

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 26 June 1996

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**Chairman:**

Mr H. Becker

Members:

Mr R.L. Brokenshire

Mr M.R. De Laine

Mrs R.K. Geraghty

Ms A.K. Hurley

Mrs D.C. Kotz

Mr G. Scalzi

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Environment and Natural Resources, \$57 856 000

Witness:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton, Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for the Ageing.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Mutton, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Ms A. Harvey, Director, Corporate Services.

Mr A. Holmes, Director, Natural Resources.

Mr R. Thomas, Director, Office of the Environment Protection Authority.

Mr P. Hoey, Director, Water Resources.

The CHAIRMAN: By now members will be aware of the rules under which we operate. I will arrange for members to have a copy of the information sheet. 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.

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.

A flexible approach is given to the call for asking questions based on about three questions per member, alternating sides. Members may also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning, but any supplementary questions will be the exception rather than

the rule. I now invite the Minister to make a brief opening statement if he wishes.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I welcome the opportunity to address the Committee on issues relating to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. South Australia is currently enjoying a period of unprecedented awareness and interest in all environmental areas. The level of community involvement and participation in conservation and environmental issues has reached an outstanding new high, and through this South Australians are increasingly becoming regarded as among the most environmentally conscious people in this country. Community input into environmental care, rehabilitation and in addressing the past issue of neglect far surpasses previous efforts. Our environmental technology and our approach to environmental efforts is seen nationally and internationally as being at the leading edge. But moreover, the efforts of the South Australian Government and the South Australian community in the environment are opening doors to exciting opportunities overseas. There are enormous prospects now, whether through the export of our expertise or by giving South Australia a competitive edge on an export market that increasingly demands that production be both clean and green.

In the education arena, standards of environmental education are creating Australian firsts, and environmental research undertaken by tertiary and scientific institutions is internationally renowned. This Government has been successful in fostering a grassroots approach to the environment and involving and empowering the community, whether school children, community groups, individuals, business or industry. If the concept of sound and ecologically sustainable development is to endure then the community at all levels must be involved.

The 1996-97 budget will help build on numerous efforts in the environment and natural resources portfolio that are now coming to fruition. As awareness grows so too will the number of challenges to be addressed, particularly with expectations and best practice standards of today being far beyond what they may have been only decades ago. Issues of air, water, marine environments, landcare and remediation, habitat restoration and conservation have been lifted significantly in profile. The 1996-97 budget provides for recurrent expenditure of \$104.8 million, with a capital works budget of \$28.571 million, being a \$12 million increase over the previous year. The Government's budget approach for 1996-97 has been to increase capital investment while at the same time reducing operating costs through strategic productivity improvements.

As I have said, South Australia is at the forefront of a number of environmental initiatives and I want to refer briefly to some of these projects. It is the South Australian Government that has spearheaded moves to clean up the Murray River in one of the biggest environmental remediation projects to be undertaken in this country. Through our dedication and persistence we have convinced three other States and the Commonwealth to dedicate resources to improve the quality of this important waterway, the lifeblood of our community. The outcome of our efforts will be to turn around the current decline in the quality of the Murray River and start to make significant improvements. The Murray-Darling 2001 project is a further commitment to addressing water based environmental issues by the South Australian Government, because by focusing on water we can also deal with other related issues such as land, landcare, vegetation and general biodiversity.

I am delighted with the success of our program to appoint catchment water management boards to the Torrens and Patawalonga to address issues of water quality and remediation. We must ensure that our rivers are healthy, because if they are not we can assume that land based issues that influence the state of our water are far from acceptable. It has been an embarrassment to this State and totally unacceptable that some of our rivers were considered too contaminated to allow primary contact without risk to our health. Our efforts in this regard will be expanded later this year with the formation of catchments boards to cover the wider Murray, Onkaparinga and Gawler catchments as well.

This Government has introduced a number of ground breaking initiatives in water resource management. As a first step, the Water Resources Act is undergoing a comprehensive review. This new water resources legislation will incorporate several important policy directions, which were outlined in the State Water Plan. The aim of this Government is to leave the environment in a better condition than we found it. Many hundreds of millions of dollars are now being invested by government, industry and the community as a whole in addressing these issues. In fact, the environment, as an industry in its own right, has become a major contributor to the economic base of South Australia, attracting significant private investment.

In industry, the EPA has taken a substantive role through its licensing process to commission a series of environmental improvement programs for companies, large and small, to ensure that emissions are further reduced by the year 2001. This year the EPA will build on the achievements of the cleaner production program through a pollution prevention program to be undertaken in collaboration with small to medium enterprises. In addition, the Environment Protection Authority will contribute to the work of the National Environment Protection Council, which met for the first time last Friday, particularly with the development of national environment protection measures in four key areas: the National Pollutant Inventory, the transport of hazardous waste, air quality and the assessment of contaminated sites.

There will also be a strong focus on waste management and litter. The waste management strategy will be released soon with the aim of setting new standards in waste management while promoting further our recycling and green industries leading to resource reuse and the creation of green jobs. I was pleased earlier today to release plans for the Government's implementation of our new litter strategy that contains a number of innovative measures.

The issue of waste and landfill is controversial, again reflecting that standards accepted by the community a decade ago are no longer acceptable. There is no doubt that past management of landfill has been undesirable. However, the need for landfill will remain into the immediate future. Despite many technological advances, there is no automatic alternative, particularly in a society that has been conditioned over many generations by a throw-away ethic.

The highlights of the 1996-97 budget are significant. There will be a strong focus on capital works whilst our recurrent expenditure will be used to continue to improve the State's environment, parks system and a range of service delivery expectations across the portfolio. A central feature of the budget is the commitment to improve the management, access and facilities in this State's national parks system. This allocation will be used to upgrade roads and infrastructure in our parks, particularly at Innes, Cape de Couedic, Point Avoid and Mount Remarkable; continue major integrated pest

management programs in two key parks, the Flinders Ranges National Park and the Coorong National Park; complete the Mount Lofty Summit redevelopment in 1996-97; and continue the biological survey of the State. A biological survey of vertebrates will be undertaken in the South-East and the survey of Stony Desert and North Olary Plains will be continued.

The Flinders Ranges National Park, in particular, is a major undertaking. The project involves increasing vermin control to create a feral-free Flinders Ranges National Park by the year 2000. This project will restore one of our most internationally acclaimed parks to its best condition in living memory, with a view to reintroducing threatened species or species that previously inhabited the area. The project is being viewed with interest by counterparts interstate as a potential forerunner to similar programs throughout Australia.

A significant milestone, of course, was the Government's decision to extend the Great Australian Marine Park—an initiative promised and delivered only by this Government—opening up new opportunities to enhance our conservation focus and to promote international ecotourism. Yet another project to gain national attention has been the commitment to raise the curtain on the historic Queen's Theatre, a former court, horse bazaar and car park, that was originally the oldest theatre on mainland Australia. The project has captured imagination throughout the land and will become a heritage icon for this State, with work to restore it to a workable theatre and exhibition space to proceed this year.

Additionally, the Government has also committed itself to a review of our approach to the metropolitan coast and the development of a strategy for long-term sustainable management. The issues here are complex, recognising that 70 per cent of our world's sandy beaches are eroding. This review is well under way and involves experts from throughout the country. I expect the recommendations from the review of metropolitan beaches to be presented to me early in this coming financial year and a decision made quickly to implement key findings.

South Australia is also a world pace-setter in the development and use of spatial information. As the lead agency, the department's Resource Information Group is contributing to the economic development of this State through its association with the private sector to develop a broad-based spatial information industry. Key components will be the development of a property cadastre and the redevelopment of the world-renowned Lands Titling System (LOTS), the first stage costing about \$5.5 million. This property cadastre is a view of land information based on properties and will be of enormous benefit to industry, Government agencies and local government in particular.

This work will bring the State's land information system into the twenty-first century. It will have the effect of improving efficiencies in the operation of the real estate, conveyancing, development and finance industries, and bring in major benefits to the community of South Australia. Furthermore, the Land Service Group of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources will work on the development of the community title system. These titles will provide a developer with the ability to divide land into conventional building allotments with the added benefit of common property and a corporate managerial body similar to a strata title scheme. Our objective is to provide this State with the most effective community titles legislation in Australia.

In closing, I believe that many of the achievements of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources have been groundbreaking. The public of South Australia is already beginning to see many results. The commitment will be further accelerated this year. Projects to be announced soon include the formation of a new management and marketing strategy for our national parks and the release of a new greening strategy for South Australia which is gaining considerable interest. This Government has not been afraid to tackle the hard issues. In doing so, we have brought the community on board, and in this partnership of joint responsibility we will ensure that our environmental legacy is significantly improved.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to page 331 of the Program Estimates. There are a number of proposals currently before the Development Assessment Commission to establish landfills at Highbury, Inkerman, Dublin and Salisbury, and others to extend already established landfill proposals in terms of extending the height of Wingfield dump and the time of the East Waste dump at Highbury. Given that a decision made today about landfill is a decision for tomorrow, a decision for our children's children's children, is the Minister willing to impose a moratorium on the decisions about these proposals in order to investigate alternative waste management strategies?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: To answer the last part of the question first, I am not prepared to introduce a moratorium at this stage. As an agency we have looked very carefully at our responsibilities in this area. As I said earlier, regrettably landfill is with us for a while. With all of the technological improvements that we have seen it is not anticipated that we will be able to do away with landfill in the near foreseeable future. There is a need for an integrated waste strategy for metropolitan Adelaide and also for consideration to be given to that strategy in regional centres as well. As I am sure the member for Torrens would be aware, we are about to release such a strategy as a major initiative of the Cleaner South Australia Program. It will be presented as a series of objectives for the management of waste over the next two decades, supported by programs geared towards meeting those objectives.

