message about the environment. Too often people in the past have given a negative message which suggests that the world is about to end when clearly it is not. There have been significant improvements in the environment. In many of our cities there has been a reduction in some of the harmful gases which are emitted.

If we keep telling young people that things are bleak, that they have no future, that the world is about to blow up and that we shall all suffocate, we take away from them some of

the main reasons for wanting to live. I think that the prophets of doom and gloom have a lot to answer for.

Young people, rather than being bestowed with material goods, are looking for something more basic: affection from within the family rather than being given things which in the long term are not as important to them, even though they may have some transitory appeal. If young people feel confident and wanted, are able to discuss things, have affection and can see a future, we will minimise the incidence of youth suicide. I suspect that many of the car accidents involving young people are related to depression and hopelessness. If you believe there is no future for you, you will be a greater risk taker. I have heard teenagers say, 'I am going to die, anyway, so what is the point. I might as well drive like an idiot.' The more that older people push that negative view, the more likely it is that we shall see this high level of youth suicide in Australia.

People in the community, all levels of government and the media need to look closely at the message that we give to young people and the images that we convey of violence, lack of respect for others and what is often a pretty negative and hostile view of the world. We should be celebrating Australia as a fantastic country. It is not perfect, but it is better than any other country that I have seen. Our young people should be jumping out of their skin with excitement at the future that they have in this country. Rather than youth being seen as a negative, it should be seen as a positive.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We now come to employment.

#### **Membership:**

Mr Clarke substituted for Ms White.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the Minister wish to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** A brief one. I covered some of these points in my earlier statement. I reiterate that South Australia has come from a very difficult position. Whilst we do not want to keep harping on the past, the fact is that we started from a difficult base with regard to employment. We have gone through the power blender with tariff implications and changes to manufacturing industry, and that process is pretty well at an end. Our companies are leaner and meaner in the sense of extracting more output. They are more efficient and productive. Looking at the numbers employed by General Motors-Holden's now compared with years ago, we see that it produces more for a lot less by way of input. We have gone from an economy which was protected and wrapped in cotton wool to one which is now very much world competitive and export focused.

We have seen a tremendous shake-out in employment. The days of the unskilled and semi-skilled are pretty well over. Companies do not want people who cannot earn a dollar from day one. The challenge that this community faces is to provide employment for those who traditionally went into the semiskilled and often unskilled areas. That is why, especially in the northern and southern suburbs, we need to put a lot of effort into ensuring that people can raise their skill levels. Whilst we have unemployment, we have vacancies that we cannot fill because we do not have the skilled people to fill them. We need not only to upskill our existing work force, which we are doing through exciting programs such as the vehicle industry certificate, but also to ensure that young people in particular have employment opportunities and the skills that make them employable. We need to marry the unemployed with the skills vacancies. It is not as simple as



it might sound; it is quite complex. In this State we need to live off our brain power, not our muscle power.

The industries that we are encouraging will bring diversity and promote greater job opportunities in aquaculture, viticulture, tourism and IT. It has not happened as quickly as we would like, because, as we have restructured and refocused our economy, we have copped things like an increase in sales tax on motor vehicles, which has dented confidence, and there has been uncertainty about interest rates. All those things are very important to a sensitive environment such as South Australia's.

Traditionally, our economy has depended on the Eastern States for the sale of white goods and other manufactured goods. Whilst that is and will continue to be important, we need to get more variety and diversity into our economy. South Australians need to believe in themselves and recognise that we have many advantages. We are seeing the fruits of some of them now with companies, such as Bridgestone and others, coming here because this is a less expensive State in which to operate, and that gives companies an advantage in competition and the opportunity to employ more people.

We are not saying that the unemployment rate for the young and the not-so-young is ideal—it has been a really tough road—but we have made significant progress. We have been through a big shake-out in the Public Service. To the credit of South Australians, a significant metamorphosis has taken place without significant social disruption. We still have the challenge of making sure that our work force is the most highly skilled in this country. It has not been: in many situations it has been below average. We need to make sure that this State is the smartest and that it stays ahead of the pack in order to attract more industry. Companies such as EDS and others are keen to be in South Australia because they can see the potential that we have to be the smart State. We need to back that up and ensure that we provide the high quality training that is necessary.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the lead speaker for the Opposition wish to make an opening statement?

**Mr CLARKE:** A brief one. At the outset I should like to be guided by you. At the end of the examination on employment issues, I understand that when the member for Taylor returns she will have further questions on TAFE, so there will be some cross-fertilisation between employment and TAFE. I hope, therefore, that the line with respect to employment will not be closed.

**The CHAIRMAN:** You do not want to close the line, do you?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We never close anything off.

**Mr CLARKE:** That will probably be the last thing that the Minister will give me today. I am grateful to him for that. It is now generally accepted that, despite what the Liberal propaganda issued at taxpayers' expense says, South Australia's economy has stalled and that the jobs market is showing signs of going backward. Youth unemployment is sitting at 40 per cent and has grown by 30 per cent in the past 12 months. It is the highest of any State, and the trend is upward. Our overall unemployment rate is the highest of any mainland State, and it is only South Australia's poor participation rate which prevents its rocketing into double figures. To date, no additional jobs have been created this year. In April 1996 there were 657 400 employed people in South Australia and 69 500 unemployed, and we had a 61.9 per cent participation rate. If the participation rate were the same as the national rate, that is, 63.6 per cent, there would be 89 400

unemployed people in South Australia, and the unemployment rate would be 11.9 per cent.

The Premier's promise of 20 000 additional jobs a year is in tatters, and youth unemployment is not the only problem. The number of unemployed people aged 35 to 54 in South Australia went up from fewer than 14 000 in 1990 to about 24 000 this year. This occurred even with there being a high rate of people giving up on South Australia and moving interstate, a rate which has increased since the election of the State Liberal Government. I refer to the Labour Market Analysis Bureau, published at the end of December 1995, with reference to recent developments in the South Australian labour market, because it makes a few points in support of my assertions, as follows:

The South Australian labour market has performed only moderately well over the past year in spite of continued strong, though slowing, national economic growth. The rate of employment growth in South Australia in the year to August 1995 was 2.1 per cent, half the national rate. Full-time jobs actually fell in South Australia over the past year. The condition of the local labour market still has some way to go before the pre-recessionary levels of buoyancy are reached.

I also have a copy of the Minister's press release of 8 February 1996, entitled 'Unemployment figures highlight need for change in Federal Government', where the Minister suggested that the best way to provide jobs for unemployed Australians was to put Paul Keating out of work. Given the history of unemployment in this State since your appointment as a Minister and since the election of the Brown Government, perhaps the press release should be turned another way, that is, the best way of getting jobs for South Australians is to put the Premier out of work.

Is the Minister concerned about the massive rise in the number of mature-aged unemployed, most of whom are male? Is the \$150 000 Community Employment Broker Scheme a totally inadequate response to the problem, as it represents \$6 per unemployed mature-aged person for the coming financial year?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The member for Ross Smith has made a number of claims in his opening statement. Unfortunately, he was not present when I spoke about youth unemployment. For the honourable member's benefit, I will briefly revisit what we are talking about in this respect. Last year, unfortunately, Mr Murdoch was misled in terms of the real level of youth unemployment in this State. As I explained earlier, there are approximately 100 000 15 to 19 year olds in South Australia of whom approximately three-quarters are at university, TAFE or school full-time. The rest makes up the labour force. The figure that the honourable member quoted of unemployed youth relates to that youth labour force, and it represents young people who seek full-time work or who are working full-time.

As I mentioned earlier, youth figures exclude part-time employment. In that number of young people who are categorised as seeking work, the most recent figures I have demonstrated that about 1 300 are actually full-time students. The number comes down even more if one takes into account the fact that about 1 300 of those so-called unemployed young people are still at school.

The figure touted for youth employment, when translated on a genuine basis as a percentage of teenagers, is probably about 6 per cent. As I indicated, many of the young people are still at school, even those who are seeking full-time work. The data for youth unemployed is original data: it is not adjusted for fluctuations in school leaving times. The figure

went up last month because after term 1 many young people decided to quit school, university or TAFE and enter the work force or put their hands up for a job.

One of the paradoxes one can have with unemployment statistics is that, when things appear as though jobs will be available, the unemployment rate can actually increase, because the question posed to unemployed people is, 'Have you been seeking work?' Clearly, if you think there is a sniff of a job you are more likely to put your hand up and say that you are looking for a job. If you think there is no hope, why would you put your hand up for a job at all? There is this paradox, which we recently had in South Australia, where the unemployment rate can increase slightly when people sniff that things are improving.

In regard to the specifics of mature-aged unemployed, the Employment Broker Scheme, which was originally focussed on turning part-time work into full-time work so that a person could work two days at X and three days at Y, is more comprehensive than that, even though that is still an important objective of the scheme. Recently, we approved a significant increase in funds to DOME (Don't Overlook Mature Expertise). In fact, we originally provided \$50 000 but are now providing an extra \$100 000 under a performance arrangement where they are deemed to be employment brokers. They will specifically target mature-aged unemployed.

Whilst we talk about youth unemployment frequently—and correctly so—in many ways it is harder for an unemployed mature-aged person to get a job than it is for a young person. A young person at least has time on their side, while a mature aged person does not.

We have generously supported DOME, and it acknowledges that. It is a fantastic organisation in that it has named part of its training facility 'Cafe Kickstart'. That is a compliment to Kickstart and the support that has been given. I know of other agencies as well as my own to which the Treasurer has provided assistance in terms of physical equipment. We have not forgotten mature-aged people, and we have a policy of not discriminating in terms of what we try to do for unemployed people.

**Mr CLARKE:** It still begs the issue: \$150 000 under the Employment Broker Scheme is totally inadequate. They spill that much around the Bar of the Adelaide Club over 12 months. Our unemployment rate, particularly among mature-aged workers, is getting worse. Would not that have warranted far more resources and funds being allocated to that end by your Government rather than just this \$150 000?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** First, any Federal Government has prime responsibility for creating the economic climate for employment throughout this country. A State Government can only do so much. The Premier has already detailed how we are attracting industry here. The Minister for Industry, Manufacturing and Small Business, John Olsen, has also been involved in that process. We operate on a playing field created by the Federal Government in terms of interest rates, taxation, tariff policy, etc. That is not to say that we do not have a responsibility, but the principal responsibility falls on the Commonwealth. DEET, the equivalent of my department, has a budget of approximately \$14 billion. Our total budget in TAFE does not reach \$.5 billion. There is no way in the world that we can match the big boys or girls of Canberra.

We undertake a whole lot of programs in South Australia, not just the employment broker scheme, which target the mature aged. We do not put people through an age test for the Kickstart program. The honourable member mentioned one

aspect of the employment broker scheme, but many projects are undertaken in conjunction with private employment agencies such as Speakman Stillwell, whose services have been contracted. We have a new program starting soon called the Regional Labour Exchange to ensure that we have skilled workers to work in the rural industry on a seasonal basis, because that is one of the areas where there has been a shortfall.

We are putting extra money into IT training for the unemployed. Many of those will be women and many will be of mature age. TAFE runs a lot of programs for women. I saw one the other day which had a special exemption under equal opportunity for women to be trained as illustrators. We run a lot of introductory programs in TAFE. We run oodles of programs for mature aged people, not just women. So, the honourable member must look at it in the total context of what we do rather than isolate our contribution to one specific program.

**Mr CLARKE:** I take up the Minister's point about the national Government having primary responsibility for the creation of jobs. Originally, there was a narrowing of the gap in the average duration of unemployment of an unemployed person in South Australia, in the past few years of the former State Labor Government. Since the Minister's Government has been in office since 1994-95, that gap has actually widened. Given that the briefing that the Minister received from his department some time ago makes the point that 'South Australia is demonstrably more under-skilled and therefore as a society more vulnerable to economic restructuring than other States,' is it not a fact that South Australia cannot afford to lose Federal funding in areas of these labour market programs, which have been built up not only in South Australia but in the whole of Australia under the previous Federal Labor Governments and which are now very much at risk under the Minister's colleagues in Canberra, and that we, as a State community, both Liberal and Labor, should be scratching, fighting, clawing and insisting on the Howard Liberal Government maintaining those types of labour market programs in South Australia rather than seeing them severely slashed or axed altogether?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It is fair to say that I have been very vocal in relation to universities which, as the honourable member would know, operate under State Acts of Parliament. The Federal labour market programs are significant. I have no objection to any government of any persuasion ensuring that whatever programs they run are run efficiently and effectively and produce results. I am not in a position to pass judgment on whether Federal programs are run efficiently or effectively. That is the responsibility of the Federal Government, which must make those decisions. Ultimately, it must wear the consequences in a democratic system at the ballot box. I urge any Government to judge programs on their effectiveness and to make cuts, if they must, in areas where programs are not delivering.

The Federal Government is well aware of my view regarding labour market programs, as many of our programs interconnect with many of its programs. The Premier has made clear and the Cabinet has decided that we will not and cannot pick up any program that the Federal Government chooses not to fund. For a start, we do not have the resources. As I said, the Federal Government is accountable ultimately to the people of Australia. If it does things that the people of Australia do not like, it will have to bear that in mind when seeking re-election. With regard to the Federal programs to which the honourable member alludes, any concerns should

be directed by him specifically to the Federal Government. I can indicate to the Federal Government my feelings about programs, but ultimately it must make a decision based on what it believes is in the best interests of the country. If it gets it wrong, it will suffer the consequences.