Information from public submissions received by the EPA, along with recommendations from the public workshops, have now been distilled into a report to be published as a companion to the strategy document. This shows very clearly that the EPA has endeavoured to be open and honest in dealing with the views expressed. The next step will be to embark upon an implementation program for the strategy, due to commence in the first half of 1996. At this stage it will bring together representatives of a range of interested parties to develop policies which will have wide ownership in the community. Groups represented will include industry, local government, Recycle 2000 and community and conservation organisations. It is vitally important that all of those groups be brought in on this case.

Work has commenced on industry codes of practice for some aspects of the strategy such as the transport of listed wastes. As I said earlier in my opening remarks, it is recognised that there has been a significant improvement with industry itself recognising the responsibility that it has in a number of these areas, but I believe that the integrated waste strategy, which has been needed for a long time in this city, will go a long way towards overcoming much of the uncertainty that has been associated in the past with such issues as landfill.

Mrs GERAGHTY: A recent survey in Highbury, where the Minister would be aware East Waste has operated the landfill for 25 years, disclosed a high incidence of asthma, eczema and cancer. Information from Canada confirms that people living near landfills suffer from a high incidence of asthma, eczema and cancer. Low birth weight was also recorded in Canada as higher among those living near landfills. With such evidence available, why does the Government consider allowing the establishment of landfills anywhere near areas of human habitation?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Reference has been made by the member for Torrens to East Waste. That particular company is before the courts, so that issue is *sub judice*, but that will not stop me from answering the remainder of the question. I would have thought that the latter part of the question clearly substantiates why we need to bring forward the type of strategy to which I referred in my previous answer. There has been very little direction regarding where we are going in this State as far as landfill is concerned, and there has been very little support from local government for the controls that we need. On numerous occasions, we have found situations where a landfill has been established and local government has allowed housing to be built right up to the boundary.

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Prior to our coming into Government, as the member for Newland says. This strategy will provide a much greater direction to ensure that that does not happen in the future. There is no doubt that waste management and particularly landfill are two of the more sensitive areas of the environment portfolio. The Environment Protection Authority has received an enormous amount of representation on this issue, as have I in my office.

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Again, as the member for Newland points out, as the local member she has received a considerable amount of representation which she has passed on to me. I am grateful for the significant role that the member for Newland has played in that process.

Ms HURLEY: Since coming into office and continuing into the 1996-97 financial year, one of the Government's objectives, which the Minister has mentioned, has been to improve water management in South Australia, including, of course, cleaning up the Patawalonga. During last year's Estimates, the Minister indicated that he and the Premier would swim in the pristine waters of the Patawalonga this year. He said:

I assure the Leader that it will be healthy enough because I will be swimming with the Premier. We have not worked out who is going first, but the honourable member can be pretty sure it will be clean enough for both of us, and we have made that commitment.

Can we expect in the very near future an invitation to watch the Minister and Mr Brown cavorting—

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Do you want to swim with us?

Ms HURLEY: No, I wouldn't want to steal the limelight from you and the Premier, especially as the EIS on the development of the protocol for the Glenelg foreshore mentions that the implementation of the catchment management plan will not enable water quality satisfactory for year round primary recreation contact in the basin.

The CHAIRMAN: This morning as I went past the Patawalonga I observed that it is the cleanest that I have seen it for 20 years. We have had some very heavy rain over the past few days, and this is the first time that I have not seen any milk cartons, cans, sticks or broken boughs of trees in the river. I said to my wife, 'Look at this; it is absolutely

spotless.' I think the Minister should know that. It is a fair sort of test after all the rain we have had.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Thank you, Mr Chairman. In response to the member for Napier, as far as this Government and I are concerned, the program for the clean up of the Patawalonga, as it relates to the total management of the catchment, is still very much on cue. There is no doubt that the work carried out over the past 12 months since the Patawalonga Catchment Water Management Board was put in place has been quite remarkable.

I am aware of the questions asked of my colleague, the Minister for Housing and Urban Development, on this matter that related particularly to the area of the Patawalonga that is his responsibility in the built-up areas of Glenelg. With the total catchment management there has been a significant improvement and the board's comprehensive management plan, to be completed later this year, once approved will form the basis of the board's work program into the next century. That draft plan will be released for public comment and will be identified as a major initiative in putting down a direction for future centuries for the Patawalonga. If we look at what has been done about cleaning up the Patawalonga since this Government came to office, and compare it with the absolute neglect decade after decade under previous Governments, we see that what has been achieved is quite remarkable.

The specific question asked by the member for Napier is whether I will still be swimming with the Premier.

Ms HURLEY: And when.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will still be swimming with the Premier, and I think we will be able to do that in the very near future.

Ms HURLEY: I will be there.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: You had better bring your bathers because we might invite you to join us! I have been very pleased with the positive responses that have come in from people who, like you Mr Chairman, have recognised that the cleanliness of both the Patawalonga and the Torrens River has improved significantly. I will be very happy to organise for any members of this Committee today an opportunity to look at much of the capital works that have been carried out, such as the trash racks and a number of other initiatives, because it is certainly a success story with which we are particularly pleased.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to page 330 of the Budget Estimates, specifically to the \$1.5 million allocation for a new project for the Naracoorte Caves. I have noted with interest over the past couple of years the Minister's commitment and specific interest in the Naracoorte Caves. Will the Minister explain the new joint funding arrangement of the upgrading of visitor facilities and infrastructure at the Naracoorte Caves?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am very pleased to have been able to announce earlier today that agreement has been reached with the Commonwealth Government for the joint funding of a major upgrade of visitor facilities and infrastructure at the world heritage listed Naracoorte Caves Conservation Park. The development is to be undertaken over two years at an estimated cost of \$3 million. It is a major development in South Australia. The project will see the construction of a modern interpretation and visitor centre to provide for and attract significant increases in visitors, both from overseas and locally. The existing building will be modified to upgrade laboratory and curation facilities for storage and research into fossil specimens extracted from the site, to allow presentations to be made to all levels of students and

to provide accommodation for local parks administration. A contract has been executed to purchase neighbouring land to consolidate the site between the park's two main cave features, and will allow the development of dormitory style accommodation for students and researchers.

In addition to the upgrading of visitor amenities, the camping area, access roads, car parking and landscaping, portable staging, seating and electronics will be provided for Blanche Cave to enhance the use of the cave for artistic and other events in a manner that does not compromise the feature itself. The Commonwealth will provide \$1.5 million in funds through its regional development program; the State's contribution will comprise a \$1 million capital allocation through environment and natural resources and tourism; and the remainder provided through in-kind support of associated agencies, training and employment schemes and student support under the Campus Conservation Corp.

As the member for Mawson would recognise, the Naracoorte caves is the only area in South Australia under World Heritage listing. It is a very significant tourism asset. It is not only a tourism asset but a very historic asset, as far as South Australia is concerned. I believe that the future development will certainly be welcomed by all South Australians and those who visit locally and from overseas.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Capital works is always of interest to members of Parliament. Page 195 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments refers to capital payments of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the 1996-97 financial year. Will the Minister provide detail of this expenditure?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The 1996-97 budget provides for capital expenditure of \$28.5 million. As I said in my opening remarks, that figure represents an increase of \$12.2 million over the previous year. Key elements of the capital program are \$1.8 million to upgrade priority roads within Coffin Bay, Flinders Chase and the Innes and Mount Remarkable national parks. These parks, as the honourable member would realise, have high rates of visitation and poor roads are a major impediment to ecotourism development, park visitation and to the general enjoyment of those who visit. Also, \$1 million will upgrade facilities within the Flinders Ranges, the Coorong and the Cleland, Innes and Kangaroo Island national parks.

South Australia contains some of the best known parks in the world that preserve excellent examples of the State's biodiversity and natural heritage and are a key element of our tourism industry, and it is important that that should be the case. Also, \$5.6 million will be expended as part of the first stage to bring the State's land information systems into the next century. These improvements will bring benefits to the real estate, financing, development and conveyancing industry. An amount of \$790 000 will be provided for coast protection and rehabilitation works for the State's coastline; \$1 million will go towards the clean-up of quality water in the Torrens River and Patawalonga catchments, including the provision of trash racks on both waterways; and \$424 000 will go towards the biological survey of South Australia to provide a database of South Australian species and the frequency of native flora and fauna.

The ongoing survey provides an important information bank in helping to balance decision making with issues of ecological sustainability. An amount of \$440 000 will go towards the State's high-tech ambient air monitoring program in a bid to establish South Australia as the air quality centre of excellence for the southern hemisphere, using modern

equipment to analyse air quality and movement and to trace pollution to its source. As I have just announced, we can add to that the \$1.5 million from the State plus the \$1.5 million from the Commonwealth in the new Naracoorte development.

While these represent only a small proportion of the projects which are planned for 1996-97, they show the diversity of issues being addressed. The expanded capital program clearly demonstrates the strength of this Government's commitment to further improving the quality of life for South Australians through the protection, conservation enhancement and utilisation of the State's natural resources and heritage.

Mr BROKENSHERE: I refer to page 326 of the Program Estimates and the protected areas management subprogram. What is the current status of mining access to the anomaly in the Yumbarra Conservation Park? Will the Minister provide an assurance that the conservation value of the reserve system is not threatened by this process?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I appreciate the question from the member for Mawson, because it provides me with an opportunity to state the Government's position and to emphasise our strong commitment to the objective of environmentally sustainable development in South Australia. I remind the Committee that the Yumbarra Conservation Park conserves over 320 000 hectares of Mallee ecosystems and forms part of group of reserves whose total area is well over 3 million hectares. The central portion of Yumbarra, which is approximately 106 000 hectares, is the only portion of these suite of reserves where mining is not legally permitted. This central portion contains a magnetic anomaly—one of the more significant findings to date of the \$20 million South Australian exploration initiative.

While only prospective at this stage, the site has a great potential for an economic deposit of minerals. Clearly, there are advantages and benefits to be gained by investigating the nature of this anomaly in a responsible manner. The concurrence of both Houses of Parliament is necessary to allow exploration and, should an economic deposit be discovered, any mining development would be subject to a full environmental impact assessment. Should mining development go ahead, a proportion of royalties which may accrue from mining would be allocated to the management of the park.

As members would be aware, a select committee has been established to investigate the proposal to reproclaim approximately 26 000 hectares (which, I remind members, is less than 8 per cent of the park) to allow access for mineral exploration. The select committee has received submissions from many interested parties and will report on its deliberations in due course. Reproclamation of a proportion of Yumbarra Conservation Park should not be seen as a threat to the 4.6 per cent of the State which is currently set aside as reserves with no access for mining. The South Australian Government is committed to the conservation of our natural and cultural heritage and to the environmentally sustainable development of the State's assets.

Substantial benefits to regional and State economies and to conservation management in the area can result from responsible development of newly discovered mineral resources. It is also recognised that our reserve system and current practice in the fields of mineral exploration and extraction can and will be improved. The Government has signed a national agreement which aims to achieve a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system by 2000 and is committed towards that end, both on public and private land. South Australia has a reserve system of

which we may well be proud, the extent of which is due in part to the acceptance of controlled mineral exploration under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

We in South Australia are also at the forefront of the adoption of new technologies which are aimed principally at minimising impacts to our sensitive arid and semi-arid environments such as the use of track vehicles in sand dune country, the use of remote sensing techniques such as air-borne surveys and satellite imagery.

In closing, can I say that in developing an outcomes focus to environmental management of mining and exploration in South Australia, the Government is taking practical steps towards the integration of environmental management into operational practice. This has been assisted by the release in Australia of the draft international environmental management system standards. The larger mining houses operating in South Australia have been among those recognised nationally as having world-class environmental management processes, and the Department of Mines and Energy in this State, in cooperation with industry, is undertaking research into a number of strategic issues that will lead to continual improvement of industry practice.

The fundamental business of Government is to ensure the wellbeing of current and future South Australians, taking into account social, environmental and economic factors. It is recognised that the State's future may well depend on both its untapped mineral resources and its reserve system with large areas of arid and semi-arid wilderness. I can assure the member for Mawson that any decisions regarding the Yumbarra Conservation Park will and must take into account the wise use of both these resources.

Ms HURLEY: The Minister said in his answer that the proposed exploration of Yumbarra should not be seen as a threat to any of the other conservation areas. However, the Minister seemed to imply that that is only if the other areas are not found to have any valuable minerals. What areas of South Australia—both land and marine—does the Minister believe should be permanently protected and managed solely for conservation purposes?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: At the outset, one of the very real difficulties that I, as Minister, realised between 1979 and 1982 and have recognised over the past two years and eight months since becoming Minister this time is that there is no opportunity for us to recognise priorities regarding biodiversity or any other issues relating to the land we have under our national parks and reserves. With that in mind, I asked the department to initiate an audit of the areas that we have under parks and reserves.

As the honourable member would be aware, we have well over 20 million hectares under parks and reserves in South Australia. It is a concern to me that, having that significant amount of land under parks and reserves, we still cannot say that we have representative areas under parks and reserves. That is something that we are investigating. That audit has come up with an opportunity for us to look more closely than we have been able in the past to areas that may have a higher priority than others. The honourable member would also be aware that it was the previous Government that introduced the concept of regional reserves which provided for mining in parks.

Ms Hurley interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Well, it was only a quirk of time whereby the parks were dedicated prior to the regional reserve system being introduced and they do not allow exploration. The section of Yumbarra to which we are

referring is one of those cases. With the regional reserve system there is that opportunity for exploration to take place. The previous Government, with the support of the then Opposition, was agreeable in establishing that new concept, that new criteria.

The audit that has been carried out provides us with a better opportunity to look at the areas that are of a higher priority with regard to biodiversity, ecosystems, etc., plus the opportunity that we have through the regional reserves system in working with the mining industry. I have nothing to suggest that there is not a very good working relationship between the Department of Mines and Energy and my own agency. That all augurs well for a closer and better working relationship as far as overall Government is concerned.

Ms HURLEY: The Minister raises an interesting question. Given that the mining industry has access to well over 90 per cent of South Australia, does the Minister think that the scales are tipped in its favour and that the Government should be doing its best to preserve the biological integrity of the very few areas which are left?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I can only agree with that. The previous Labor Government dedicated this land under joint proclamation. The biological survey is gradually moving across the State determining the areas of biological significance. That is not moving as fast as I would like, and I am particularly keen to see it improve so that we can put in more funding to ensure that the biological survey moves faster than it is moving at present. It is important to complete the survey and determine the areas of highest biological integrity, and this Government will continue to do that.

Ms HURLEY: The Yumbarra Conservation Park is part of the Greater Yellabinna dunefield area, which is the most significant mallee wilderness remaining in the world. While the area proposed for reclamation comprises only 1 per cent of the Yellabinna region, considerably more than 1 per cent will be affected by mining exploration as tracks will be constructed through the Yellabinna dunefield area to and from the mining exploration site or sites and infrastructure established, thus endangering this significant area of mallee. The Minister talked about rehabilitation and how new technology meant that mining did not make such an impact. Given the experience outlined in the Yellabinna mining audit, that rehabilitation programs in this type of country have had poor results and as mallee is so slow to regrow it is considered to be a non-renewable resource, what evidence do you have that the mallee wilderness can be rehabilitated?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As I mentioned in answer to a previous question, technology has improved significantly in recent times. We have not reached any decision on Yumbarra about mining of that area. We have to go through a very open process. I cannot imagine a more open process that could be provided for input from the community, first, through the select committee and, secondly, if the select committee determines that we should proceed to a debate in Parliament and both Houses agree, that will only provide the opportunity for exploration. We will then have to go through environmental impact assessment procedures with the involvement of the EPA in setting down those conditions if it is determined that we should work towards mining.

No consideration has been given to the methods or the technology that should be used for mining, because that is further down the track. We have to go through a full process, and I totally supported that full process being put in place. I understand from discussions with my colleagues from other States last weekend that the process that has been adopted

with respect to Yumbarra and whether mining should or should not occur is by far a more open process than has been recognised or put into action in any of the other States. I understand the sensitivity of what the member is saying, but I repeat that we are a long way from considering the type of technology that could or should be used if mining is to proceed in Yumbarra.

Mrs KOTZ: My question relates to the implementation of strategies for litter control. The EPA released a public discussion paper called 'Litter: It's Your Choice' in March this year. In that paper an increase in litter fines was discussed together with an increase in the number of authorised officers to enforce the litter fines. What was the outcome of the public responses and what is the Minister's intention regarding litter fines? Will the Minister also address what the Government plans to do about plastic bags, and is a charge or levy envisaged on these items?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I was very pleased with the results of the consultation that took place. Late last year I established a task force made up of people who I felt were representative across the board of those who had an interest in litter control. They, through the EPA, prepared a discussion paper that was released in March this year. We had an excellent response to that discussion paper—well over 100 submissions came in—and the results were very pleasing. There was overwhelming support for an increase in litter fines. As a result, it is proposed that on-the-spot fines will increase from \$48 to \$200. For serious offences which require a court appearance, they will increase from a maximum penalty of \$200 to \$4 000. This latter category will cover instances of non-payment of expiation notices and serious littering offences, such as illegal dumping. I intend to introduce to Parliament during the September session amendments to the appropriate Acts to allow these charges and changes to occur.

The litter discussion paper also addressed the issue of plastic bags and asked for public feedback and ideas on what should be done. Responses ranged from banning plastic bags to placing a levy or charge on them. Further consultation is clearly required. I am not satisfied that we have all the answers to all the questions that need to be asked in regard to that matter. There is also a need for significant education of the real and perceived environmental problems with plastic shopping bags. I do not walk away from the fact that aesthetically they are very much of concern. When we recognise the damage caused to our wildlife, for example, through the marine and other forms of environment, they really are of concern.

I am pleased that many retail stores are now taking it upon themselves to introduce pilot programs. Some stores are already charging for bags. However, I feel that the best approach is, first, a voluntary one involving industry, the community and Government. I have asked the major players in this area to attend a meeting in the next six to eight weeks as this will allow the issues to be more clearly understood by everyone and we will hopefully reach agreement on a solution to the problems. I do not know whether everyone will agree. These people include local government, retail trades associations, small retailers and organisations such as KESAB.