**Mr CLARKE:** I read somewhere that the Minister made a public statement urging his Federal colleague (Senator Vanstone) not to slash labour market programs. That seems at variance to the rollover approach of the Premier in terms of cutbacks in Federal funding for these types of programs. Indeed, the Premier has been exhorting colleagues in Canberra to slash Federal funding in a whole range of areas, which as we all know backfired with the loss of Commonwealth funded positions in South Australia. It is one thing for the Minister to send off a polite protest note to his colleagues in Canberra about these labour market programs—and I do not think there is any doubt about their effectiveness—but when will this State Government, irrespective of the political complexion of the Government in Canberra, get up and publicly defend these labour market programs and insist that they be maintained, because the Minister knows as well as I that the labour market programs in this State are effective and that we cannot afford to lose them?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It is not accurate, and it is quite unfair, to suggest that the Premier has ever advocated an across-the-board slashing. What he suggested to the Commonwealth was that it might like to consider looking at its own bureaucracy in terms of its size and efficiency. He never encouraged the Federal Government to have a blind policy of cutting across-the-board. He specifically suggested that the Federal Public Service bureaucracy be made as efficient and effective as possible. I think it is a complete misconstruction of what he said to imply that he suggested a total cutting of programs by the Commonwealth. I have never heard that, and he has denied that he has ever said anything of the kind. I made the point earlier that the Federal Government runs its programs. It makes the judgments and the decisions. If it does what the community wants, that will be reflected in the ballot box. After all, that is the most powerful tool that people have for indicating their pleasure or displeasure. I am sure that Mr Howard is well aware of the power of the ballot box.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** The success of future information technology industries in South Australia depends on a trained work force. What is being done to inform young people of careers in this area?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** If you look at where our commitment to informing young people about careers has its genesis, you will see that much of it comes out of the innovative program entitled 'Tradeswomen on the move', which involves successful tradeswomen being role models and showing young women in schools what they can achieve and what has already been achieved. That program has been very extensive; it is still operating and will continue to operate and demonstrates how one can seek to influence young people in terms of choice of careers. My department has in process the development of a very sophisticated information package, utilising CD-ROM technology, to make young people aware of the opportunities in information technology.

The Minister for Education and Children's Services is also very committed to ensuring that students at schools are aware of the opportunities. It is fair to say that in some education areas, not just in the State system but also in the private system, there has not always been an extensive knowledge of opportunities, and school counsellors who are sometimes

burdened with dealing with personal problems have often had to carry the issue of career counselling.

The lesson to be learnt, along with other intervention programs, is that the earlier young people are involved the better. Programs focused on IT need to start at pre-school and not just when someone is about to enter years 11 or 12. The CD-ROM project involves a contribution of \$150 000 by the Employment Division of my department. The project is supported by the Department of Information Industries, the Information Technology Work Force Strategy Office and ITEC, which is the Australian Information Technology Engineering Centre at Technology Park, of which TAFE is a partner with the universities. Tenders for this program closed a few days ago, and the CD-ROM will be available by the end of this year in time for distribution to all secondary schools for the next school year. The CD-ROM will be marketed and supported by pamphlets, posters and promotional materials and developed, obviously, in consultation with industry. There is not much point in having a CD-ROM that is not relevant and state-of-the-art.

We are using the technology itself to promote a career option in that industry. It is worth pointing out that young people must realise that if they want to get into some aspects of IT, they need to keep maths and physics as study programs. Sadly, we have found that some students go to university expecting to study aspects of engineering and electronics but cannot because they have given up doing a full range of maths. I discussed recently with the Minister for Education and Children's Services, SSABSA and the private school system the issue of ensuring that young people at school receive accurate information about which subjects to study, so that they do not get caught short when entering university and are precluded from engineering and some aspects of IT because they do not have the prerequisites.

It is important also to make clear that a person does not have to be a maths whiz to be employed in the IT industry. The industry needs some people with maths and physics skills, but it also needs creative people: people who can translate into information technology formats educational learning materials and other programs that will be attractive to industry not only in Australia but elsewhere. I have spoken with people from EDS and Motorola who say that often the best people come from areas such as philosophy. This is because they are looking for people who are creative, innovative and prepared to challenge some of the orthodoxy. Certainly with respect to the technical side of the IT industry many people will need maths and physics, but if a person wants to get into the sales side, such as scriptwriting and those sorts of areas, then certainly there are plenty of opportunities—in fact, they are enormous—for young people with those particular skills.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** I refer the Minister to page 440 of the Program Estimates and the Kickstart program. The Kickstart for Youth program was announced in September 1995. How successful has that program been, particularly for unemployed young people?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** That program, as I acknowledged earlier, is a son or daughter of Kickstart and was created specifically to address the issue of youth unemployment, the current level of which is unacceptable, as I have said on many occasions, as has the Premier. We need specific measures to make sure that that age group does not become the long-term unemployed. Some early intervention at the right time will avoid young people being unemployed well into the future. As indicated, the program was announced in September 1995

and was due to start on that date, but the staff got it up and running a little earlier.

The first target of 1 000 participants was exceeded by 498, which represents an almost 50 per cent increase; 34 per cent of participants gained employment and about another 25 per cent went on to further study and training opportunities. Bearing in mind that often we are dealing here with young people who have missed a lot of schooling, have had difficult home backgrounds, have often moved around the State, and so on, we are handling a very challenging clientele, to put it mildly. The targets for the forthcoming financial year are 1 200 participants, a 50 per cent employment outcome and a 25 per cent training outcome.

Members would understand that, if that age group goes onto further study, that is not a negative but often a positive. I have seen and met with some of these young people and, in some cases, participants have lacked so much self-esteem that initially the staff have been involved in going to the homes of participants in the morning to get them motivated to come along. But in the cases where they have persevered—and I have seen some of these young people graduate as dental assistants—they will attest to the value of this fantastic South Australian creation, the Kickstart program.

**Mrs ROSENBERG:** My next question also refers to page 440 of the Program Estimates and deals with Upskill South Australia, which was announced in January. What progress has been made to implement the initiative?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** One initiative to tackle not only youth unemployment but to improve training was to create this program called Upskill or, if one wants to use a fancier term, contract compliance. Any company that wishes to get Government business in the civil construction area must, in its tender process, submit and indicate its commitment to training and employing young people. The program has already had an impact. In fact, I believe the recent increase in the number of apprentices in that area is as a direct result of companies getting the message that if they want Government business then they must deliver in terms of training young people.

The companies do not mind. I have not had any complaints from them because they are all treated the same. They would have a legitimate complaint if they were treated differently but, with a scheme such as this, they are all treated the same, and so companies that have not been committed to training are subjected to the same pressures to deliver just as much as companies that have traditionally pulled their weight in that regard. The program has been well received and I believe that, over time, we will see that scheme extended because, increasingly, with outsourcing we must ensure that the training equivalent that was previously conducted by Government agencies, such as SA Water and so on, is still provided by the company that has the contract via outsourcing. In other words, the State Government contributes about 30 per cent in terms of spending in the State, and it is vital that the money spent by the taxpayer returns a training component, particularly in relation to our young people. The program is operating and I am confident that, over time, my colleagues will accept the need to expand it beyond civil construction to take in all areas of Government.

Indeed, I am urging the Federal Government to adopt a similar scheme and say, 'If you want Government taxpayer business, we want to see your commitment to training people.' That is not an unreasonable requirement and I am pleased that my Cabinet colleagues, after what was much work by my staff in the department, and after consultation

with 100 agencies, were able to come up with a formula that is now delivering. I can give specific examples, but that gives an idea of what the program is. It is another innovative way to address skill shortages and make sure our population is well trained.

**Mr CLARKE:** I refer to Skillshare. Some of the most devastating news to hit the unemployed concerns the freezing of Skillshare funds by your Federal Liberal colleagues. I understand that a Skillshare provider in Whyalla has been forced to close and others in Port Augusta and the Grange-Henley Beach area have been cut back. Some Kickstart programs use Skillshare training facilities. I am also aware that New South Wales-based Skillshares have handed back funding to the Commonwealth following the cuts because they say that the remaining funding is insufficient to operate with.

I have been told of a parallel situation back in the Fraser Government days when the then Federal Liberal Government moved to abolish the Community Youth Support Scheme, the predecessor to Skillshare. The then State Minister responsible for labour market programs, the now Premier, attacked the proposal and sent a submission to Cabinet, which formed the basis of a formal rejection of the Fraser Government's plan. CYSS was not abolished. So far, I have not heard a squeak from you, Minister, regarding the defence of Skillshare, which I would have thought would be coming, particularly in the light of the offensive and uncaring attitude taken so far by Senator Amanda Vanstone. I refer to the comment you made on ABC News this morning dealing with cutbacks to Skillshare funding. Your response was:

The people affected should direct their complaints to the Federal Minister. We cannot as a State Government always be there to protest to the Federal Government.

That is a lame attitude on your part. Skillshare provides a valuable service, as you have acknowledged in the past, and this State Government should be out there kicking the living daylight out of the Federal Government for cutting back funding to this program which does so much work for the long-term unemployed. When are you finally going to stand up to Canberra and your colleague, Senator Vanstone, and make it plain and clear for all that we will not tolerate cutbacks to these types of funding arrangements?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I have already indicated my concern about aspects of funding cutbacks to universities and also in the labour market program area. There are ways of indicating concern to the Federal Minister and that is what I am doing and have already done in respect of a whole range of issues. The point I was making this morning to the ABC reporter was that, whilst I acknowledge that people would naturally want me to pick up the battle on their behalf, I was suggesting not unkindly that they should direct their protest to the people who are in control of those programs, namely, Senator Vanstone or the Prime Minister. I was not in any way trying to avoid the issue: I was just saying that it was a Federal program. The Federal Government is responsible for it. If people come to me, I have to refer their concerns to the Federal Government, anyhow. Hopefully, I will be meeting the Federal Minister next week to talk about a whole range of issues, including labour market programs, but I do not think it is unreasonable that, if a program is a Federal program, concern should be sheeted directly to the Federal Government.

That is not to say that many of the Skillshare programs are not delivering. I am not in a position to know the detail and effectiveness of all those programs, but my assessment from

a distance is that many of them are excellent programs. As I mentioned earlier today, the Federal Government has a responsibility to ensure that programs have outcomes. I have not been provided with any details by the Commonwealth in respect of the cuts, but I hope to be meeting with Senator Vanstone. I have written to her asking for a meeting in the near future to talk about labour market programs, funding to universities and other related issues. It is quite appropriate to do that, but I point to people involved in the Skillshare area that they should be expressing their concerns directly to the Federal Government and their Federal member if they are unhappy with the decisions that have been made. Otherwise, I am dealing secondhand with the information that is given to me.

**Mr CLARKE:** I appreciate that it is a Federal program and ultimately the Federal Government has to bear responsibility for those funding cutbacks. My concern and the concern of those who support Skillshare is that, whilst you may have made representations to the Federal Government, it is not listening but we saw the reaction of the State Governments when the Federal Government announced tax measures with respect to State and local government car fleets. Because of the furore surrounding that decision there was considerable modification by the Federal Government. Given that we are dealing with the single most important issue in Australia today, unemployment, and the important role that Skillshare plays in combating that, a similar response just as vociferous from a State Government, particularly of the same political persuasion as the Party now in power in Canberra, would be advantageous in trying to reverse these funding cuts. If you have tried the back door and it is not working through politeness and discussions with your Federal colleagues and, if you believe in the scheme enough, you should get out there and belt them with a big stick publicly where it hurts. Why are we not seeing that?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As I indicated before, I am not aware of the details of the specific Skillshare programs in terms of the effectiveness of the particular programs. That is the absolute responsibility of the Federal Government. The procedures, practices and policies that the Federal Government implements are its responsibility and, if people in Skillshare or elsewhere do not like them, they have an absolute right to register their concerns directly with their local Federal member, the Minister or the Prime Minister. I believe that is the most effective way of conveying their protest if that is what they want to do because the Federal Government ultimately is accountable at the ballot box. I am having discussions with the Senator in respect of labour market programs and university funding. Whilst I am in some ways flattered by the honourable member's imputation, the ballot box has a greater element of power attached to it than what I may or may not do in terms of communication with the Federal Government. The democratic process of voting and the consequences of that will very much focus the mind of the Federal Government in a way that a letter or a public statement from me will never do.

*[Sitting suspended from 12.58 to 2 p.m.]*

#### **Membership:**

Mr Brokenshire substituted for Mrs Rosenberg.

**Mr CLARKE:** One of the drafts of the Youth Employment Task Force report I have seen lists Ms Cathy Tuncks of DETAFE as one of members of the task force. I noted that the

member for Kaurna is also listed as a member—I assume to ensure that the document remains completely partisan. Unfortunately, the most recent draft I have seen is what I can only describe as disgraceful, with faulty analysis, lack of vision and nothing in the way of additional funding or employment development initiatives. I also understand that almost every person who has seen the latest draft is appalled by it—including officers of DETAFE—despite its taking several months longer than advised when it was first announced. Has the Minister advised the Premier that officers of his department believe that the Youth Employment Task Force report is simply not up to scratch, and does the Minister agree with the views of his officers?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I have not advised the Premier on that ground. I saw a draft some weeks ago. My understanding is that the report is close to being completed. It needed considerable polish in terms of some of its expression and the presentation of some of the diagrammatic material. It is close to being ready for release. That will be at the discretion of the Premier, who I would imagine would first want to show it to Cabinet.

**Mr CLARKE:** Do the Minister's concerns with that draft relate only to style and polish rather than substance?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** They relate not only to style. There are aspects that could have been presented more clearly. I am not writing the report. The people on it were unpaid. Ms Tuncks is a departmental officer, but I have not tried in any way to direct what she said on that task force. We must remember that its members are providing community input and, therefore, it is in their time without recompense, and it should be judged in that light. The views expressed in it are not necessarily those of the Government. It was meant to be a community voice, and one would expect a range of views, given that the people on it were not put on it to try to come up with a specific outcome. With regard to the composition of the task force, we have people such as Professor Sloane and people from the community welfare area. One would expect a range of views which may or may not coincide with those of Government. There is no point having a report that merely echoed the Government view, because we could quite capably do that ourselves. The member for Ross Smith is being a bit unkind in implying that it has been a long time coming. It has taken a while but, as I said, the people are essentially giving their time free. As I understand it, they were formed into subgroups which focused on particular aspects of youth employment. As far as I am aware, it has been polished in terms of grammar and so on and should be available at any time for public release.

**Mr CLARKE:** In your capacity as Minister for Youth Affairs, did you advise the Premier that the task force report should not be released in its present form?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Conversations between the Premier and me are private. I give the Premier advice on a lot of things, and he gives me advice from time to time. His advice usually carries more weight than my advice to him. I have expressed various views to him about what should happen in terms of release timing. However, my main concern was the desk top techniques used to prepare the document—or the draft that I saw—and how it was presented at that stage. It did not do justice to what the committee had done with regard to the substance that it had put into it. It was more a presentation issue in what was going to come out of that report rather than any concern about particular issues. I should not try to influence in any way what the committee recommends or will recommend, because that would be unproductive and quite

at variance with what the committee was intended to do, that is, essentially to have a free rein to come up with innovative ideas. My concerns have been in relation to the presentation of the document.