I take this opportunity, as I did earlier today, to commend organisations such as KESAB. We are very lucky in this State to have organisations such as that. The support that KESAB and other organisations receive indicates the amount of support in the community for a voluntary and educational

approach. KESAB has done very well in those areas. Several working examples which already operate show how industry can respond to community demand and provide alternatives to the throwing away of plastic bags. I refer particularly to the Mitcham Shopping Centre, which is a prime example, as is a program operating in the South-East of South Australia. I will ask these people to share their experiences with industry and the community to show how it can be done and how it can be achieved successfully. Shoppers need to be provided with choices in the way goods are supplied. They also need to be able to make informed choices. I am of the opinion that, as far as those containers are concerned, the vast majority will make a responsible choice.

Mrs KOTZ: The substantial increase in fines indicates the seriousness with which the Government relates to this problem. At page 326 of the Program Estimates reference is made to the State Heritage Protection Subprogram. What is the progress of works to the Queen's Theatre, and when are we likely to see the site made available for performance and community use as it was so successfully at the last Adelaide Festival?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: This is a particularly exciting project. I do not know whether the member for Newland or any other members of the Committee had the opportunity to attend Oz Opera during the last Festival and the production in the Queen's Theatre, but it was a very exciting opportunity and one that I will always remember. The Queen's Theatre is Australia's oldest mainland theatre site. The only one that is a little older is in Tasmania. As such, it is important to the heritage of this State and the nation as a whole. The site is in the process of being transferred from the South Australia Asset Management Corporation to the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources. Conservation work on the project has already commenced. In fact, work has started on the boundary walls and the fire walls of the theatre space, and it is good to see after all this time that work has actually commenced.

At this stage it is anticipated that building works will be completed by October this year. Work will include securing the site and providing basic services. Funding for this work will be provided from existing sources. The Department of the Environment and Natural Resources has secured annual funding of \$86 000 to ensure that the Queen's Theatre site will be managed both to conserve its heritage value and to ensure that it is available for community use. Judging by the number of inquiries received to date, I am sure that demand for providing a venue for artistic performances and functions will be more than adequately met. I expect that the Queen's Theatre will be available for use early in 1997. I also look forward to announcing in the near future membership of a Queen's Theatre reference group. This group will comprise senior figures in the public sphere and the private sector, and it will be charged with helping develop ideas for ongoing use of the place. The enthusiasm shown by people who have made contact in wanting to help in various ways has been quite overwhelming—it really is fantastic. This exciting project reflects this Government's continued interest and commitment to our State's heritage and demonstrates how our heritage places can be readily adapted for modern use. I am sure that all South Australians will look forward to the progress that has been made.

Mrs KOTZ: At page 330 of the Program Estimates reference is made to a very important aspect of native vegetation conservation. The Minister will agree that the loss of native vegetation over many years is of great concern to

all of us. South Australia has lost over 75 per cent of its vegetative cover in the agricultural regions, with the loss in some areas as high as 90 per cent. What is the Government doing about this situation?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The Government has commissioned the initial 1975 study into vegetation loss and continued the Voluntary Heritage Agreement Scheme introduced by the Tonkin Government between 1979 and 1982. The Government has also undertaken a number of greening programs and has supported active community programs. I recognise that the previous Government built on that voluntary system to introduce the system in place at present. Support has been provided to the Native Vegetation Council in developing a strategic approach to a plan for a long-term native vegetation management goal, and this will be completed within three months. A State Revegetation Committee has also been established to ensure coordination and integration of the many revegetation interests and to initiate the process of developing regional vegetation and revegetation plans to counteract issues such as salinity, habitat loss and soil movement and to link revegetation to primary production.

Through the Department of Transport, an environmental code of practice for all road maintenance, including contract work, has been developed. A roadside vegetation survey, using the Geographic Analysis and Research Unit of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, has also been developed. There have been some interesting results from that. The Government has contributed with the Commonwealth Government to Coastcare projects worth over \$160 000 for weed control, revegetation and erosion management of the coastline, and \$225 000 to the first comprehensive study of native vegetation along the coastline. The surveys under way will determine the type and extent of coastal plant communities and their relationship to regional and environmental factors.

With local government and the Commonwealth, the State Government has established the Mount Lofty Ranges Catchment Program. For the first time, there is a community-based group responsible for determining the direction of the program for essential land use planning and support needs. Property management planning is critical to long-term conservation of our native vegetation. In 1996 the Government, along with the National Land Care Program, has four part-time people linked to the program who will concentrate on natural resource and native vegetation issues. A project is also under way to promote landholders' economic reasons for undertaking revegetation programs on their land. Across the State we can recognise that a far greater responsibility is being taken on the part of landowners as far as revegetation is concerned.

Finally, many projects are being undertaken in the urban environment. This project, through the urban biodiversity network established by the current Government, will be instrumental in bringing these projects together and linking together the various groups involved. The strategy was developed this year, and a planting program will commence this July to supply Trees for Life and the local friends group at Cobbler Creek, for example. In 1995 the Native Vegetation Council established the Heritage Agreement Grants Scheme at a cost of \$45 000 which, in conjunction with the Revegetation Grants Scheme (\$50 000), will commence a process of empowering the community to manage heritage agreements and revegetate the land.

Revegetation overall is an issue that is seen to be extremely important by the community in this State. Many of the initiatives that are now under way are being warmly welcomed by the community generally.

Mr De LAINE: In 1994, the Minister said that the Government would undertake a wide range of programs related to improving coastal management. What alternative funding arrangements have been negotiated with local councils?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I indicated in my opening address that the review into coastal management, which has been carried out with Malcolm Kinnaird as the Chairman, has been very successful. People with significant expertise from around Australia were brought into that review. I am looking forward to seeing the review's recommendations because, as members, particularly the member for Price, would be aware, concern has been expressed recently about the removal of sand from some areas to be placed in other areas along the coast.

One of the things that I asked that review to take into consideration was the effectiveness or otherwise of the sand replenishment program. I understand that the results of the review will indicate quite clearly that that is a successful program, but we will probably come up with some suggestions as to how it might be improved.

To answer the first part of the honourable member's question, in January last year an agreement on coastal management funding and responsibilities was signed by the State Government and the Local Government Association. In essence, it devolves more functions and responsibilities to local government but provides for funding of coastal management protection work on a 50/50 basis between the State Department of Environment and Natural Resources capital works allocation and the Local Government Reform Fund.

Funding and responsibilities for coastal management are being reviewed for the metropolitan coast in the current review of the management of Adelaide beaches. I will be in a position to provide more detail to the member for Price when that review has been completed. I am happy to ensure that the member for Price is provided with that detail, which is more information than the honourable member has sought and I have been able to provide.

Mr De LAINE: Has any other assistance been given to councils to develop alternative strategies?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is a matter of working through with councils each of their appropriate responsibilities. I am of the opinion that a greater responsibility needs to be taken by local government in this area. If we take into account the agreement to which I referred and which was signed in January 1995 there has always been a greater expectation that there will be more of a shared funding responsibility than is currently the case. That is something that we are working through with local government. It is important that we have the results of the review, because the Local Government Association has been very much involved in that review, and I think that, once we have the results, it will be a lot easier for us to consult further with local government regarding the sharing of those funding responsibilities.

Mr De LAINE: How much will be spent on sand replenishment this year?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I think it is about \$2.1 million, but I am prepared to take that question on notice. The Director of Natural Resources might be able to answer that question.

Mr Holmes: The major sand replenishment program is a biennial program. So, in 1995-96, the major part of the program was undertaken, while 1996-97 is the off year when the major part of the program will not take place. There will be minor sand replenishment at a number of locations along the coast during 1996-97, the majority of which will be in the Tennyson-Semaphore area at a cost of about \$160 000. The other programs for sand replenishment are smaller. I cannot provide precise details, but there would be two or three projects involving about \$50 000.

Mr De LAINE: As a supplementary question, Mr Holmes mentioned the Tennyson-Semaphore part of the coastline. Substantial erosion occurred last year following a big storm. What will be the situation if that occurs again this year? Will additional funding be put into that or will it have to wait until the following year?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The erosion of dunes at Semaphore Park has continued to the extent that there is a risk that a severe storm could damage foreshore houses with a property value of about \$18 million. The dunes over a 380 metre length at Tennyson have also undergone erosion in recent years, although that erosion has not been as rapid as at Semaphore Park. The dune scarp is currently closer to the building line here than at Semaphore Park. The risk of buildings being undermined during a severe storm is greater at this location, and six properties with a value of \$2 million are vulnerable.

In 1996-97, it is proposed to carry out sand replenishment at a cost of \$160 000, as we have just heard, to provide a sand dune buffer against erosion while planning by Hindmarsh-Woodville council is being undertaken to allow for rock protection works to be constructed if sand replenishment proves to be ineffective. In other words, the advice that we continue to receive is that we should continue with sand replenishment on a trial basis because, as I think the honourable member would be aware, a significant amount of concern has been expressed by local residents about placing a sea wall in that area.

A total of \$1.8 million was allocated for rock protection works at Tennyson in 1995-96. Only \$200 000 of these funds were actually spent on sand replenishment. The balance of \$1.6 million was carried over to 1996-97 to be held as a contingency fund for rock protection works, if required, depending on how successful we are with the sand replenishment program. Agreement between the Hindmarsh-Woodville council and the State Government on funding and protection responsibility has been reached by way of the State-Local Government Agreement on Coastal Management signed in January 1995. Funding for works is to be provided from the State allocation to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Local Government Reform Fund on a 50/50 basis with Hindmarsh council being responsible for planning, supervising and maintaining the works.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to page 331 of the Program Estimates. This Government has had to take on many a challenge considered by the previous Labour Government to be in the too hard basket. The challenge in this instance resulted in the disgraceful suggestion that koalas breeding in large numbers on Kangaroo Island should be culled, and we know what 'culled' means, that is, to kill the koalas. The Democrats and the Opposition used the emotions of children and other cheap political point scoring exercises in this regard. Will the Minister inform the Committee on the state of this Government policy?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I thank the honourable member for his question. As he may be aware, the meeting of Environment Ministers from Australia and New Zealand last weekend in Perth determined that any mention of culling should be removed from the national strategy. I make the point that I have never personally suggested that culling should take place, nor have I advocated it. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile delving back into the history of this issue because I was interested in the comments of the Leader of the Opposition while away last weekend when he was urging the Government immediately to rule out culling. I thought that I had already done that some time ago. I said that while I was Minister for the Environment that would not occur.

It is interesting to delve back into the history of this issue. More interesting is that culling was first suggested some years back, well before this Government ever came to office. Even more interesting is the warning bells that were signalled 10 years ago in a draft management plan released for the Flinders Chase National Park by former Minister Don Hopgood. That plan highlights problems being experienced back then in relation to Kangaroo Island's koala population. I will quote from page 147 of that draft plan, released 10 years ago, as follows:

Park management must address the underlying problem, that is, a koala population which is too large and too concentrated for the limited rough barked manna gum resources to sustain.

It further states:

Further studies of koala reproduction and feeding requirements, with a view to controlling the park's population are required. Meanwhile, the availability of surplus koalas should be made known to suitable establishments, for example, wildlife reserves, with requests met for young females from high density colonies in the park.

There we had the warning bells 10 years ago and, despite a succession of Labor Environment Ministers from Don Hopgood, Susan Lenahan and Kym Mayes, it would appear that very little if anything has been done in this matter, eventually leading to the continual population growth of the koala out of the park and into a larger portion of the island, with subsequent damage to the island's vegetation.

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is probably gathering dust somewhere. It is another issue that the previous Government saw as being too hot to touch, too hard to handle and better shelved to the bottom drawer, as the member for Newland says. It is another legacy of the previous Government in abrogating its responsibility and leaving a problem that should have been dealt with and remedied 10 years ago.

None of us walks away from the huge problem that we have regarding koalas. It is something that we will have to work through. As members of the Committee would be aware, I established earlier this year a task force to look into the matter. I understand that that task force will be bringing recommendations to me a little later, and I await the results the work of that task force.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: In the meantime I was pleased with the debate that took place in Perth last weekend and that the decision was made by all Ministers—States and Territories—that the matter of culling of koalas should not be considered at this time.

Mr SCALZI: Is the Minister telling us that if we had dealt with the problem 10 years ago it would never have reached these proportions?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I think that is what I am saying.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to page 331 of the Budget Estimates, which refers to environment protection issues. Will the Minister say how many licences are likely to be approved in the 1996-97 financial year under the Environment Protection Act 1993?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I thank the member for Hartley for that question because it is good for people in the community. I hope those who read *Hansard* will recognise the importance of that question because much has been achieved in the short time that the Environment Protection Act has been in place. I put on the record my appreciation of the commitment being shown by the authority and the officers who support it in a huge number of areas. The way in which the authority and the office have been prepared to work closely with industry, while making it very clear that there is an expectation on industry to do the right thing, has been very successful indeed. It annoys me profusely when I hear, as I did for a while from difficult sources, that the Environment Protection Authority lacked teeth. That certainly is not the case, and I support 100 per cent the way in which the authority and the office has gone about fulfilling its responsibilities.

The Environment Protection Authority has approved approximately 1 500 licences since the proclamation of the Environment Protection Act in May of last year. The EPA forecasts approximately 1 700 licences for approval during the 1996-97 financial year. The EPA has extended the terms of licences for periods of up to three to six years for good environmental performers to improve administrative efficiencies as well. I am very pleased indeed with the commitment shown through the offices of the EPA and licensing in providing an integrated coverage of pollution and/or waste matters affecting air, water and land because it is a very significant and important area. The representation that is received through my office—and I am sure through the agency itself—would suggest the very real interest that exists in a number of the issues that are dealt with by the EPA on the part of the general community.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to page 330 of the Budget Estimate papers and to the introduction of a water levy for the Murray River. I am sure the Committee is aware of the success of the water catchment levy in the metropolitan area. How will the funds raised by this levy be managed and for what purpose will they be used?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Again, this is an important question asked by the member for Hartley. I was very pleased to be able to attend a public meeting last night in Murray Bridge and a public meeting a week ago in Barmera as part of the consultation program that is working concurrently with the introduction of the new water resources legislation, and particularly to work through issues relating to the establishment of the Murray River Catchment Board. Both those meetings were very successful. We received a large amount of positive comment that we will take on board, as far as the legislation is concerned. A levy of .3¢ per kilolitre on all Murray River water diverters, except stock and domestic users, will apply from 1 July this year. This levy will be based on the licensee's volumetric allocation. It is anticipated that this levy will raise \$1.7 million. In addition, the South Australian Water Cooperation will contribute \$800 000, making a total of \$2.5 million, which will ultimately be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Federal Government.

Under the new Water Resources Bill to which I have just referred (and which will be introduced into the Parliament in September this year), funds raised by the levy will be used

exclusively within the Murray-Darling Basin catchment in South Australia to accelerate the current effort in restoring the health of the Murray River. The funds will be managed by the soon to be established Murray River Catchment Management Board. This board, which will be very much community based, will develop a management plan detailing a program of works and measures, which will be funded by the money raised by the levy and any matching funds from the Federal Government. The management plan will be developed in consultation with the community and then directed to me for consideration and endorsement. The board will be required to report annually on its achievements and performance against its management plan.

It is anticipated that, in the first year of operation, efforts will be concentrated on integrated catchment management plans, restoration of flood plains and riparian zones, integrated flow management strategies and urban effluent and stormwater disposal with off-river reuse. The expected outcomes from these initiatives include better water quality in the river through, for example, reducing nutrients and salinity, carp control and ensuring adequate environmental flows. Corridors of green along the river and its tributaries will assist in the control of non-point source of pollution and, importantly, will enhance natural habitat.

Other measures include the revegetation of aquifer recharge areas, revegetation on areas of potential dry-land salinity, the protection and expansion of habitat for threatened species, more efficient water use and, finally, agricultural sustainability work with the environment, all of which are very important outcomes. Certainly, community response again indicates support for these important initiatives.

Ms HURLEY: In 1993 the Minister told the Committee:

The management of our parks and reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act is a disaster. Staffing levels are an absolute disgrace.

The Minister said that the issues of endangered species, pest plants, feral animals and extra resources would be addressed by a review of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, a five-year tourism plan and better fire management. What has been the outcome of the review?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As I pointed out earlier, a lot of work has been done in this area. I referred earlier to the audit that has been carried out, which was something that we flagged in our policy. We felt it important to recognise the issues, warts and all, and to be able to look at how we can address a number of those concerns. I will continue to talk about the huge potential of our parks for all sorts of reasons, whether it be just for the public's pure enjoyment or the major responsibility that we have in protecting biodiversity and ecosystems. The staff of our national parks are very committed in the work they must carry out.

I mentioned earlier my concern about the lack of representative areas in our parks and reserves system. When one recognises that we manage over 20 million hectares, and recognising the population of this State and the responsibility we have in appropriately managing that area, it is vitally important that we are able to recognise representative areas of the State in that park system. Where do we go from here?

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, very soon we will be releasing what we are referring to as the Parks' Agenda. South Australia is really developing an image of being a clever, creative and a more green State to attract investors and business. The parks of this State are amongst the State's greatest assets, and I only wish more people realised that. Parks provide many benefits to nature-based tourism. Park

values are being eroded, we realise, by the impact of pest plants and animals and poorly managed visitor access, and we are keen to ensure that the Parks' Agenda will bring with it a strategy to resource a world-class parks and wildlife system. The agenda addresses the issue of community understanding, sense of ownership and support and encourages corporate involvement through sponsorship and other mechanisms. I am also able to inform the Committee that, in the very near future, I will be releasing the composition of the new Parks and Wildlife Council.

As I stated in the House earlier this year, I place a great deal of import on that council. It is extremely important that we provide the opportunity to people with expertise to work alongside those who have the responsibility professionally for our parks and reserves. The other issue South Australia really has going for it, and which a lot of people do not realise, is the huge amount of volunteer support that is available, with well over 6 000 members of Friends of Parks organisations throughout the State. Added to that is the significant input from the consultative committees. I do not think there is any doubt that other States are very envious of what South Australia has been able to achieve in the way of voluntary support.

I am the first person to say that we have a long way to go in the management of our parks and reserves, and that is no reflection on those who already have the responsibility of managing those areas. With the release of the audit and the release later of the Parks' Agenda, we will be able to address a number of past concerns regarding appropriate management of these parks and reserves as very important parts of South Australia.

Ms HURLEY: Supplementary to that, I am not certain from the Minister's answer whether the Parks' Agenda is the equivalent of the five-year tourism plan and, if not, could the Minister provide details of that?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Director of Natural Resources, who is also the Director of National Parks, to answer that question.

Mr Holmes: In conjunction with the South Australian Tourism Commission, we have been working on a five-year strategy for tourism development which is in draft form and which is a complementary document to the Parks' Agenda, to which the Minister refers. The Parks' Agenda will outline the strategic directions in relation to tourism development associated with parks. Later this year that material will be available in the public arena.