**Mr CLARKE:** What did the task force itself cost the taxpayer? You mentioned that they were doing it in their own time. I assume that means that there were no sitting fees, and so forth. Were any other costs associated with it?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It would be minimal in terms of printing. The cost would be almost negligible.

**Mr CLARKE:** I could not find reference to 'Kickstart' in any of the budget papers, although there are references to Kickstart for Youth. I understand Kickstart is contained with the programs delivery line, and I see that that line has received a cut of \$680 000 in real terms, which is excess of 10 per cent. I note that the Minister's budget press release states:

The Kickstart funding will be maintained at \$1.8 million and Greening Urban SA, which was announced with great fanfare, and a group training employers rebate scheme have been abolished, with the Minister giving the reason that they were the areas of duplication with the Commonwealth programs.

Is the maintenance of Kickstart funding only in nominal terms, and does this represent a cut of almost \$70 000 in real terms?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The funding for Kickstart has not been reduced. In real terms, if you take into account the extra commitment for Kickstart for Youth and Focus on the Future, there is actually a significant increase. With regard to Focus on the Future, an additional \$250 000 is going into that over and above the present financial year.

**Ms Tuncks:** The \$600 000 you referred to reflects the situation when the previous employment and training division was taken in under the umbrella of DETAFE, with particular VET sector functions. That money was attached to VET sector functions not employment division functions, and it has now been transferred into the inappropriate employment division lines, so it is not a cutting, anyway.

**Mr CLARKE:** Why did the Minister cut the so-called duplication programs, which I just referred to earlier, when the whole question of the size and extent of the Commonwealth labour market programs and major subsidy schemes is still up in the air and with significant cuts predicted by most commentators in so far as the Federal budget is concerned?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As we have made clear, we do not intend to pick up programs that the Commonwealth cuts. We do not have the financial capacity to do so. The Greening Urban SA scheme was very costly in outcomes. It did a lot of good things, but it was very expensive per participant with regard to outcomes. We felt that we could get a better result by transferring that money into programs which were less costly to run. Greening Urban SA in many ways provided heavily subsidised training for people who would be taken on by local government. That was the reason for changing that one.

The Group Training Rebate Scheme, in effect, duplicated what the Commonwealth was already doing. Our decisions were made prior to knowing what the Federal Government was contemplating. At this stage I am not aware that it plans to cut in that area. In fact, I think we are more likely to see an increase in funding by the Commonwealth because it is committed to increasing training for the community. Whilst we have heard about some of the alleged negative aspects, the Federal Government, in fairness, is also committed to doing

a lot of positive things and expanding training, certainly for apprentices and trainees.

**Mr CLARKE:** Do you support Minister Vanstone's proposals that apprentices be paid only for the time that they are at work and not while they are training?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Again, the view expressed by the Commonwealth is one on which we have sought clarification in respect of payments for apprentices. We are still awaiting a definitive response, but I understand that it is arguing that apprentices be paid more for the non-study time so that the net consequence for apprentices is likely to be zero or negligible. In other words, it is a book transfer. There will be more money for on-the-job work-related outcomes, but for the training component, as with many other training schemes, one would not be paid. If there were to be a net reduction in income to apprentices, particularly for those doing a block program, I would have serious concerns. However, we are still waiting for clarification from the Federal Government. My preliminary understanding is that it is a bookkeeping exercise of paying more for the work that they do and less for the study time, which is a practice in many traineeship schemes.

**Mr CLARKE:** Has your department given any thought to whether it is more advantageous in terms of recruiting apprentices to bulk up the payments for their attending on the job as against off-the-job training and whether that might have an impact on the number of apprentices attending those courses of instruction?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** At this stage we do not know the fine detail of what is proposed. Whether people undertake apprenticeships or traineeships is the result of a multitude of factors, including young people's perceptions of that career's status and income potential; also, it reflects an attitude in the community which often unfortunately denigrates trades areas. There is also the complication that, in some apprenticeship areas, in the first year or so the apprentices do not necessarily contribute much in net terms to the employer taking into account breakages, and so on, which are expected in that first year. It is too complex an area on which to give a simple answer that it would or would not attract people. The apprenticeship and traineeship schemes need to be revised so that we have a more continuous output of apprentices which is not subject to fluctuations in the economy. People are more likely to get apprenticeships during good times, and this means that we should be training people in the less active times so that when there is a skill shortage we can meet it. In other words, we now have a bit of an episodic approach to apprenticeships and traineeships, and we need to smooth it out in order to get a more continuous and controlled flow of apprentices and trainees.

**Mr CLARKE:** Dealing with the cuts to the Group Training Employers Rebate Scheme, you said that you decided to cut those fundings without knowing in advance what the Commonwealth Government might do in terms of these labour market programs. If the Commonwealth Government cuts these Commonwealth-funded programs, will you restore the programs that you have cut in this budget, which has been predicated on the basis of the Commonwealth Government's maintaining its effort? Why cut them in any event?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As I indicated earlier, there is a duplication of contribution by State and Federal Governments. The Treasurer has made the point that if we signal a capacity to offset what the Commonwealth may cut, that is an open invitation for it to cut. That would not be a wise thing

to do. I do not believe that this scheme is under threat from the Commonwealth. Indeed, all the evidence from Minister Kemp is that the Commonwealth is absolutely committed to increasing the number of apprentices and trainees. It would have to weigh up the effect of taking away incentives. There is no point in our double funding a scheme when the Commonwealth is already supporting it generously and we can put the money into schemes that the Commonwealth does not target. I refer to Kickstart and other programs which we have found to be very useful at the local level, including small business. Training for small business has been overlooked for too long.

**Mr CLARKE:** How will the Self-Starter Scheme differ from the State-funded Self-Employed Venture Scheme and the Commonwealth's NEIS program?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I will touch on that in general terms and Ms Tuncks might like to add to the answer. The Self-Starter Scheme has a training component in it, so the young person gets proper training related to small business, management, taxation and so on. They have to prepare a business management plan, which is then assessed by people with experience in the business world. If that plan has potential and looks feasible, they are eligible for a grant, but they are then required to be under the guidance of a mentor for 12 months. I understand that in the NEIS scheme not all those elements are present. Ms Tuncks might like to add to that with respect to the fine detail.

**Ms Tuncks:** The Self-Starter Scheme is designed to address the client group not picked up by NEIS. NEIS is for the longer-term unemployed who are eligible for income support during the first year of operation of their business. A significant number of young people, for a variety of reasons, are ineligible for that income support, yet they may have a good idea. Therefore, we have designed a program which dovetails with the Commonwealth's program and picks up a group of people who are not eligible under Commonwealth guidelines. Participants in the NEIS program can apply for a Self-Starter grant. They are not precluded from applying for the \$3 000 grant if they have a business plan that would be deemed to be appropriate by the selecting panel.

We are providing training for the other people who would not normally have been able to get in and do the training under the NEIS program. It differs from SEVS in the sense that there are no loans. This is a straight grant provided under particular circumstances for equipment, facility, hire, or whatever, as deemed appropriate by the selection panel. There will be no loans which require repayments, many of which we have still collected for a number of years in the department, with all the problems associated therewith, to which Mr Carter from Administration and Finance can attest.

**Mr CLARKE:** In terms of traineeships within the State public sector, I understood from the Premier at another Estimates Committee hearing that there is a contract which the State Government has with the Commonwealth that secures funding for public sector trainees through to at least March 1997. Given that the State Government has acknowledged the value of career start traineeships within the State Public Service, will it maintain traineeships for the level of employment of these young people in the State Public Service, even if there were future cuts by the Commonwealth Government?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The 1 500 trainee positions announced early this year were the result of a special arrangement that I secured from Minister Crean in which the Commonwealth provided \$10.4 million and we the same.

That was basically on top of what we were already doing. So, it represented a significant increase over and above the existing commitment to take on trainees. At this stage there are 424 on board. So, we still have over 1 000 to take on. We are diversifying into a range of areas embracing not only clerical but also dental assisting, amenity horticultural (a fancy name for gardening) and assistants in areas such as libraries, etc. Each of those, because they are specialist areas, require special selections and therefore take a little longer than a more generalist clerical selection process.

I am keen—and I know that the Premier is, too—that the scheme be continued, and we will in the very near future seek to put our case to the Commonwealth for a commitment to ongoing significant funding at this level, because that program generates employment outcomes between 70 and 80 per cent either in the public or private sectors. So, it is a very successful program. I believe that the Commonwealth will be sympathetic to continuing a program such as that. I point out again that the 1 500 positions were over and above those already in the system.

In total, since we came to Government, close to 2 500 have been involved in the traineeship scheme. There is potential to expand the scheme into other areas not only in occupational terms but also in examining innovative ways to extend the scheme to incorporated bodies and groups that are linked to Government grants. I want to explore some of those innovative areas in order to try to expand the scheme in the future.

**Mr CLARKE:** Minister, you said that it represents about 1 500 trainees over and above the normal commitment. What is the normal intake of trainees into the State public sector that you fund?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Prior to our coming to office, it was about 300 a year, including an additional small number of university graduates. When we came to office the number was increased by several hundred. To this point in time about 2 300 have been involved in that scheme, but I will get back to the honourable member with the precise details.

**Mr CLARKE:** I am aware of the 70 to 80 per cent success rate among trainees in terms of securing ongoing employment beyond 12 months. How many are actually retained within the State public sector when they have completed their 12 months?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I will have to take that on notice, but there would be a significant number. I know of one lass in YouthSA who is now working in the Premier's Department. On an immediate anecdotal basis there are a quite a few in TAFE who have been kept on. As to the precise global figure, I will have to provide a response to the honourable member. It must be borne in mind that we have new categories which go beyond the clerical area. So, it is a new ball game.

**Mr CLARKE:** Would the Minister provide a breakdown of the gender and age of the trainees involved?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Yes. The traineeships are targeted primarily at young people, but the Commissioner who handles the recruitment process uses discretion if someone is not, strictly speaking, a young person. In addition to this scheme, there is the technical traineeship scheme which trains apprentices in the trades area for Government agencies. That uses the group training process as well as the more traditional approach. I suspect that there are more young women than men in this program, but it probably runs at about 60 per cent female in terms of traineeships because the positions have predominantly been in the clerical area.

As the member for Ross Smith knows, our society is still very much gender specific in terms of occupation. In the dental assisting area it is 100 per cent female, not because we want it that way but because we are still trying to deal with community attitudes that are reflected in parents' and community influence in pushing young men into particular areas and young women into particular areas. As a community, we have not been able to break away from that.

**Mr CLARKE:** A major aim of the Aboriginal Employment and Development Strategy is to achieve 1 per cent Aboriginal employment in the South Australian public sector. I understand that under the previous State Labor Government the 1 per cent challenge promoted by the now Leader of the Opposition was achieved. Have employment levels of Aboriginal people in the South Australian public sector gone backwards since that time? What is the total number of Aboriginal people now working in the State public sector, and how does that compare with the number in 1993?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** In terms of a general comment, some people do not want their racial identification made prominent. We actively encourage Aboriginal employment. We have many such people in my department. In some of our traineeship and apprenticeship programs, for example, Douglas Mawson, a significant number of Aboriginal people are working on building the new TAFE campus for Ernabella.

We have some excellent employees in TAFE, such as Joseph Cleland who won the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship award last year. If he is not in England or America, he is about to head that way. It is a challenge to increase Aboriginal employment levels, but my department and one of the agencies headed by Les Nayda try to put a lot of effort into encouraging Aboriginal employment. I will come back with a specific answer in respect of the percentage level.

**Mr CLARKE:** The Minister may recall that last year I made a plea for a pay increase for two of the Minister's ministerial advisers. I do not know whether I should have done that. I am particularly interested to know whether Mr Andrew Blyth is still working for the Minister. The Minister will recall a question asked in the House by the member for Taylor concerning someone from the Minister's office asking for a copy of a press release that she had issued regarding a matter. The request was made under an assumed name, but the fax number happened to coincide with the Minister's ministerial office. The Minister issued some stern warnings in the House about that type of behaviour, which he did not condone.

I attended the opening of the Gail Gago Federal ALP electoral office during February of this year. The office was to be opened by Carmen Lawrence. There was a demonstration outside those premises by a number of young Liberals, and I saw Mr Andrew Blyth there. It was a Friday, a working day, and he was prominent in the demonstration. I do not attack his right to demonstrate and voice his political views, but was he there in his own time, on annual leave, or was he still being paid for that day whilst attending that demonstration?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Andrew Blyth is no longer employed in my ministerial office. When I became Minister there was a position for one person which was part of the entitlement to the office, and it was paid \$50 000 a year. Given that Youth SA is part of my portfolio responsibility, I thought it would be good to split that position and take on two young people, thus providing them with an opportunity to work in a ministerial office and undertake training. Hence,

I took on Andrew Blyth and Sam Murphy at the very high salary of \$25 000 each per annum. They were happy with that. It was a rare opportunity to work in a Minister's office—it does not happen all that often—and they have both acknowledged that they learnt a lot from their experience. Sam Murphy no longer works for me, she has gone into her family business, and Andrew left about six weeks ago.

Andrew's efforts at being a sleuth were obviously not of a high standard. I had no prior knowledge of his attendance at the Carmen Lawrence meeting. In fact, Andrew was on leave, but my advice to him prior to his being involved while on leave during the election campaign was to keep his nose down and not to get involved in activities which might in any way implicate the office, despite the fact that he was actually on leave. I think he had an unusual view of his own dimensions because he has subsequently told me that he felt he could hide behind a placard and would not be recognised by anyone. He did not realise at the time that he would be fortunate to have the company of the member for Ross Smith. His mathematical understanding of size and space did not necessarily conform to the real world, and he was spotted by the honourable member. He is a young person, and I think he has a lot to offer. He no longer works with me, he left under amicable circumstances, and I believe he now earns more money working for someone else.