Ms HURLEY: How many staff will be employed in park and reserve management in 1996-97, and how does this compare with 1993-94? In other words, how many positions have been cut?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: In 1993-94 there were 268 positions and, in 1995-96, 243. I will ask the Director to comment on this question. There has been a more significant sharing of responsibility as far as staffing is concerned. I understand where the honourable member is coming from and, had she read further with regard to that question that I asked in 1993, she would have seen that I have been concerned about the staffing of national parks for a long time.

Ms HURLEY: It is just that they are understaffed.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I do not back away from that situation. My agency is very much aware of how we feel about that. I will ask the Director to respond in more detail to that question.

Mr Holmes: I would like to make two points. First, the number of rangers that we have in the parks' service has

remained relatively constant over that period—certainly over the past three years. We saw from questioning last year that it had dropped by two, and we have reinstated two rangers, so ranger numbers have remained constant over that three year period. The other thing to bear in mind is that, whilst the total numbers of park staff have dropped, there has been considerable contracting out of work, which effectively means that work is being done in another way, so we do not count those numbers in our own work force. However, there is an external work force that is doing some of the traditional work done by our construction and maintenance workers.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I make the point that we are making an effort and have commenced a program over the past 2½ years to put right what was a disgraceful situation under the previous Government. There was an absolute need for us to know exactly what the situation was, and that is why, under our policy, the first thing I asked the department to do was carry out that audit. Along with the Director and his staff, we have put a lot of effort into the preparation of the Parks' Agenda, because there is a need for a new direction in park management. There is a need to look at other ways in which we can be assisted with management, whether it be through the corporate sector—and that does not mean, in any way, shape or form that we are looking to privatise parks. I want to reiterate that, because every time we talk about an involvement of the corporate sector somebody jumps on the bandwagon to suggest that we are looking at privatising our parks. We are not looking at that.

We recognise—and I certainly recognise—that there is a greater opportunity for corporate involvement and certainly corporate involvement through the marketing of our parks. As I have said on a number of occasions in these Committees, I am lucky in that as Minister, between 1979 and 1982 and since coming to office this time, I have had a great opportunity to look at parks and travel through certain sections of parks that perhaps other members of the community have not had the opportunity to do. That is why I keep talking about our potential with ecotourism and the responsibility we have, as I said earlier, to protect those ecosystems and our biodiversity. However, there is a huge area of opportunity and challenge involved with the management of those parks and reserves.

Ms HURLEY: The Minister has consumed 2½ years doing audits and reviews and it will be interesting to see what he actually does to fix what he says is a disgraceful situation. In view of that, what extra resources are going into the control of feral animals, pest plants and endangered species?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Director to respond to that, as a specific question has been asked about the type of funding. However, I come back to the member for Napier's comment with regard to what we are doing and what is being done. I will say again that what we inherited with our parks and reserves left a hell of a lot to be desired regarding lack of management, future direction and data to give us an idea of just where we were with the management of these parks and reserves. I am not ashamed one bit; in fact, I am absolutely delighted with the progress that has been made in the first 2½ years of this Government in the preparation of that audit, which took a lot of effort, and in the preparation of the strategy soon to be released of the changes that have been made to the National Parks and Wildlife Act, particularly with the opportunity to provide for a new National Parks and Wildlife Council.

As I said earlier, recognising the important work that the professional people in the service do, I think there has been

a need for a long time for input from other people with specific expertise—whether it be through marketing, in the corporate sector or in management—to work together with the National Parks and Wildlife officers in the huge job that we have. Let us not underestimate that responsibility that the staff have. One of the problems we have seen, and it has been referred to on numerous occasions, involves a policy of the previous Government, where a significant amount of land has been continually added to the parks and reserve system without the matching staffing.

It is all very well for the member for Napier to ask about what we have achieved. We have a situation where we have inadequate staffing, which we inherited from the previous Government. As well as looking at the staffing side of it, it is vitally important that we take the opportunity to look at the most appropriate management for the future, the appropriate direction and also to recognise and gain the data that has been very much needed to help us with that management program. I now ask the Director, Natural Resources to respond.

Mr Holmes: The important point to note from the budget papers is that the capital program associated with protected area management has been substantially increased both last year and this year. Last year, some \$6.4 million was spend in the protected areas of the national parks arena, and this year the estimates read at \$8.6 million. If you recall again the detail of the program last year, it focused on fire protection, pest plant and pest animal work, on endangered species protection and on the development of facilities in parks. Those programs have been built on over the last year and this year, culminating in \$8.6 million being allocated this year.

The Minister referred to the Coorong and Flinders Ranges programs where the integration of pest management and endangered species protection are success stories. In the Venus Bay Conservation Park we have reintroduced three endangered species which are now breeding successfully. A whole range of initiatives under the capital program have addressed many of the concerns that were raised as a result of the original parks review and the subsequent audit that was undertaken. From my perspective, as a director of the parks service, considerable work has been done in the past three years to attend to many of the problems that were recognised.

Ms HURLEY: Does the Minister consider that staffing levels are now adequate to ensure good and proper management of our parks and reserves?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have just said at least three times that with the state of South Australia's economy we do not have the opportunity to increase the work force in our parks and reserves. I should very much like to do that. There are parks, particularly in the north of the State, where I believe it is necessary to consider increasing the staff. We inherited a \$3 billion black hole. With the resources that we have, not only in national parks but across the board, we are considering how we can best deal with some of the problems that we face in our national parks. I have already explained those initiatives through the agenda, the audit and the new council which will put a fresh focus on our parks. I am very keen to place much greater emphasis on providing information about parks. The Director and I have just been to Perth. When we look at what Western Australia has been able to achieve regarding interpretation, because it has more funds in the kitty with which to do it—

Ms HURLEY: There must be higher priority for the environment.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: What are you suggesting that we should cut out? That is the difficulty that every Minister has

because of the \$3 billion black hole. There is only a certain amount of money to go around. I would give my bottom dollar to put more resources into national parks. Hopefully, one day we will be able to do that, and I hope it will be in the near future. We just do not have the resources at present.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: My question relates to the Coorong and other Ramsar wetland areas. I have heard that management plans are to be prepared for a number of South Australia's Ramsar listed wetlands. Can you confirm that this is accurate?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Yes. I am pleased to respond to the member for Mawson because this is one of the good news stories. I am delighted to advise the Committee that the member's information is correct and that management planning will shortly commence for two highly significant wetland areas. It is paradoxical, but true, that although South Australia is an overwhelmingly dry State, it has numerous wetland areas of high environmental significance, and four of these are listed under the Ramsar Convention as wetlands of international importance. The four areas are the Coongie Lakes in the far north-east of the State, the Riverland, Bool Lagoon and Hacks Lagoon in the South-East and the Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert.

The Commonwealth Government is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention and works cooperatively with the States to ensure that land use and land management practices in the internationally listed wetland areas are conducted wisely and well, the aim being to maintain and enhance, where possible, the quality of the wetland habitat. The management planning referred to by the member for Mawson will commence shortly for the Coorong and lower lakes of the Murray and for the Coongie wetlands in the far north-east.

In relation to the Coongie wetlands, funding of about \$100 000 has been provided by the Commonwealth Government under the National Wetlands Program, and work will commence later this year with a view to completing the plan over 12 months. There will be extensive consultation with key interest groups and stakeholders in the region, including pastoralists, mining and others, Aboriginal organisations, tourism operators and the conservation movement. Members will appreciate the attention which has been focused on the Coongie wetlands of late, and I am confident that out of this process will come a widely accepted and understood plan that will provide a sound basis for the ongoing management of this internationally important area.

A similar process will be followed for the Coorong and the lower lakes, but the complexity of land use and land management issues in this area is such that a more detailed process of planning and community consultation, extending over at least two years, will be necessary. Work is well advanced on the methodology for the planning process and applications will be invited shortly for two full-time staff to draw together relevant information and to consult and communicate with a wide range of interested organisations and individuals.

The funding required for the study is about \$150 000 per annum and, for 1996-97, \$56 250 of this will come from the Commonwealth via the National Wetlands Program, with the balance coming from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The complexities of the area are such that it would be unrealistic to expect this study to resolve all the issues that require attention. A number of these issues will need ongoing work and commitment over a longer time frame, but I am confident that the study will provide useful directions towards the resolution of a number of these key issues.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to page 330 of the Program Estimates with respect to performance indicators and the line that deals with volunteer days in parks. I know that when the Minister was a Minister in 1979-82 he initiated the idea of Friends in Parks. When I listen to the member for Napier and members opposite, it reminds me of my four year old daughter who tells me that if you need money all you do is go into the bank, as she does with my wife, and the money will be available. But, of course, my four year old does not understand that the money has to be available before you can withdraw it. It is amazing how members of the Opposition carry on about the fact that you can just get more money like a little four year old. Minister, you initiated this idea in 1979-82 when the budget was in good shape. Since then, South Australia's debt has increased by \$7 to \$8 billion and there has been 10 years of degradation to the national parks of this State. How does the Minister see the blending of volunteers and friends organisations with respect to national parks and their working relationship with parks officers? Where does the Minister see the significant benefits of volunteers and friends with national parks?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As I said earlier, the State Government and I as Minister place a very high priority on community support for national parks. We are extremely fortunate to have strong community support in South Australia. Currently, there are 85 friends of parks groups across the State. Their combined contribution of voluntary hours in the calendar year of 1995 equalled 71 full-time staff and \$4 million in monetary terms. In terms of the support provided, that is unbelievable. In addition, their fund raising has been quite outstanding. The contribution of the volunteer program and its role in the management of the State's parks is a success story in itself and is something of which the community of South Australia can be very proud.

The support of volunteers in a number of areas is critical. The National Parks Foundation Incorporated has contributed to the funding of many large projects, including land purchase for parks. It does an excellent job in the community. Eighteen consultative committees provide knowledge and advice across a broad range of issues which impact on park and wildlife management. Camp ground hosts ensure that visitors to camp grounds receive personal attention and are made to feel welcome when visiting parks, while the extent of network of friends groups support field staff with a broad ambit of park management issues.

I am aware of the positive relationship between volunteers and park staff. I have had interaction with volunteers in the field, and there have been annual forums. The forums are an absolute delight, because they provide the opportunity for volunteers from all over the State to come together and talk about their programs and priorities. I am pleased to publicly acknowledge the outstanding commitment by these people to supporting national park management. I recognise that, in having people who are prepared to support in a voluntary capacity, that also requires assistance from the professional people within the National Parks and Wildlife Service as well. In recognising the commitment that the volunteers make, a significant commitment is also made on the part of the National Parks and Wildlife Service's staff who work with those volunteers to achieve the significant programs and projects that they are involved in.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to page 330 of the Program Estimates with respect to redevelopment projects in several national parks. I note with interest the initiatives that the Minister introduced in recent times in conjunction with the

Minister for Tourism with respect to ecotourism. As your parliamentary secretary and as someone interested in the environment, I have heard from a number of my constituents and a number of other people I have met that, whilst they applaud ecotourism, they sometimes have concerns as to how our parks will cope with the impact of these additional visitors. Will the Minister comment on that?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Last year, the Chief Executive Officer of the department and I visited some of the parks in the United States. Of course, the most significant issue that those parks and the management have to confront is ways of keeping people out of the parks rather than encouraging people into the parks. With the work that has been carried on I will add to the list that I have already referred to. For example, there has been significant work in Seal Bay where big dollars have been spent. I do not know how many members of the Committee have had the opportunity to visit Innes and Pondalowie Bay, but if they do I strongly suggest that they look at the new boardwalk and the work that has been done at Pondalowie. I could talk about the work at the Naracoorte Caves and about the work at Mount Lofty in the Cleland Conservation Park, but in answer to the question I will make a few key points.

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

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Our parks system is a valuable asset for both its intrinsic conservation value and its potential economic value, which may be realised through ecotourism opportunities. In answer to the honourable member's question, I would like to make the following key points. A number of parks, which are crucial to a sustainable nature based tourism industry, have been identified for priority in this State in infrastructure. Those parks are: the Cleland Conservation and Wildlife Park, the Innes National Park, the Flinders Chase National Park, the Flinders Ranges National Park, the Coorong National Park, and the Naracoorte Caves.

In addition, parks which offer opportunities for unique visitor experience, such as Morialta Conservation Park and Deep Creek Conservation Park, are also being developed to improve visitor facilities. Funding will be directed to facilities such as roads, car parks, trails and boardwalks, camping grounds, shelters, and signage. As I said earlier, \$1.5 million will be spent on roads and \$1 million on general facilities. It is important to note that these projects are directly associated with tourism management. I am pleased with the close working relationship that has developed between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and tourism in this State.

A program has been implemented to upgrade existing facilities and to ensure that any developments are planned to provide visitor safety and enjoyment. The recently completed beach access facilities at Seal Bay and the boardwalk, which is part of Innes, are excellent examples of the standards that are being achieved.

Another pleasing aspect to which I refer is the interest and support of Commonwealth and local government community groups and the tourism industry to develop cooperative programs to support nature based tourism. To answer the major concern raised by the member for Mawson, I do not believe that any of these activities relating to tourism and visitation in our parks will have a major impact on the environment. In fact, I think that most of them are fairly limited in their impact on the environment at this stage.

Ms HURLEY: How many applications for clearance were lodged with the Native Vegetation Council in 1995-96; of those how many were approved; how many were for scattered trees as compared to broad acres; and what did they represent in terms of area?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Because of the detail that is required, I will take that question on notice.

Ms HURLEY: Where conditional orders are made for replanting or setting aside areas for wetlands, etc., what program of enforcement is put in place?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond.

Mr Mutton: In respect of the clearance of some scattered vegetation, conditional consents have been laid down. It is one of the objectives of the Native Vegetation Council to ensure that there is a significant improvement in the level of aged class distribution within vegetation in areas in which some scattered clearance has taken place. The objective is to ensure that, in the short, medium and long term, we start to put back into place some aged class distribution in the vegetation which will be sustainable.

One of the problems that South Australia has, particularly in relation to scattered vegetation, is that, generally speaking, it is of a single age because it is the remnant stuff that was left after initial clearing, and ongoing grazing, particularly in some areas, has limited the amount of regeneration that can take place.

Officers of the department are involved in monitoring the application of those specific orders from the point of view of revegetation. As you travel around the State, particularly in those areas associated with the wine industry in South Australia, you will clearly see the level of re-establishment of vegetation that has taken place as a result of those conditional orders being given by the Native Vegetation Council. Officers of the native vegetation section of the department are responsible for monitoring compliance with those orders. We now have officers placed in all the key regions so that they are closer to the community to be able to do that.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I believe that Liberal Governments in this State have shown innovation and commitment to vegetation and environment protection. I go back to the previous Liberal Government between 1979 and 1982. Reference has already been made to the commitment that we made at that time. I was also interested to hear Nigel Monteith, the Chairman of the Native Vegetation Council, speak on radio the other day when he said that the greatest threat to bushland is no longer clearance, because broadscale clearance has ceased, but rather disease and old age. No longer are we just looking at protection alone: rather, we are looking at measures that include revegetation, management and research.

I was pleased to learn the other day that figures will be released shortly which will show for the very first time that more trees are being planted in this State than are lost. These include trees lost to clearance, disease, old age, salinity and the like. I think it is a great credit to South Australians in both urban and rural South Australia that we have recognised nationally the pioneering efforts in vegetation control carried out by those people.

Ms HURLEY: How much money has been allocated for fencing and feral animal control in areas now under rehabilitation or management agreements with landowners?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Director to respond. He may not have the exact figure, and we may need to take that question on notice.

Mr Holmes: I can answer it in part, and it may satisfy the honourable member's query. Each year, an allocation is made to the Native Vegetation Fund, which is administered by the council to do a number of things: to pay compensation for clearance refused as well as be responsible for revegetation works, fencing, and management and heritage agreements. It is up to the Native Vegetation Council to allocate those funds. The allocation in 1996-97 is about \$600 000 to \$700 000. Of that, my recollection is that about \$200 000 per year is available for direct management of heritage agreements.

Mrs KOTZ: At page 331 of the budget estimates papers is a reference to the pollution prevention program for small to medium enterprises. What is the pollution prevention program? Is it confined to the local government areas of Marion and Mitcham?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I appreciate the question. Much of the Environment Protection Act 1993 is geared toward licensed industries with significant individual environmental effects. The EPA certainly recognises that small businesses have a significant contribution to make towards environmental improvement. The aim of the pollution prevention project is to provide small to medium-size businesses, which are not necessarily licensed, with the tools to enable them to identify and implement environmental improvements at reasonable cost.

Aside from an improved local environment and an increase in environmental awareness, a key aim of the project is to realise potential cost benefits to small business. The course materials for the project have been developed and are presented by EPA staff. Workshop participants are selected on a street-by-street or neighbourhood basis in consultation with the local council, and assistance with venue, local publicity and initial contact with participants, etc., is usually provided by the local council and would be sought from the council.

The inaugural workshop of four sessions was conducted in March/April 1996, with a follow-up session this month. All businesses from Deloraine Road, Edwardstown, were invited to participate, with 12 out of 19 accepting the offer. Feedback from participants has been very positive: all stated that they would recommend the program to others. Some of the positive outcomes include an increased awareness of environmental issues, increased cooperation between the businesses to reduce environmental impact and improved relationships between the EPA, local government and participants. All participants indicated initially that they would implement pollution prevention activities for their businesses. From recent indications the EPA is particularly delighted with the exceptionally high follow-through rate.

A second workshop commenced on 15 May this year for two streets in Melrose Park, and nine businesses—about 40 per cent of those invited—have attended to date, again with very positive feedback.

The cost to business is extremely affordable, involving a token charge of \$50 per head being charged to cover the cost of catering and course materials. These workshops have been run as part of the Edwardstown and Melrose Park pollution prevention project, which is a joint initiative of the EPA, Marion and Mitcham councils and the Patawalonga Catchment Water Management Board.

Overall, the project is an exceptional one, and there is a great opportunity for that pilot program to be expanded. Certainly, there is much to be gained by small business throughout South Australia in such a program.

Mrs KOTZ: On a point of clarification, the program is obviously in the pilot stage, but is it envisaged that councils will initiate contact with the EPA or will the EPA contact councils to look at promoting the program?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Executive Officer of the EPA to speak briefly on that point.

Mr Thomas: We would look at approaches in both directions. As the Minister has already indicated, there has been an enthusiastic response and we have had to prioritise the councils with which we are dealing and which are interested. The next group we will be talking to is Port Adelaide/Enfield. I have just written to the new Mayor of the new combined council, Hans Pieters, indicating that we are prepared to do that council area next. Soon I will be addressing the combined council, which is keen to have the program. After that a number of other councils will be considered.