**Mr CLARKE:** The next matter to which I refer was raised with me by the parliamentary committee that visited the Pitjantjatjara lands a month ago with the Minister for the Aboriginal Affairs (Dr Armitage). There were some concerns, I think at Indulkana, regarding the fact that there was a TAFE college there but it was not staffed. The Minister would appreciate that in these remote north-western areas of South Australia, regarding the repair of motor vehicles and basic equipment which are needed to run the communities, it is not easy to pick up the telephone and get a skilled tradesperson to come up and do the job. Concern was expressed that there was a winding back of TAFE support in those communities so that they would not be able to teach the skills to the local community to do their basic repair work. I understood that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs would discuss this issue with the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. Has he done that yet and, if so, what is the outcome?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I am not aware of any cutbacks in the provision of TAFE resources in that area. The programs were administered through the Adelaide Institute of TAFE until October/November last year, but they are now administered by the Spencer Institute. That makes more sense, because it has a physical presence in Port Augusta and other major centres. One of the difficulties for our staff in those areas—and I appreciate the work they do—is that they are often called upon to be the Mr or Ms Fix-its of those communities. That is understandable, because they have a range of skills. We need to train the local people to fix their own cars and plumbing, etc. That is what we seek to do, but I am not aware of, nor would I support, any cutbacks in the provision of services in that area.

There have been some mixed messages about whether TAFE should be run totally by the Aboriginal communities or whether it should continue as is. When I met with the elders some time ago, they indicated that they did not want TAFE handed over prematurely to them because they were not ready for it, but they made the point that they wanted their people to have training to be able to fix water services, electricity, motor cars and so on. That is one of the tasks that we are trying to perform. One of the big challenges in that



area is to promote and provide for adult literacy. The elders have told me to leave the culture to them: 'You teach the maths, the English and the mechanical skills, and we will teach the traditions of our people.'

I do not have responsibility for DECS, so I do not know what change of direction, if any, it has taken on that issue, but we are certainly committed to providing services in that area. In fact, we are spending more money: we provided half the cost of the facility Umuwa. So, I do not believe there has been any cutback. We certainly would not support a cutback. As the honourable member knows, it is difficult to provide teaching services for those people. We owe a lot to the TAFE staff who work in those remote locations. We have upgraded facilities in many of them—a new campus will be provided at Ernabella and we have provided new facilities at Amata—but I accept there is an enormous need in terms of training people basically to be self-sufficient. The model that needs to be adopted in that instance is more akin to a small country town than a big city model. If those communities are viewed as small country towns then one has a better perspective to meet the needs of indigenous people.

#### Membership:

Ms White substituted for Mr Clarke.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We now move to examination of the lines of expenditure for TAFE. Minister, do you wish to make a preliminary statement.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I have a brief statement, Mr Chairman. I am proud of TAFE, not because I seek to claim credit for what is done in TAFE—clearly the staff do that—but because, in what have been fairly difficult times, our TAFE staff have performed admirably. Contrary to some assertions made in some quarters, the number of teaching staff in TAFE has slightly increased in real terms if measured as equivalent full-time staff, recognising that many of our staff work part time. There has been a real increase in staff in the area of teaching.

Certainly there has been a decline of staff in the non-teaching area because those services have been picked up by contracting out facilities and other efficiency measures but, in terms of actual front-line teaching, we have increased our staffing. As far as budget provisions are concerned, we have significantly increased the State Government contribution to capital provision even though capital provision is not normally a State Government responsibility—in percentage terms it is enormous, but realising that we are operating from a small base. In non-capital terms there is a real increase, even though in percentage terms it is small—nevertheless, it is a real increase.

Actual training hours delivered have increased, which reflects an increase in productivity by the staff. The number of hours generated within TAFE has increased significantly, and that is why we were able to obtain the extra \$5 million Commonwealth growth funds. In the related private training area, much of which is serviced by TAFE, there has been a dramatic increase in training hours provided. I believe that TAFE SA, through its 10 institutes, is in a very strong position to meet the challenges this community faces. We have a very large capital works program under way, with more extensions and expansion to occur shortly.

Mount Gambier campus is under way. We hope the development of Urrbrae will be under way by the end of the year, and we are looking, in the very near future, at significant refurbishment at Regency, along with projects under way

at Mount Barker and other locations throughout the State. The range of programs in TAFE has increased. We have had, I think, the best endorsement of TAFE through the International College of Hotel Management, which builds on the reputation of the Regency Hotel School. That hotel school is the only school outside Switzerland where one can do the diploma course for the Swiss Hotels Association and the Cordon Bleu Cooking School and it was located here because of TAFE's outstanding reputation.

Likewise, EDS has set up within the Adelaide Institute of TAFE because, after examining all alternatives, it came to the conclusion that TAFE offered the best quality training. They are just two examples of major international organisations voting with their feet to piggyback on the reputation of TAFE; to work in conjunction with TAFE, and it is very much to the credit of TAFE staff that those developments have occurred. We are always looking to ensure that TAFE is not only the biggest but, and more importantly, the best training system in the State. TAFE has 90 000 students and enjoys increasing collaboration with the universities and private providers.

The State Government has a very strong commitment to TAFE, and I believe that it will continue to grow and that its reputation, which currently is reflected in agreements with 16 countries, will expand over time. To conclude, the clear message to the community is that TAFE is a real alternative to universities; it provides an alternative option which is equal but different, and is vital if our State is to be at the forefront of training and employment in high-tech and other areas. TAFE is delivering. It will get bigger and will continue to be an excellent organisation that can, in some areas, obviously improve, but it will continue to bring great credit to this State and to the staff who work within that organisation.

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

**Ms WHITE:** As we turn to examine the higher education and TAFE areas of this budget line, a few important points need to be made to set the scene in which we need to view this year's budget. It has been much reported that severe cuts will be made to higher education by the Federal Government that will affect this State in a dramatic way. Thousands of students, including higher education students, further education students, and even school students, will be affected by the forecasted cuts to Austudy, the massive increases in HECS charges that have been foreshadowed, and the possible introduction of US-style fees into university courses. They are all issues that will affect students and their ability to learn, train and gain an education to follow their chosen career paths.

Add to that the Federal Government's freezing of Federal funds to Skillshare, cuts both made and foreshadowed to all labour market programs, and the current forecasts that the Federal Work Place Relations Bill will bring in terms of youth wages and training discount wages we have heard a little about so far, and the scene is one of pressure on this State and its young people and other people who are training and learning in this State. Further add to that the cuts to community service that we have seen made by this State Government and there is, as I tried to highlight in my first question, high pressure on young people in this State. That is the scene within which this budget has been cast.

The \$6 million recurrent funding is predicated upon a \$9.5 million increase in Commonwealth grants. Given what we have just been talking about and what we foreshadow will

happen with Federal funding cuts, that is a pretty optimistic forecast.

Members might remember last year that we looked at our ANTA growth funds and whether we would receive them and South Australia came pretty close to not receiving that money, which is an extra \$7 million or \$9 million, depending on which estimate we look at in the current budget of money in doubt. If that Federal funding is cut from South Australia, we are looking at a cut to this budget and that is to be remembered. I will ask questions on higher education first. What is the current policy position of the South Australian Government regarding the provision of Austudy and what representations has the Minister made to the Howard Liberal Government to inform the Commonwealth of this position and to urge it not to make the foreshadowed cuts in this area?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** First, it is important to make clear that to my knowledge the Federal Government has not made any decision and certainly it has not revealed any decision to me about Austudy or similar programs. I would advise people not to read into the forthcoming August budget things that may not necessarily be in it. We know we live in a political environment where people wish to raise issues and create angst in the community, but the best advice is to wait until the Federal Government budget comes down and we can see what the Federal Government intends to do. In the lead-up to any Federal or State budget, there is always the canvassing of possibilities or options. I have had some discussions with the Federal Minister and I hope to have more in the near future, but it is premature for anyone to be speculating about what the Federal Government may or may not do. It is best to wait and see the real thing in August.

**Ms WHITE:** In response, speculation was generated by the Federal Minister herself when she raised the whole issue of cuts to higher education.

*The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:*

**Ms WHITE:** She did raise it and suggested it to the Vice Chancellors with whom she was dining. For the Minister to imply that he has no role in this but to sit and wait on the Federal Government means, in my view, that he is not performing his job, which is to fight for South Australia and South Australian young people and to fight for the quality of higher education in this State. That depends on funds and it is important for the Minister to be in there fighting. I do not accept the Minister's view that we just have to wait and see and that it is not his role. Is the Minister concerned that the Federal Government might introduce US style tuition fees into our universities, causing a huge increase to HECS charges and providing a massive disincentive to young people to go to university? What has the Minister said to his Federal counterpart on this issue?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I did not say that I was waiting just to see what would happen. I said that for people in the community it is important not to be continually driven by speculation—much of it wild speculation—about what could or could not happen. In any pre-budget situation an authority will always canvass various options. We do it here. Government departments do it as entities and I guess we do it as individuals. We look at possible scenarios, opportunities and options and the Federal Government no doubt will be doing the same thing. It is pointless to be building straw people all the time and creating fear and apprehension if there is no substance in it. That does not mean to say that in my role I have not made clear my views on the importance of universities and TAFE in South Australia. I am on the public record

and I have made it clear that I regard them as an investment and not simply as a cost.

I do not accept the member for Taylor's claim that I have been sitting back. I have not been doing that. I am stressing that there is no value for anyone in creating artificial fears and getting people agitated when there is no evidence to suggest that that is what is going to happen. If the Federal Government did introduce a US-style fee system I would be most concerned about it because our Government in South Australia is absolutely committed to access to higher education not only for people who have money but for people who are of lesser means. I can speak from experience, as someone who paid my own way to university in the first year and then won a scholarship. I know the situation from personal experience. I have done it the hard way and I do not believe that a country like Australia would be a better country if we had US-style fees for universities. The Federal Government has made no commitment to do that and, as I have indicated several times now, it would be looking at all sorts of options. If its ultimate objective is to make our education and training systems more effective and efficient, that is its absolute obligation and there are ways in which our present system is ineffective and could be made more efficient and that includes the HECS scheme.

I will give one example. I know of the daughter of a person who is very wealthy. That young graduate has no intention of working and, therefore, no intention of paying back HECS. Therefore, there are anomalies in the system at the moment which could be addressed. There are other ways of providing a system which would be even fairer in terms of access and equity, but the State Government would certainly not be supporting a system which made it harder for people to go to university, when we are trying to create a smart State here and not one in which privilege is the means of accessing higher education.

**Ms WHITE:** As to the Minister's quoted example of someone having trained at a university and not intending to pay back the HECS fee, is the Minister advocating up-front fees in universities? In March this year, shortly after Senator Amanda Vanstone became Education Minister, I attended a public function where the Minister was speaking and you announced that you had just written to the Federal Minister advocating a HECS like charge for TAFE students. How will that charge operate and what will it mean for students wanting to enter TAFE courses?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As to the first point, I do not support a scheme which requires up-front fees. If people can afford to pay up-front, that is fine. The case I mentioned was one where someone could and should pay back something to the community for having the benefit of a tertiary education but, because her parents are in a position where she does not have to earn an income, she is not paying back anything under the current HECS arrangements. I am just using that as an example where someone who is rich and should be paying is able to dodge any contribution because of some weaknesses in the present system. I acknowledge that that is one case, but the system at the moment has a lot of deficiencies in it.

In terms of a vocational fee system, I have had many people, particularly mature age women—many from the northern suburbs—suggesting to me that even though TAFE fees and charges are much lower than in the university system, they would like to have the option of repaying those charges, materials fees and so on when they earn their income and not up-front or during their course. In other words, it

would be a more equitable system if, when they graduated from TAFE and were earning money in a trade or profession, they could pay back a percentage of the cost of their training then rather than having to do it up front or during their program.

I acknowledge that a State Government could not introduce a scheme such as that, because it is too expensive and we would not have the resources to do it. I have canvassed that view with the Federal Minister as a possibility of having a vocational education and training scheme, so that people had the option of paying once they started earning their income. It would be a more equitable system. The most expensive of our courses is \$15 000 a year for the International Hotels Management Program, which is more expensive than any university program of which I am aware. However, it is basically limited to those who have parents who are well off. Even our less expensive programs, most of which are in the order of several hundred dollars, plus in some cases materials fees of \$1 000 for art programs, are still a burden if you come from a family with low means. It is put forward as an option for consideration, and it has merit. I am urging the Federal Government to consider it.

**Mr WADE:** Will the Minister provide information about a new and exciting program that will see TAFE and South Australian trained staff for the restaurant chain Sizzler?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** For TAFE in South Australia this is another example of how good it is. It has been awarded a contract with the Sizzler chain, which is awarded on the basis of a selection out of all the training providers in Australia, to train staff for the Sizzler chain. That training will be undertaken at the Regency Hotel School. It is a significant development. Once again, great credit is due to the people within TAFE and in this case the Regency hotel school. I commend Sizzler on its good taste. One of the essential attributes of running a quality restaurant chain is that you have quality, trained staff. What we will see in the first traineeship, undertaken from 9 July, is both unemployed and existing staff in the Sizzler chain being trained through TAFE SA. It is another feather in the TAFE cap and an indication that people who are in the quality restaurant business know quality training when they see it. That is why we have been able to get this deal with Sizzler.

**Mr WADE:** I refer to Program Estimates (page 431). What progress is being made with respect to the training requirements in new and emerging industries such as aquaculture, food processing, wine and floriculture?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** TAFE is adaptable. It has to be adaptable because it is in a competitive training environment. Some members may not realise it, but we have well over 200 private training providers in South Australia, in addition to the three universities and the 10 TAFE institutes. If you are a trainer and you do not keep up-to-date, you get left behind. We are offering a whole lot of innovative programs not only in the areas mentioned by the honourable member but in areas such as ecotourism, and we were one of the first organisations to implement training for that rapidly growing area. In conjunction with the Developing Marine Science Centre at Port Lincoln, a TAFE diploma is offered to support the aquaculture industry. I commend the Flinders University on its linkages with us in terms of delivery of programs such as that. We are developing a food processing skill centre, and that is to build on not only arrangements such as that which I have just announced with respect to Sizzler but the whole gamut of the food industry, with traineeships in the dairy

industry, on the food processing side, fruit and vegetables, baking, and also in relation to fish products.

South Australia has not done enough in the past with the excellent products that come out of our primary industries. We can create a lot of employment and opportunities in terms of how we process those excellent primary products that are generated in South Australia. As an example, in tuna production the Japanese pay large amounts of money but the product has to be presented and prepared correctly. In related ventures such as Port Adelaide we are seeing a maximising of return in terms of value adding as a result of TAFE input into developing skills.

We have enormous commitment in the wine industry to training people. Recently, I attended the graduation of the vineyard managers in the South-East. We literally have people queuing up from other States to access our training programs, and we are committed to expanding them under some of our growth money programs. With regard to floriculture, there is a huge potential for the export of flowers and the Para Institute is linked in with a program to assist the flower growers in the northern areas to ensure that the flowers they produce and the presentation of the product is of world standard. They are just some examples of what TAFE is doing to ensure that our industries have the best training.

**Mr WADE:** What is DETAFE doing to enhance community and industry awareness of its activities and services?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We have a comprehensive commitment. To a large extent, I am part of the front line and so is the Chief Executive in trying to communicate to the public what has been for too long our best kept secret, that is, the good things that TAFE does. Whenever I get an opportunity, I regard myself as an evangelist for TAFE and for training, and the Chief Executive does, also. We are totally committed to presenting TAFE, revealing to the community that we run 300 award courses. We train people in all areas. We train them to be jockeys (one of my favourite examples is that TAFE has an electronic horse, which uses little chaff and generates very little manure). We have been successful in training jockeys. We train computer assisted design people, child care workers, aircraft maintenance, and so on. We are continually trying to get the message to the community—not only to young people but to their parents—that it is time that everyone in the community has a look at what TAFE offers.

We still train in traditional areas such as cabinet making, and I hope that we continue to do that. We still have black-smithing shops, but we also provide training in the most sophisticated areas of computer technology. Institutes such as Adelaide have 1 500 computers on line for training, and people would find it staggering if they saw them being used. We are promoting TAFE SA as the corporate name. Whilst the 10 institutes are part of a system with about 60 sites throughout the State, we are encouraging them to develop their own personality as an institute within the framework of a system and get known, liaise with, be a part of and reflect the needs of their local community.

We have TAFE week coming up shortly, and there will be activities in Rundle Mall and elsewhere. We are supporting training awards. This year the categories have been expanded to cover Government agencies. In total, we are sponsoring eight different categories. We are producing a magazine for senior secondary school students. At the Royal Show, as at the Skills Expo, people will see examples of TAFE promoting itself to the community. Our best kept secret, hopefully,

will no longer be a secret as a result of TAFE's promoting its activities to the community.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** The report of the National Commission of Audit released last week recommended the scrapping of the funding of our assessable university and TAFE systems, to be replaced by a highly inequitable system of vouchers and scholarships. It is like Fightback Mark II. It also recommends that anyone who leaves school early would have to apply for funding to be involved in a labour market program and that universities and TAFE colleges would charge high fees for courses involving full cost recovery and beyond, effectively taking tertiary education out of the reach of many low and middle income earners and their children. The Premier is reported as hailing the report. What is your view regarding the recommendations of the Audit Commission on matters affecting TAFE and universities? Do you have a view, or do you prefer the approach of Senator Amanda Vanstone, who has ceased to comment on almost anything in an effort to avoid foot-in-mouth disease?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The member's statement carries some unfortunate connotations and reflections on members of this Parliament and elsewhere. I am not aware that the Premier has hailed the report. My reading of what he said was that it should be looked at, considered and evaluated closely. I do not believe that his statements could in any way be taken as either support for or rejection of the Audit Commission. He was saying, 'Let us look at what it has to say and a considered response will be developed in time.'

Members must accept that reports like that will canvass many strategies and that the Government ultimately has to adopt policies which meet the needs of the community. The fact that a group of people in an Audit Commission or whatever make recommendations does not mean that the Government of the day—Federal, State or whatever—will necessarily adopt them. Indeed, we have heard the Prime Minister and other Federal Ministers specifically reject some of them, even at this early stage. I would not get too excited about the recommendations of the Audit Commission. I think that commissions are good in the sense that they get you to challenge some of your current practices, and they are worthwhile from that angle; but it does not mean that the Federal or State Government would necessarily follow what the Audit Commission or any other commission suggested. I would not get too excited or lose too much sleep over it.

It is unfortunate that the member should reflect on a Minister as she did. Senator Vanstone has a very difficult portfolio. In my view, it is probably the most difficult portfolio of any Federal Minister, because she has to come to terms with an inherited significant deficit. I know that she is very much aware of the importance of education and training. Like State Government Ministers, after Labor has been in power, we find that we have to do some significant repair work to get the economy back on track and to bring about important reforms. I understand very much the difficult task that Senator Vanstone has. Ultimately, the Federal Government must try to refocus the economy and the social fabric of this nation so that we can be No. 1 instead of being one of the leading nations in debt of any in the world.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Do you regard HECS as a tax, given that it is administered by the Australian Taxation Office, and do you oppose any increase in the cost to students of obtaining a university of TAFE education?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Whether it is or is not a tax is an academic question. I guess that tax is something I pay and view differently what other people pay. More seriously, I do

not believe it is unreasonable to ask people who benefit from a university education to contribute something back to the community. I am happy to pay a significant tax on my income because I have had the benefit of being subsidised and supported at university by the taxpayer. I do not have any problem about contributing back to the community when the community has given me the means to earn a high income. Whether what one is asked to pay back is appropriate or fair is a different question. I think that the principle of paying back is appropriate. Whether the precise details are in the correct form is another matter that the Federal Government is likely to address.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Would you see an increase in HECS payments as a broken promise by the Federal Liberal Government?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The Prime Minister made clear that his pre-election statement referred to people in the system who were already studying, not those who may enter in future. I think he has made clear that his commitment related to those who are already part of the HECS process, not additional people. In the context of what he is reported to have said, I do not think that anyone could accuse him of breaking a promise in respect of HECS. I would have to check the pre-election statement, but I have no reason to doubt that what he said prior to the election was a commitment to people already in the system, not to those yet to enter it.

**Mr ANDREW:** I refer to page 434 of the Program Estimates, in particular video conferencing. I have been particularly pleased in the electorate of Chaffey to see the value and use of video conferencing at the Murray Institute. I believe that it has been well received in the Riverland with respect to the ability of students to access a wider range of programs and subjects. What is the present number of video conferencing classrooms, what have these facilities been used for and what has been their success?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** This is an important area. TAFE is a world leader in distance education using interactive video or video conferencing. Members may recall that less than a year ago TAFE came second in the world in regard to the quality of its electronic classroom delivery. We were beaten by a multi-national billion-dollar organisation, so that gives some indication of where TAFE sits. One of the reasons why EDS was pleased to be associated with us was our sophisticated network linking not only within Australia but across the world.

We have 30 video conferencing facilities stretched across 25 campuses. This year we are allocating extra money, depending on the type of facility that goes in. We are looking at an extra two or three units, which means integrated classrooms of about \$100 000 each, but some of the technology is becoming cheaper. When it started it required about 46 STD lines: now it is down to about two. So, there has been a significant reduction in the cost of operating the system.

Members may not realise, but not only are our facilities used for direct teaching and save a lot of travel time and expense and provide greater access for country students, but also in some situations they have been used by professionals, for example, for counselling. I know that psychiatrists have used the system to provide face to face counselling to people in country areas. It means that they can access facilities that would otherwise be difficult to access. In TAFE we have never claimed that video conferencing is the answer to everyone's remote study prayer, but it is a major factor in

helping young people and not so young people access the system. Some people find it difficult to come to terms with aspects of video conferencing, but it is largely a personal preference in that some people are more accommodating than others.

We intend to expand this network. In years to come there will be greater use of video conferencing not only in terms of South Australia but also linked in ultimately with other new age technology, including use of satellite delivery backed up with computer-assisted learning. I emphasise that, whilst this gadgetry is sophisticated and impressive, it should never detract from the fact that we are a people organisation. We are interested in our students and staff as human beings who can interact not simply as statistics who may be linked into some hi-tech facility, no matter how whiz-bang it may be.

**Mr ANDREW:** I refer to page 436 of the Program Estimates with respect to the Urrbrae development project. From a country perspective, Urrbrae is seen highly in terms of reputation and expectation in that it provides valuable rural courses. We are all aware that significant dollars were spent recently at the Urrbrae campus. Would the Minister give an update on the current status of that project, particularly in terms of what it currently offers and what he expects it to offer not only to country people but to all people with a rural course interest in the future?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I acknowledge that the member for Mawson is a distinguished former scholar of that school. The will of Peter Waite, who donated the land, is an important element in determining what we can and cannot do on that site. Hopefully, the legal aspect has now been finalised. It requires either a determination by the Supreme Court that a TAFE facility is an educational facility or, alternatively, if that is not forthcoming, it may require a change in legislation through the parliamentary system. I do not believe many people would dispute that providing a TAFE facility next to a school facility, or integrating with it, would in any way be seen as deviating from Peter Waite, who had a vision about education and, in particular, agricultural education.

The facility is a joint development with DECS upgrading its high school and TAFE providing as part of a total project in excess of \$16 million. We are providing nearly \$11 million towards the capital cost of our part of the project. The idea is to have an integrated development where students can share many of the facilities. In one precinct there will be a university across the road at Waite (with child-care facilities and a library that caters for research needs), a high school and a TAFE facility.

I am also keen, although it has not been finalised, that Trees for Life and Greening Australia be located there. I am aware that they are funded in part by the Department of Primary Industries and that they raise a lot of money themselves. It would be a golden opportunity to have Greening Australia and Trees for Life on the one site so that we have, in effect, the one-stop shop for industries and organisations that work together to develop agricultural and horticultural techniques. It will be a fantastic project. On that site the City of Mitcham, in conjunction with the catchment board, is developing innovative wetlands and a stormwater retention scheme to reduce the amount of water that ends up near where you live, Mr Chairman.

All in all, it is exciting and innovative. Given the value of agricultural and horticultural activities in this State, it will be welcomed by everyone. I look forward to the day when we officially start work on that site. We are confident that we can

get work under way before the end of this year. Bearing in mind that it is a joint TAFE-DECS project, we have to fit in with what DECS does, and some of its work has to precede the work that we do.

**Mr ANDREW:** I refer to page 431 of the Program Estimates with respect to on-line technologies. What are the benefits for students and industry from the current initiatives within DETAFE to deliver TAFE courses via on-line technologies, for example, the Worldwide Web and the Internet?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As I indicated in the answer prior to the last question, TAFE is a leader in terms of technology. Not many people realise that TAFE produces its own CD-Rom, and we are very much linked to the Internet. Much of our TAFE material is now available on the Internet. Increasingly, we will provide training via the Internet and other forms of computer-assisted learning. Much of that was pioneered out of the Regency Institute. This is also done through the Onkaparinga institute for farmers and graziers so that they can study on their home computer at a time that suits them and also return assignments down the line via their computer.

One of the challenges for TAFE—and it is always a costly one—is that if you want to train and be ahead of the rest you have to spend a lot of money on upgrading and ensuring that the technology is ahead of the rest. Industry does not want to be trained on equipment that is out of date. It is a great challenge to ensure that we have a relationship with industry so that we can work with it to have the most sophisticated equipment. I indicated in an earlier answer the extent to which the Adelaide Institute has a commitment to computer training, but all of our institutes in one way or another are involved in modern technological delivery. The Torrens Valley institute has been recognised for some of its innovative training. The Croydon campus is very sophisticated in terms of multi-media technologies. One can go around to each and every institute and find that they are all doing something which is quite remarkable. The South-East institute, in terms of modern technology, is using global satellite information for the design of vineyards. All the institutes are up there with the best in terms of modern technology.

**Ms WHITE:** In defence of the Minister's words to my colleague the member for Torrens when she said that the Premier was reported as hailing the National Commission of Audit, I have the *Advertiser* article from which she got that information. An article in the *Financial Review* yesterday refers to the shake-up in the university sector. It says that it is aimed at trying to reduce regulations and introduce a more flexible industrial relations system in tertiary institutions which could include changing academic tenure. Of course, there is State Government legislation controlling that. What is the Minister's view on academic tenure?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I am not aware that our legislation relates to tenure within universities. Obviously, we have industrial relations provisions under one or more Acts, but my understanding is that university staff in general, particularly academic staff, come under a Federal provision, but I am prepared to be corrected. I think there is a case for having a mixture of tenured and non-tenured staff. I am a strong supporter of the fact that universities must be independent of Government and other political forces in respect of their commitment to search for truth. In other words, in my view they cannot be subjected to constraints which stop them from vigorously pursuing answers and solutions to all the questions

that might arise, whether they be scientific or otherwise. Tenure affords some protection in that regard but, at the same time, in my view you need some flexibility so that you can respond to the changing needs of the community in terms of training by having some people on your staff who may not necessarily have that tenure.

In an ideal world, the best position is to have a mixture of people who have tenure, provided that for those staff you still have flexibility to move them according to changing needs and demands but with the flexibility of being able to offer contracts to staff to ensure that universities do not become too rigid or set in their ways. In other words, there should be a hybrid mix in terms of staffing so that there is not too rigid a formula for employing staff. I think a hybrid mixture would be the healthiest way to go for universities and some other institutions.

**Ms WHITE:** The TAFE budget again includes an amount of \$18 million in its accounts described as an advance to the University of South Australia. I presume that that is for the City-West campus. Under what line does this appear in the Program Estimates, what is the source of funding, and why does it appear in the TAFE accounts?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I am technically the guarantor for the University of South Australia City-West project. I do not believe there is any danger that the University of South Australia will fall over—at least I hope not—but technically I am the guarantor for a loan from, I think, the National Bank. It becomes a bit confusing, because there are other aspects in the budget where we act as the agency that disburses money to the university. In total, I think that project will cost about \$54 million. It is built in, but we have been mindful not to upset the member for Taylor by trying to claim that that is additional spending when it is actually part of the University of South Australia's allocation.

**Ms WHITE:** With reference to page 434 of Financial Information Paper No. 1, over the past year the State TAFE area came close to being punished financially by the Commonwealth for not maintaining effort. Will the same rules apply with the current Federal Government regarding the requirement to maintain effort in order to qualify for the Commonwealth growth funding, and what discussions has the Minister had with the Federal Government regarding this issue?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The Federal Government has given no indication, of which I am aware, that it will change the rules for the immediate future. In the absence of information to the contrary, we would assume that the rules remain for the next financial year. The member for Taylor would appreciate that there has been ongoing concern for a long time about how States have been judged with respect to maintenance of effort. We believe that over time South Australia has been treated somewhat unfairly because our reporting has been absolutely factual. We have given a very accurate account of what we have been doing. I do not believe that is quite the case with all other States—I think a little bit of fudging has been going on elsewhere. South Australia does a lot of innovative work in terms of fee for service.

I would also argue that, in many cases, our programs are of better quality. We have suffered under the formula that has been used. I would not be surprised if, looking at the long-term future, the Federal Government changes that formula, given that not only South Australia but also Western Australia and Victoria have been protesting for a long time about the formula that has been applied, on the grounds that we regard it as essentially unfair. Despite that, we still

maintain effort because of the contribution of our staff, and acceptance of some of our innovative programs, such as the Vehicle Industry Certificate.

**Ms WHITE:** Supplementary to that, is the new Commonwealth Government locked into the ANTA agreement? As the Minister would appreciate, there is a good \$9 million, or so, increase in the ANTA funds listed in this budget. Are they locked in?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The Federal Government has been looking at ANTA through various avenues, one of which has been the COAG meetings of the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers. Those meetings have been and are still looking at what ANTA is or is not doing, and an assessment of ANTA has been carried out as part of the National Audit Commission Report. It is fair to say that there is general agreement around Australia that we do not want to see the baby go out with the bathwater, and that ANTA has provided a focal point for national standards, accreditation, and so on, but there has been a feeling that perhaps ANTA was showing signs of becoming a very large bureaucracy.

I think the Federal Government, in conjunction with the States and Territories, is likely to refine ANTA's role and try to ensure that it does not grow into a huge bureaucratic establishment. One would expect the national commitment to standards, accreditation and cooperation, etc., to remain, but I think some changes will be made at the edge of the ANTA agreement. As the honourable member would know, the Senate also held an inquiry, and I believe we will see a synthesis of all those studies and reports, but that is probably a few months away. I would say that probably towards the end of this year we will have some clear idea about ANTA, and that will certainly follow the next ministerial council meeting, where I am sure it will be discussed at some length.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** As well as business and education, like the member for Chaffey I have specific interests in aspects of TAFE, one of which relates to the International College of Hotel Management. Minister, I refer to page 437 of Financial Information Paper No 1, and ask whether information could be provided on the level of enrolments and accommodation facility associated with the International College of Hotel Management, which I have had the pleasure of visiting. I must say that it is a superb resource for our State.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I had the privilege last week of attending the graduation of ICHM students who had completed both the Cordon Bleu and Swiss Hotels Association programs. Interim graduations have been held but this was the first where students who had completed the total training package were presented with their awards at a major ceremony at the Hilton Hotel. The program is in its infancy and, as I indicated earlier today, it derives recognition in large part from the good work that has already been done at the Regency Hotel School. There have been six intakes so far, with students enrolling from not only Australia but other parts of the world.

The seventh intake, which is the current intake, comprised 75 students for the first semester of this year. In total now we have 171 students on campus; 72 students on industry placement which, in some cases, involves hotels in many parts of the world; and three students are studying a second language in lieu of industry placement.

We expect 42 new enrolments in the next intake commencing next month. Overall, members can appreciate that there has been a rapid growth in enrolments. As hinted at by the member for Mawson, the accommodation is excellent. In

time, and as part of the upgrade of the Regency Hotel School, we will be looking to ensure that the cooking side is well provided for in terms of top quality equipment. Without taking anything away from the ICHM program, I stress that I am absolutely committed to ensuring that programs run by the Regency hotel school are maintained and enhanced. I make it clear that we have no intention in any way of doing anything other than enhancing and boosting those programs run for students who are not part of the international college program. In other words, those doing the international program pay \$15 000. We are partners in that but those who are being trained for most of our hotels and restaurants attend the Regency Hotel School as TAFE students.

I am keen to make our support for the Regency hotel school clear in order to dispel any notion that somehow I or the department want to phase it out, sell it or do something with it. We are absolutely committed to it: it is the bread and butter of our hospitality program because the local students who may not come from affluent families but who want a career as a chef or in hospitality will still be going into that program. In fact, we have expanded the number of students in that program. I need to make that clear because some people from time to time suggest that the international program will be at the expense of the main program, but that is not the case. That is not something I would ever support.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I refer to page 431 and the line about child care training. I believe that the child care sub-program of the community services and health program in DETAFE has been involved in developing an innovative approach to child care training. What does this really mean to our State? Will it allow us opportunities to sell the program to other States and Territories in Australia? Will it have the potential of income generation for DETAFE? Specifically, what has been the State's role in this development?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I recently had the privilege of launching the new child care training program which was part of the National TAFE child care conference held at the Goodwood Orphanage. That new program involved over 100 TAFE staff and \$750 000 to develop the curriculum and materials that go with it. Already we have recouped close to \$200 000 resulting from sales of that material, although that is not why the department undertook the project. We need the best quality in terms of people who look after children in day care. That is now required by legislation and parents naturally want it and have every right to know that the people looking after their children are competent and fully trained. At that launch I was impressed to see the range of materials developed, covering every aspect not only of behaviour of infants but also medical aspects relating to being able to look after them properly and how to deal with emergency situations, whether it be an asthma attack or the like. I was very impressed with the dedication of the TAFE people under Ann Davenport, who worked on that program for probably two years. It involved coordinating over 100 staff in an exercise involving many of our TAFE institutes and making those materials available to other States. Whilst we often focus on the material side of TAFE, we are also involved in areas such as child care training and, once again, it illustrates the diversity of what TAFE offers to the community in terms of training.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** We heard almost *ad nauseam* questions and comments from the Opposition late last year and early this year about ANTA growth. I refer to page 431 of the papers. Concern seemed to be expressed that South Australia's ANTA growth funding was at risk in 1995. Can

you advise whether the 1995 growth funds were received from ANTA? If they were received, did our State achieve its maintenance of effort obligations under the National Vocational, Education and Training Agreement?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We were keen to secure that funding, because it represents about \$5.5 million, which is not to be sneezed at. It was achieved through a fantastic effort by TAFE staff. Some institutes perform more efficiently than others. Some achieved incredible productivity improvements. We need to continue those throughout the TAFE system. We are not saying we can sit back but, if we take into account what was provided directly through TAFE and indirectly in the programs we are associated with, we exceeded the ANTA target by 180 000 student hours. We have those funds and we will allocate them to growth areas such as viticulture, IT and so on. It means that we are able to take into TAFE this year about an extra 3 600 students to undertake programs. That money is vital for us and, as I say, whilst there was a great effort to pick up some of the shortfall of previous years, we need now to continue our commitment to productivity and keep increasing the output of student hours per teaching staff member, and I believe that TAFE can do that. As I said, it is easier for some areas than others but, nevertheless, all institutes and staff have to be part of a process of absolute efficiency to meet our commitment as the biggest and, more importantly, the best training provider in this State.

**Ms WHITE:** As to the role of ANTA and Commonwealth-State relations, does the State Government support a national partnership model of TAFE with both the States and the Commonwealth involved as equal partners, or does the Minister believe the present functions of the Commonwealth in this area should be devolved to the States?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The member for Taylor has to appreciate that, contrary to some popular belief, the South Australian Government provides most of the money for TAFE. A view has been around that somehow the Commonwealth pays our bills and that we have got Commonwealth money coming out of our ears, but that is not true. The State Government provides most of the funding for TAFE and, therefore, it is appropriate that the State has the major say in what happens in terms of delivery of TAFE programs. There is a case for continuing a coordinated approach, national accreditation, and interchangeability of awards and programs but, in my view, we must retain control over our programs so that we meet the needs of South Australia, the industries in South Australia and particularly the regional needs.

The last thing we want is to be controlled and directed from Canberra, when we are trying to provide a multitude of programs to meet a multitude of needs. We can have the best of both worlds with the Federal Government being supportive and our all working in a coordinated, cooperative Federal system where the State Government has the major say with respect to priorities and allocation of resources.

**Ms WHITE:** The States and territories joint submission to the National Commission of Audit (page 28) states:

A new structure should be developed for the national VET system with the following principal features.

It talks of a true partnership between the States and territories, Commonwealth and industry, and later it talks about the continued commitment of the Commonwealth as an equal partner in the development of a national VET system. Am I interpreting the Minister's answer to the previous question to be such that he does not agree with that?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I am saying that TAFE is not VET; TAFE is only part of the vocational education training system. As a whole, the VET sector encompasses the private providers as well as TAFE. If the Federal Government is seen as an equal part in VET, it does not contradict the primary role of the State Government with respect to TAFE, because we pay most of the money for TAFE. The Federal Government provides quite a lot of the money for the private training sector by way of subsidies, and so on. There is no real conflict. It is just that TAFE is part of the bigger VET sector and, whilst both elements are focused on training, they are not the same thing. It is really distinguishing between TAFE, where we are the big spenders, and VET where the Commonwealth would provide much more money than the State Government is able to provide.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to Program Estimates (page 427) on the provisions of resources. I am not sure whether I am missing something, but I really did not see a significant maintenance budget when I looked for it this year or last year, which is something that would be of concern to me if that be the case. Our TAFE institutes and infrastructure are valuable resources that have been provided predominantly by the Federal Labor Government, and I am concerned that, without sufficient money going into maintenance, they will fall apart. What is the budget for maintenance this year?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As the honourable member pointed out, many of our facilities are relatively new. We have some that are not so new. We are committed to building quite a few new facilities in the near future, including the Centre for Performing Arts, and so on. However, the figure for maintenance is \$1.2 million, plus what the institutes themselves provide for ongoing maintenance. Whilst you may not classify it strictly as maintenance, things such as the dust extraction system at the Marleston Campus of Douglas Mawson cost \$1 million, and that has just been installed. That is just one dust extraction system. In terms of occupational health and safety, that means that the students and staff there have the best working conditions we can provide. If you look at it other than in a narrow definition, you will see that quite a lot of money is going into constantly upgrading our facilities. However, as material costs rise, it becomes a challenge for us to maintain them obviously at the level we would like. It is fair and honest to say that TAFE's facilities are maintained at a high level. Whilst we have some facilities such as Victor Harbor, Kadina and so on that are not the Rolls Royce in terms of buildings, most of our facilities are pretty good quality; accordingly, you need to spend less maintenance on them, given that many of them are fairly new.

**Ms WHITE:** Is the Minister willing to provide the Committee with the breakdown of that maintenance budget across institutes?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Yes, we can do that, with regard to what it was spent on and where it was spent.

**Mr WADE:** I refer to Program Estimates (page 434). Could the Minister advise on the establishment of the VEET board? What progress has it made to date in its various areas of priorities, one of which was to open up the training market to competition?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The VEET board is charged with the responsibility of developing the State training profile which in essence is really the direction in which training priorities should be going in this State. It is a powerful committee, consisting of the following: Peter Romanowski, who is the Deputy Chair and who is a senior officer at Mitsubishi; Debbie Thiele, from the Agricultural and

Horticultural Training Council; Peter Smith from British Aerospace; Dagma Egen from Aspect Computing; Professor Ian Chubb, Vice Chancellor, Flinders University; Professor Judith Sloane, National Institute of Labour Studies; Professor Harry Green, Institute for Telecommunications Research; Paul Rosser, Australian Quality Council; Di Ewens, formerly a senior management person with Telstra; John Lesses from the UTLC; Robyn Buckler from the Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union; and Brian Stanford from DETAFE, *ex officio*.

So it is a pretty powerful group of individuals. As Minister, I appreciate the time and effort they put in. In developing the State training profile, they really make clear where in South Australia we should be directing our training effort. They also make clear where the money for encouraging innovation and private sector training should go—the so-called diversified training market—and generally act as a link between the wider community, industry, unions and me as the training Minister. Not only is it a powerful group but also I am keen to meet frequently with it. I have had the pleasure of meeting with it in the past. I am convinced that a group such as that can be extremely useful in providing advice to the Government. At the end of the day, ultimately, the Government has to make decisions and weigh up the pros and cons of the advice given. I have confidence in that board to come up with the correct advice with regard to where training should go in this State and the priorities we should attach to training not only in the special funding allocated to the private sector area but in relation to training overall.

#### Membership:

Mr Atkinson substituted for Mr Quirke.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Since the mid-semester break on 12 April, computer tools needed to train students in the module of database implementation have not been fully functional. Some of these tools include an SQL server (I understand that reliable access has been denied), Microsoft access (which has been only partly working), and the ODBC link between Windows and the server has not been available to students at all times. Students have been recording these conditions since 3 May to Computer Services without any satisfaction. I understand that the education managers are aware of the difficulties, but management has been unable to offer any explanation for this situation. That is in part of a letter from a student expressing concern. There is the following further comment:

My concern here is that while there is no doubt the assessment criteria will be modified to recognise the difficulties students experienced, most students... are attending the module to gain training in database implementation—an unlikely outcome, given that TAFE are either unable or unwilling to have the computer tools fully functional.

Would you care to comment?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It would be helpful if I knew which institute it is.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** This is from a student at Sefton Park.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** If the member will give me more clues, I will have the matter looked at. It is clearly the responsibility of the institute Director and the education managers.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** It is the Adelaide Institute of TAFE.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We will take up that matter with the institute Director. I am surprised, if they are key elements of the course, that they have not been attended to, because that



institute has at least 1 500 computers and over 23 000 students. It must be doing something right to have that number of students. We will take it up with the institute and get any deficiencies corrected if those allegations are correct. Frankly, I would be amazed if something critical to their course had been allowed to remain unrepaired or had not been rectified almost immediately. I undertake to have that matter looked at by the institute concerned.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** I understand that when students graduate and attend the ceremony their certificate is provided to them without cost and that, if it is posted to them because they are unable to attend the ceremony, it is posted without cost. However, if they wish to pick up their certificate from the office they have to pay a \$10 handling fee.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I am not aware of the specifics, but it is probable that by not attending the ceremony or having it posted they are creating additional work.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** It would still have to be handled in order to be posted.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Yes, but if it has to be kept at the counter waiting for Miss or Mr X to turn up, there is a problem with security and more counter staff may need to be available. I suspect it is done to discourage people from not attending the ceremony or not using the postal option. TAFE SA is very generous to students regarding time payment facilities. In some ways it provides a service to students which exceeds that offered elsewhere. I would not want to pass judgment on an institute until I was aware of the full details. I am surprised that people would not want to go to a graduation ceremony or, alternatively, have their certificate posted to them. If the TAFE institute has to keep a lot of certificates on hand in case someone rocks up, I think it is appropriate that there be a disincentive, and we could debate whether it should be \$10 or something else. I will ascertain what the practice is, but I guess it varies from institute to institute. I would not pass judgment on an institute without knowing the full details.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** I am sure that it is not a case of students not wanting to attend the ceremony; it may be that for many reasons they are unable to do so. It seems that only \$600 000 was spent on training with DETAFE in 1995-96, and that is less than 1 per cent of the budget. Given that TAFE is meant to be at the cutting edge of training a highly skilled work force, why is this figure so low; what is the staff training budget for the coming year; and is not the department setting a poor example to industry in regard to its own training?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** That is only part of the total story in TAFE. That is the central allocation. The institutes themselves take great pride in providing funds for staff training that they initiate. In developing the new regulations for the councils, one of the points that the Presidents of the councils made was that they take great delight and pride in providing staff development assistance, including, in some cases, funding for staff to go overseas. In TAFE we have many people going overseas to upgrade their work-related experience and to improve their knowledge.

Recently I gave approval for two TAFE staff to go to South-East Asia for a toolmaking exercise in order to improve their skills and ensure that they are abreast of developments in that area. It is not accurate to imply that that is all that is spent on TAFE training; that is the central allocation. In addition, we have people going overseas and the institutes spending a lot of money on them. The allocation

for training is close to \$1.7 million. I think the member may have misread that.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to 'Contracts of training and recognition services' on page 439 of the Program Estimates. One of the 'Issues/Trends' described is that of the implementation of a nationally consistent system of competency-based training at entry level through the Modern Australian Apprenticeship Training System (MAATS). I believe that should be the Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship System, but perhaps I am wrong in that. Does the Minister support the national training wage arrangements that are in place in many awards to assist employers to take on more trainees?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** There is a multiplicity of funding programs. The provision is expressed in some of those awards for apprentices. Plumbing is one example of that. Other people access it through the national youth training wage. The scheme to which the honourable member refers, MAATS (Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship Scheme), will as far as I am aware continue those programs. We are still awaiting and developing the detail of that with the Commonwealth. The short answer is that there is some variation in what people get paid according to which classification they are in and which form of training or youth wage they come under.

**Ms WHITE:** Is the Minister happy with the wage arrangements that are in place in various awards?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** There is a case for simplifying and clarifying some of it. You can get some anomalies where someone on the level of apprentice receives more money than another doing a different type of trade training. If, as a result of the MAATS system, it is possible to develop a simplified training wage arrangement, it is to be welcomed, provided that it does not in any way discourage young people from taking up apprenticeships and traineeships.

**Ms WHITE:** Does the Minister support the view of the Minister for Vocational Education and Training, Dr David Kemp, as given to ACOSS in a speech on 22 May, when he suggested that 'trainee wage rates should reflect the extent to which time spent in accredited training rather than on the job in productive work decreases the value of the trainee'. If the Minister does support that concept, how would this be implemented? What would the trainee receive under the trainee's already discounted current award rate of pay, further discounted for the time spent in training, that is, a double discount, and what would be the funding arrangements?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** In an earlier answer today I indicated that, whilst the details are not absolutely clear, the Commonwealth is looking at having apprentices and trainees paid more for their work output and less for the training component. If there is little net difference compared with what they currently get, I do not have any problem. It is a bit early to say what the final outcome will be, because the Commonwealth is still developing its position in relation to that aspect. In any event, the Industrial Relations Bill has been referred to a committee of the Senate. So, we will not see a quick answer in respect of that issue.

**Ms WHITE:** I am interested in how on-the-job training will be treated under that scheme and how one determines what is training and what is productive work. To put it into context to help the Committee understand the impact of what is being proposed in MAATS, I put the following situation to the Minister. If a young person works as a second or third year apprentice chef, taking into account penalty rates and overtime, they could expect to earn up to \$30 000 a year.

How much could they expect to earn under MAATS, because under my reasoning their salary could drop by two-thirds to just over \$9 000 a year. I raise that concern because I want to know how that would be determined under MAATS.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As I indicated, it is too early to say what the final formula will be. I would not support a system where people were paid peanuts for being an apprentice or a trainee. Ideally, their pay should reflect the productivity that they create. You would not attract too many people into apprenticeships if you were to pay them peanuts. At the moment, there is a disincentive because of the commitment involved in the training. If you reward them even less, people will not enter the industry. It would be a negative rather than a positive. The Commonwealth is still working through the process, and there is quite a way to go before we see what the final formula will be. I would not support a scheme which in any way resulted in young people being exploited or which provided for any variation of that approach.

**Ms WHITE:** Is the Minister aware that, under what is being proposed by David Kemp for MAATS, the wages for young people could be as low as \$3 an hour? I have seen in the *Sunday Mail* a press report with the headline 'Libs to push new work for dole plan', and what you proposed was modelled on the South-East system. Does the Minister support a wage that would be equivalent to the unemployment rate for a young person?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** A young person in training?

**Ms WHITE:** Yes.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** The canvassing of the so-called 'work for dole schemes' is a crude portrayal of what has been envisaged by people such as the South-East Economic Development Board, me and most other people, because we are talking about paying people more to be involved in a program that involves significant training. Currently, the Aboriginal community has a community development employment program where Aboriginal people who do useful tasks in their community are paid over and above what they would receive if they were on unemployment benefits. This is a significant opportunity to look at ways of being more innovative. Rather than pay people, in effect, to be out of the work force, we should pay them more through innovative approaches.

One of the possibilities which the South-East group suggested and which I referred to the Federal Government was that unemployment benefits be topped up to a much higher level so that those people could be employed by the private sector; in other words, the Government would, in effect, subsidise the employment of people who would otherwise be unemployed. They have the benefit of being in the workplace getting experience, being part of the work ethic and having some structure and discipline in what they do. We need to examine more innovative approaches which do not penalise people but which give them more and involve them in worthwhile activities in the community. The days of simply paying people without a more focussed approach are pretty well over.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** With respect to the vehicle industry certificate (page 431), will the Minister outline the support that the State Government has given to fully implement that certificate as an ongoing entry level training program for the automotive manufacturing industry?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** This program is one of the great success stories of South Australia and a first for Australia. By way of the vehicle industry certificate, all those people in industry who are not tradespersons are able to obtain

recognition for what they already know and do as well as achieve extra modules towards a certificate which is recognised nationally and which gives them a lot more status. The State Government has contributed a total of \$2.4 million over two years towards this program, and the automotive industry (Holden's and Mitsubishi) have contributed almost \$20 million between them. Obviously, they believe it is a good program. There has been a dramatic increase in productivity, morale and quality of product with less absenteeism and fewer workplace accidents. Just as importantly, the morale of the staff and the extent to which the work force is committed and contented has risen dramatically.

I attended some of the earlier graduations from this program, and the impact on the staff was quite dramatic. You see people who have never been recognised in their life walk across the stage to someone who says, 'Well done! Here is your certificate' with their family in the audience. The emotion seen at those graduations, which reflect the success of the program, is a lot more intense than that seen at graduations from conventional TAFE or university programs. I do not take away from either of those, but to see people who traditionally have not been recognised in our community walk across the stage and get a nationally recognised certificate is something that you have to experience. Some of the workers have said to me, 'I can now converse with my child's teacher at school because I can speak English' or 'I can now read and write'—they are some of the more basic modules—and there are much more sophisticated modules related to the manufacture of motor vehicles.

The beauty of the certificate is that it caters for a whole range of abilities and talents. It recognises what these people can already do. One of the things that has impressed the automotive companies is that people who have been working in a factory situation for quite a while know a lot more than they have ever been given credit for. Other industries now wish to pick up on this. In fact, I am hopeful that the mining industry will become involved in a similar sort of certificate in the future, obviously adapted to its needs. This certificate, whilst it is a generic one, has significant application in the particular industry involved. The people at Mitsubishi can do a Mitsubishi version, and the people at Holden's can do a Holden's version. Just to see the commitment of companies and their employees and the input by TAFE staff is fantastic. For the launch and during the follow-up period, the companies have been prepared to push this program and acknowledge it as a fantastic contributor towards ensuring that their products are world competitive and their work force is not only highly skilled but also contented.

**Mr BROKESHIRE:** What is the scope of consultation in relation to the preparation of the State training profile?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** A lot of work goes into developing the State training profile because, in effect, it is really an audit of where we are at and where we need to head in terms of training. It involves about 800 organisations and individuals. As part of that input, there are contributions from industry training advisory bodies (ITABS), and there are seminars conducted by my department, regional development boards and organisations such as the Employers' Chamber. In addition, questionnaires are sent out to all sorts of people who have an interest and involvement and who are affected by training. It is a very large task. Importantly, it is not meant to be a bible that collects dust but a working document that helps us to remain tightly focused on the training needs of the State and where we should be heading. If it ever became simply something for the bookshelf, it would be largely a

waste of time. It is a document that is used frequently in terms of submissions and for TAFE institutes and other organisations to ensure that they are delivering the training that industry and the community want.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** What are the benefits to be derived from the \$20 million extension to the Adelaide Institute of TAFE?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** That extension has been completed and officially opened. It is a much larger development than it might first appear when you drive down Currie Street, because some of it is underground. In essence, it is a five-storey development. It provides new training facilities, including an area for wine appreciation, about which I know the member for Mawson would be quite excited. It is custom-built and designed. The desks have a built-in bowl. It is sad to see a facility that enables people not to swallow the wine, but it is recycled back to nature through this facility. On a more serious note, it is fitted with a lot of computing equipment. It houses the new EDS Pacific Education Centre and a hospitality training area called Rosina's, which is named after the adjoining street—an offshoot of Martina's, which is the main training restaurant.

This facility caters for about 23 000 students, and that will increase in the near future to about 28 000. It is the most intensively used educational training facility in this State. When you think that it has three times the number of students as Flinders University, it is amazing how the institute accommodates and trains them. It is a bit like the old story of days gone by where the beds of children working in factories never got cold because there was always another shift coming in. The Adelaide Institute is certainly not in those dark old days, but seats rarely get cold because new people are coming in all the time to access the training programs.

We still have the Centre for Performing Arts in Grote Street which, in the not too distant future, will become part of a brand new complex in Light Square. That will integrate the drama and technical sides of theatre production. It is becoming a fantastic part of the city of Adelaide and it is closely linked with the University of SA west campus. A new child centre is to be built there in conjunction with TAFE and the university. It is an exciting development. I am pleased to say that the extension to the Adelaide Institute continues the theme of clay brick, which gives that part of town a distinctive character of its own. Those members who have never been there should make themselves familiar with the Adelaide Institute and try one of the meals at Martina's one night.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** Supplementary to that, Minister, do you see therefore those extensions being of benefit to businesses in that area of Adelaide?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Certainly one of the strong elements of the Adelaide Institute has been, for a long time, its commitment to business training and development. It does a lot of fee-for-service work, as well as other conventional study approaches provided through the TAFE system. Adelaide Institute is very much focused on meeting the needs of small and larger businesses, not only in that immediate area but throughout the metropolitan area and the State as a whole. It is the institute that has a particularly strong business orientation. Other institutes are, of course, involved in business training, but I think one could fairly characterise Adelaide's main strength as business training and development packages to assist small and larger businesses.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to vocational education at page 431 of the Program Estimates. Vocational education in South

Australia is said to be moving towards the funder/purchaser/provider model. The question of the proper separation of functions and the establishment of probity measures, which ensure that public funds are spent appropriately are central, I think, to the proper operation of this model. How does the Minister see his proposed system operating within DETAFE?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I agree that proper principles must be established for moneys provided out of the public purse, whether they be for the public or private training sector. I will ask the Chief Executive of TAFE to comment because he is actively involved in developing those principles.

**Mr Stanford:** The Minister has mentioned the preparation of the State training profile, which is the basis of the planning. The State training profile, when it is endorsed by the Minister, will be the document we use to allocate the funds, and all allocations are included in the performance agreement, whether it be a TAFE institute, a private or an enterprise provider. They obtain money for the provision of a certain level of service, and therefore we separate out and have a very clear accountability between the funder and provider.

**Ms WHITE:** Has clear separation been established?

**Mr Stanford:** Yes, and we are continuing to work on them.

**Ms WHITE:** Is that information the Minister might table?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It is probably a bit early; they are still being refined. We want to ensure that we get that process absolutely right, but I do not believe it would be possible to table it in the time frame required for this Estimates Committee. As soon as we have them developed, we will be more than happy to make them available; however, it is likely to be outside the time frame of this committee's requirement for reporting back.

**Ms WHITE:** Clarifying my first question, I was really wanting to know who, in the Minister's view, plays each of those roles of funder, purchaser and provider?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** In the total sense, you have the public agency (TAFE), as well as private agencies. The department is the Department for Employment, Training and Further Education and, in a way, it is unfortunate that the acronym tends to confuse people with TAFE SA, which is one division of the department. We are quite keen to make sure that there is a delineation between the allocation of moneys and the recipient, so that no-one can say that TAFE has an unfair advantage in terms of accessing or competing for any of those diverse training market funds.

**Ms WHITE:** I am still not clear what the model is. It is obvious who the providers are, but who is the funder and who is the purchaser?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** In essence, the money comes through from the National Training Authority (Commonwealth funds), which we put out to tender through the Diverse Training Market Funds (User Choice), and the expenditure of that money is overseen by the VEET board.

**Ms WHITE:** Is the Minister saying that the VEET board is the funder?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Technically speaking, I am the State training agency, which is really a legal entity distinct from me, as Minister. It gets a bit complicated. As I say, we are very mindful to keep a distinction between the people handing out the money and overseeing the process and the people who are eligible to get the money, otherwise we could be accused of a conflict of interest in that process. The department for which I am totally responsible is not only

TAFE. The Employment Division is quite separate. TAFE SA is really a division of that broader department and, as part of that total umbrella, I have responsibility for the VEET board, and I am legally the State training agency. I do not know whether I have made it simpler or confused the honourable member.

**Mr Stanford:** A simple way of looking at it is that governments are the funders, the State training agency is the purchaser and the providers are the range of providers.

**Ms WHITE:** The Minister said that he was the training agency, so is he the funder and purchaser?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It is Commonwealth money with some of ours.

**Ms WHITE:** Emerging from what the Minister has said, with respect, is a very confused picture.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I would have thought that it was very clear cut. It is complex, because legally we must have these various entities. The reason we are developing these principles is to make sure that we do not have a muddying of the waters, and that people in the private training area do not feel they must say, 'Look, here you are dishing out money, but TAFE has an unfair advantage because it is part of the same beehive.' Governments, both State and Federal—but, I guess, essentially and mainly at the moment it is Federal Government money, but some of ours is in it too—are the funders, and the purchaser is the department via the Education and Training Initiatives Committee, which is made up of Government, industry and union representatives and the VEET board. The providers are TAFE institutes, or other providers. It is a tricky portfolio, and that is why I do not encourage the honourable member to seek to take it on.

**Ms WHITE:** That was the point the Opposition tried to make when legislation setting up the VEET board in 1994 was being debated in Parliament, because the Act covering the VEET board makes it clear that, as the straight training agency, the Minister is responsible for the funding of training. Surely you must agree that there is a fundamental problem. There must be a conflict of interest. You delegate this function, as you do, because you point out that there is not a clear separation of roles.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** There is not a problem but there could be a problem if we did not delineate the respective functions, but we have clearly set out to make sure that there is a delineation. The VEET board secretariat is not part of the TAFE SA administrative functions.

**Mr Stanford:** We have restructured the department and there is clear separation. We have a Vocational Education Division and a TAFE Division and there is a clear separation of functions and responsibilities between those divisions. We are moving to a clear transparent process between the various ways we operate. There is a separation that is transparent.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** As it is a complicated portfolio, I would advise you to aspire to a different portfolio because I would not want you to lose sleep.

**Ms WHITE:** As to the Accreditation Registration Council (ARC) which has now been set up, does the Minister support a consistent national system of accreditation?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** If you mean by 'consistent' an acceptance across borders of awards and other or various types of awards, it is important that we have a national system and we avoid the old railway gauge approach where someone trained in one State is not accepted elsewhere. I support a national system of inter-changeability and inter-acceptance or acceptance across State and Territory borders of training of the same standard.

**Ms WHITE:** Does the Minister support the devolution of accreditation to the enterprise level?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It is possible to have some devolution with appropriate safeguards, but we do not want a situation where in any way the integrity of awards is compromised. We can have some devolution based on ultimate accountability, which involves random inspections or audits, but I am not aware of any strong push from industry or anyone else to have a significant devolution of that responsibility. Private training providers like the assurance that they can say to people either locally or overseas, 'We are accredited by an independent body.' That, to them, is an important marketing badge.

**Ms WHITE:** Is the Minister aware that there are many examples, particularly in the tourism and hospitality area, of different AFS levels for the same training program where devolution has occurred. What is the Minister's approach to rectifying that problem?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I am not aware of significant problems in that area. Ultimately, people are subject to an audit and there is always the possibility that there will be a knock on the door or a request to see documentation and proof that programs are being delivered in accordance with the award accredited. I am not aware of any significant breaches of the agreements entered into by private providers. I shall be happy to look at any details that you can give me.

**Ms WHITE:** I am not sure that the Minister understood my point. Within different industries are different AFS levels for the same training. If we are going to have a national system and in one State you have one thing and in another State another thing, surely that is counter to the principle of having a national system of accreditation. That is what we currently have in some cases.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I am advised that there are some examples and there have been some inconsistencies between industries and between States and Territories. The new MAATS system is supposedly addressing some of those shortcomings, but I am not aware of them being at a point where it is of any major concern. It is not at a point where it has corrupted the system. If you are going to have a national system, everyone has to play by the same rules and have a level playing field and I would certainly support those elements of the training system.

**Ms WHITE:** I reiterate the earlier point and I am happy for the Minister to take the question on notice. Does the Minister support devolving accreditation down to the enterprise level within an industry? If you do support it, you run the risk of having different things happening within the one industry.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** There has been a move in many industries towards self regulation in a whole range of areas. Provided we can maintain the integrity of the system I do not have a great problem with that. I understand as part of the MAATS program that there will be scope for devolution to industries and regions, but I am sure that within that MAATS system there will be an insistence on accountability and people being subject to demonstrating that at any time they are meeting the requirements of a particular award or program. You can have greater devolution, which puts greater responsibility on the people involved, but they have to be subject to the possibility of random or other audit. I do not have any problem so long as the integrity of the system is maintained. If it involves devolution with safeguards, that is fine.

**Ms WHITE:** In relation to the diverse training market, I note that the administration and policy development functions for the diverse training market have been transferred from the employment, development and skill formation area to planning coordination. What is the total DETAFE budget for the diverse training market in the coming financial year? In terms of program delivery, what proportion of the DETAFE budget does this represent?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Approximately \$4 million is being provided.

**Ms WHITE:** What proportion of the DETAFE budget is that?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** That is not the sum total of what we put out for programs. It depends on where you want to draw the line. But we make moneys available to ITABs. They are not training providers directly but you could argue that it is a contribution towards their input to the provision of training by their industry. It is \$4 million specifically under that heading of the diverse training market, but it is not the total of all we provide for training outside the TAFE system.

**Ms WHITE:** What is the Minister's target for the diverse training market funding expressed as a total of the VET budget?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We are not aiming for any magic figure. The Federal Governments—both previous and present—would be encouraging that diverse training market funding. I am not obsessed about reaching a particular amount. In the early days, it is important that we do not get carried away with that program. Some time in the future, we will have to have a figure to go into the next budget. No figure has been conveyed to me in a vision or in any other way to which I should aspire.

**Ms WHITE:** Will TAFE be able to tender openly in this market?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It can, it does and it has been quite successful.

**Ms WHITE:** To what areas of training will the diverse training market proposals apply? Will any areas be prescribed?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It is important that money allocated is consistent with the State training profile, which has been developed by the VEET board. It is vital that it be consistent with that. It would be contradictory and nonsensical to have a State training profile for which the diversified training moneys did not accord. In 1996-97, tourism and hospitality is one area of focus; there are also computing, food processing, special projects, primary industry, general education and utilities. The definition of 'utilities' includes SA Water, SA Pipeline Authority, that sort of activity.

**Ms WHITE:** What protocols apply to the devolution of decision making in this area, in relation to who gets the training and the associated guidelines?

**Dr Wood:** The essential guideline is that the training provided must be consistent with the State training profile. The second guideline is that the training provided must be accredited and the trainee provider must be a registered training provider. The first guideline is about what the money is spent on, and the second is about assurance of quality. Some subsidiary things are more about emphases—and I cannot remember them—but they are the two central issues.

**Ms WHITE:** Will the Minister take that on notice and provide some more information?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I will provide some more detail in terms of the criteria for the allocation of funds.

**Ms WHITE:** With regard to export education, financial paper No. 1 (page 437) the Minister has talked about (and I have a copy of an *Advertiser* press clipping) some \$50 million in profits which the export education area can deliver. I have read the media releases and the press statements. Where does this figure come from? Are these proposed figures to be generated by Regency TAFE—and all the other programs that the Minister has listed in his releases—audited? I am just looking for some justification of how the Minister is measuring that \$50 million in profits that he spoke about. Looking at the budget, I cannot see where that is. I do not see that SAGRIC, which is also involved in the export of education, has paid a dividend to the South Australian Government this year. Where do these figures come from? Are they audited? Can the Minister justify them?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** I need to know the context of that comment the honourable member said was in the *Advertiser*.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to an *Advertiser* article of 6 April 1996, written by Greg Kelton—that esteemed journalist, to use your words, Minister. It is entitled 'TAFE exports to raise \$50 million'. The Minister is quoted talking about the individual components that make up that \$50 million.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Without having the article in front of me, I suspect it is to do with an amount to be earned over a period of time, and in effect it would be a ball park indicator of the potential earnings. Whilst it is expressed as a gross figure, at the end of the day we are interested in the net return. That would be a global target of what is achievable if TAFE really put its mind to developing fully those potential markets. We have links with 16 countries, including Argentina, Thailand, Japan and China.

*Mr Atkinson interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** Yes, we have had dealings with Vietnam. In order to make a dollar, you have to spend a dollar. The International Education Division has to develop and justify on the basis of net return rather than global costings and returns. That figure is achievable looking at it over a moderate time span. It is a question of priority: whether we want to go for the export dollar or, at a time when funds are tight, give our attention almost exclusively to the home front.

**Ms WHITE:** You are quoted as saying that this represents projected income and, in the case of Regency's international activities, direct income to the institute. I want to ask about some of the individual institutes and their activities. The Minister has consistently claimed that TAFE has maintained effort in the area of vocational education. I have some figures from 1993 and 1994 which relate to the performance of individual institutes and different programs. One of the Minister's briefing notes says that using module load completions is a measure which most effectively measures outcomes for students as it denotes successful completions, so I will quote those figures. The number of module load completions for all institutes fell in that time from 12 694 522 in 1993 to 12 345 831 in 1994. I want to ask about comparative figures for 1995 for a few of these institutes. For example, the number of module load completions at Douglas Mawson Institute of TAFE fell from 2 411 110 to 2 302 911. What is the figure for 1995? The other institutes in which I am interested are Croydon, which fell from 1 121 547 to 1 045 213; Murray, from 608 195 to 422 207; Onkaparinga, from 1 517 228 to 1 451 588; and Spencer, from 1 324 606 to 1 254 553.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It is important to bear in mind that TAFE is a dynamic system in a dynamic environment. You

will get significant changes from year to year within an institute and in comparison with other institutes. For example, some institutes are very much into viticulture and others are into IT development. Simultaneously, there is a contraction in some of the more traditional areas, such as engineering. We have had variations over time in textiles and clothing, although there is an upsurge at the moment. Each institute will not get a net increase each year. The system overall has shown an increase in hours, but between and within institutes and between campuses there is a significant variation in courses. Some courses become more popular; others become less popular. Hospitality has grown enormously in recent times and business training has increased dramatically. Years ago blacksmithing used to be very popular, but now it is essentially a leisure class activity at Panorama Campus. There is nothing which states that each campus must each year increase its student hours in absolute terms. It is important that for the whole State we are meeting the training needs of the community as best we can.

**Ms WHITE:** Will the Minister take that question on notice and provide the 1995 comparative figures?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We can provide some information.

**Mr Carter:** We probably need some clarification. The hours provided through TAFE institutes are total hours and ANTA hours. It is the ANTA hours on which we are measured for our maintenance of effort. Therefore, we need clarification as to whether we are discussing total or ANTA hours.

**Ms WHITE:** I was asking about module load completions.

**Mr Carter:** Module load completions are not used for maintenance of effort purposes.

**Ms WHITE:** That was not my question.

**Mr Carter:** The figures do not sound right for module load completions. They sound more like student hours. We do not have that many module load completions.

**Ms WHITE:** Where does the 12 million come from?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We could provide a fairly brief outline of where the component hours are generated from in the institutes. You must also bear in mind that over time the components of those measures change as well. We have to be sure that we are comparing apples with apples, even in the space of a few years. We can give you a brief summary of the general contribution to student hours from the various institutes.

**Ms WHITE:** I have a copy of the primary management data for 1993-94, which is where I am getting the module load completions from. I also have credit hours, curriculum hours and actual hours listed. Given the view that module load completions give a little more information, I should like the 1995 figures for those.

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We will undertake to provide a brief summary of the basis on which they are calculated to show changes between institutes going back over a couple of years. It becomes a huge exercise if you are seeking something that goes into minute detail about the hundreds of programs that we offer. We have 300 award courses for a start. We could provide a split of the aggregate to give you an idea of the trends in demand for courses and also the fall in demand.

**Ms WHITE:** Has EDS taken over responsibility for information technology functions within your department?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We are part of the general umbrella agreement with EDS, so we are part of the arrangement for EDS involvement in data processing. It is too early at this stage to be too specific about the impact of that arrangement on DETAFE.

**Ms WHITE:** Is there a service agreement between the department and EDS, and, if so, would the Minister be willing to give details of that?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We have not finalised the service level agreement. I will check with the Premier's Department in terms of whether there is any difficulty in releasing that agreement when it is formalised, but at this stage it has not been finalised. Once again, I doubt whether it would be available, if we agree that it can be released, before the required time for submission to the Committee.

**Ms WHITE:** What equipment has been or will be transferred to EDS ownership, and what equipment will be retained by the department?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** In essence, the hardware within TAFE and, in terms of what we are not handing over, laptops and microcomputers.

**Ms WHITE:** So, the EDS equipment stops at the plug in the wall?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** We have not reached a point where all those aspects have been completely finalised. You have to bear in mind that DETAFE is different from other Government agencies in that it is an education provider and that therefore it has special situations which most other Government agencies do not have, namely, the provision of educational services on an individual customer basis. Some of that detail, as I indicated, still has to be finalised.

**Ms WHITE:** Have there been departmental staff job losses because of the EDS contract, and, if so, how many?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** There have been no job losses, but seven people working for TAFE have transferred to EDS.

**Ms WHITE:** What annual savings are or will be made by the department as a result of these new arrangements with EDS?

**The Hon. R.B. Such:** It is far too early to put any precise figure on that, but we expect savings. Indeed, the Government would not have entertained this proposition unless there were likely savings as a result of the contract. It is too early to say what the savings will be in respect of DETAFE.

**Ms WHITE:** How will technology upgrades be managed and financed under the EDS arrangement?

**Mr Carter:** That will be part of the service agreement with EDS, which will be responsible for meeting our requirements, including upgrades. They will be financed through the contractual arrangements. We will meet those through our recurrent funds, whereas previously we would have provided upgrades through our capital budget.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 5.40 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Wednesday 26 June at 11 a.m.