Mrs KOTZ: The Minister will be aware that as the Chairman of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee I am interested in a range of environmental concerns that we have in this State, none more so than the area of coastal management. In fact, the committee has a watching brief over certain specified areas of the State. At page 330 the budget estimates papers refer to coastal management. What is the status of the review of coastal management for Adelaide beaches?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I thank the member for Newland for the question. The review of the management of Adelaide's beaches commissioned by the Government draws on independent coastal management expertise from throughout Australia. That is where we have been fortunate. As I said earlier, Malcolm Kinnaird has chaired that review and, through his association with people who have expertise from other States, we have been able to draw on significant expertise from other parts of Australia.

The review group has identified four key issues that have been further investigated, namely, the use of dredging near shore waters in the northern metro area for sand replenishment; environmental management of Adelaide's northern beach area from Semaphore to North Haven, including the use of on-shore sand sources; funding and administration for managing the protection and amenity of Adelaide's foreshore; and community consultation, participation and education in coastal management issues.

Two public workshops were held and written submissions were called for from the public to explore issues and canvass options for management of the foreshore. Those meetings have been very successful. Consultancies have been commissioned to provide further expert advice on some of these issues to assist the review group in making recommendations in its final report. I am anticipating that the final report will be presented by the end of September this year.

The Government considers the metropolitan coastline to be an extremely important State asset for social, economic and environmental reasons and it thus merits the utmost attention and scrutiny in its management. Again, I make the point that I have been pleased indeed with the commitment shown by members carrying out that review, and I look forward to the recommendations that will come out of it.

Mrs KOTZ: Staying with the same budget line on the same issue, does the dredging of sand from the waters around

Port Stanvac affect the beach at nearby Christies Beach? For how much longer will that operation be undertaken?

Membership:

The Hon. M.D. Rann substituted for Mrs Geraghty.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Since 1989 a total of 545 000 cubic metres of sand has been dredged from the Port Stanvac area at a total cost of \$7 million. As members will be aware, Port Stanvac is used as the source for sand replenishment operations because it is closer to Brighton, where the sand is required, than the alternative source at North Haven. Furthermore, the sand tends to be of a much better quality and is much easier to dredge. The sand source off shore off Port Stanvac is located in greater than nine metres of water and a minimum of 600 metres from the beach. The depth of dredging is quite shallow—no more than 75 centimetres—and, being so far off shore in deep water, it would not have any effect on the near shore coastal processes that influence beach conditions at Christies Beach.

This is mainly because the wave energy at the dredging location could not significantly affect seabed sediment movement. It is expected that the Port Stanvac sand source will suffice for biannual dredging operations until the end of this century. In the meantime, other potential sources are being investigated and that is important. The effect of dredging on marine life in the area is being studied by the University of Adelaide on behalf of the Coast Protection Board. Work is being undertaken to monitor the effects of dredging on the benthic life and its recovery in a sandy seabed area. The information will be important in determining how long the operation can continue in this area and could be used as a benchmark for the assessment of the impacts of dredging in other similar areas.

Finally, it is incumbent on the Government to critically review current practice. For this reason it has commissioned the extensive review of coastal management. The review draws together experts from throughout Australia. As part of that review the submissions received and the public participation on the part of those people in the community that have wanted to be involved will lead to what will be a very worthwhile exercise in what is a very important Government responsibility in working with local government in the protection of our coastline.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I refer to resource conservation management at page 330 of the Program Estimates. I refer to the Bight. How is the Minister dealing with the land use and environmental issues associated with whale watching along the coast of the Bight, what additional resources are being made available and has he consulted with the Yalata community in relation to these issues?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: A few weeks back I took the opportunity to go over to the Head of the Bight. We were fortunate to meet with the Yalata Council over lunch and the discussion that we had with the council and its representatives was very worthwhile. Following that, we invited members of the council to accompany us down to the Bight itself and that, too, was very worthwhile. We all recognise that, if we are to be successful in this whole exercise as far as the marine park is concerned, we will need and want to work closely with the Yalata community. It was certainly important for those initial discussions in which I was involved to take place. I found it very helpful. We have some way to go in determining how best we can work with the Yalata people in protecting that

area. Understandably they are keen to ensure that the area is adequately protected.

A need certainly exists for a considerable amount of work to be carried out to improve the safety of those who visit the area. It was the first opportunity I had had to visit the Head of the Bight and I was very concerned at the state of the area and at the danger evident to those who visited the area. It is imperative that work commence as soon as possible to improve that situation. One need only look at the dangerous situations in the area where people are going already, apart from the damage being caused to the environment without adequate control. I will ask the Director of Natural Resources to add to my response.

Mr Holmes: We are doing two important things in relation to the Yalata community. Given that the majority of the land adjoining the Head of the Bight is Aboriginal Lands Trust land leased to the Yalata community, it is incumbent on us to work with that community to its advantage. The department has funded a \$40 000 planning project, directed specifically at resolving the tourism related issues with the Head of the Bight. We have a contract planner, Mike Hewsteff, working with us, who is coordinating that work. The other project being undertaken at the moment is a review of the road requirements and we are doing that with the Yalata community to look at the cost of upgrading the roads from the highway to the Head of the Bight. That is being done in conjunction with the Department of Transport. A number of activities are furthering our working relationship with that community.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: South Australia has the least proportion of its waters protected under habitat conservation and management legislation of any State in Australia. Queensland has 25 per cent and Western Australia 20 per cent while South Australia comes in at about 1.4 per cent. What does the Minister intend on do to increase the area of South Australian waters protected under habitat conservation and management legislation to protect our diverse marine ecosystem and what action is being taken to have the Commonwealth Government declare the remainder of the Great Australian Bight Marine Park as a permanently protected area?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Representation has been made to the Federal Government. Last weekend at the Environment Ministers' Council I had the opportunity to speak with Minister Robert Hill on this matter and was very encouraged with the response I received from him in the work being carried out at the Commonwealth level. As the Leader would be aware, we recently endorsed the development of the marine and estuarine strategy for South Australia and advice of this has been transmitted to the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Sport and Territories. DEST will now make available \$40 000 from the Ocean Rescue 2000 Program for the continuing development of the strategy. A more detailed submission will shortly go to Cabinet on the *modus operandi* for development of the strategy itself.

The principal driving mechanism for the strategy will be a steering committee to be chaired by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, although it is recognised that the Department of Primary Industries in South Australia and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have principal responsibility within the State Government for the development of the strategy. A reference group will be established to identify issues, discussion papers will be prepared on these issues by a scientific advisory committee

and extensive community consultation will be conducted throughout the process.

It was of concern to me, both between 1979 and 1982 and upon coming to office this time, that we have not been able to move further in this important area. A number of aquatic reserves were considered during the period of 1979 and 1982 and after that but, as far as the further status of some of these areas, there is certainly a need to recognise that.

I was particularly pleased with the Cabinet decision to involve the Department of Environment and Natural Resources with the marine park in the Great Australian Bight. Prior to that it had been the responsibility of the Department of Primary Industries in this State. It is something about which I have talked to my colleagues in other States and, recognising that in most other States the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has a strong part to play in these areas, I felt it appropriate that that should happen in South Australia. I will ask Mr Mutton to comment further.

Mr Mutton: It is very important to note that this State is now moving towards the development of a marine conservation strategy, which strategy will involve a collaborative effort between a number of agencies, including Primary Industries, Fisheries, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, together with major research and data input from the South Australian Research and Development Institute. Those agencies are working collaboratively to do that. From a Department of Environment and Natural Resources point of view, certainly the issues of marine pollution and coastal management are components of that overall strategy and, of course, they are the prime responsibilities within the organisation. Agencies are working collaboratively to develop a strategy. Research work is being done now to develop a database for the finalisation of that strategy, and that work is moving forward quite constructively to achieve a sound outcome for South Australia.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I have a three-part question. I will try not to be difficult, but I would like to follow that line. In terms of working with the Commonwealth, will that also involve establishing a series of marine parks that are representative of marine ecosystems in South Australian waters? Is that what you are contemplating?

Mr Mutton: As part of the development of that strategy, research work is developing a database of the breadth of biodiversity in the southern waters of Australia. It is well known that the cool climatic southern waters of Australia are extremely diverse in make up, and SARDI is carrying out benthic surveys to build on that database to determine just what that diversity is so that it can be built into the marine strategy for South Australia. Certainly, cooperative effort and resources provided by the Commonwealth will assist in that program, particularly through the Ocean Rescue 2000 program.

Obviously the State is responsible for its waters to the three nautical mile limit, with the Commonwealth being responsible for the waters beyond that point. Where appropriate, the State and the Commonwealth will be working together to identify marine habitats that require either further investigation or some form of conservation.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I have two supplementary questions. In terms of working with the Commonwealth, given that our oceans are vast dumping grounds for a wide range of pollutants, and recognising that Government agencies are perhaps the greatest marine polluters, would the Minister consider establishing a marine habitat task force with the aim of educating Government agencies, industry and,

indeed, educating the general public about the marine environment and the importance of marine conservation?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I do not know whether it is necessary to look at the establishment of another body. The Leader commented that Government is the greatest marine polluter, but I am very pleased with the progress being made in that area, which was announced by my colleague Mr Olsen yesterday and referred to in some detail in the newspaper this morning. Certainly, the Natural Resources Council has given consideration to a number of these issues. The working relationship, to which the Chief Executive Officer has just referred, between the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Premier and Cabinet will go a long way to achieving what the Leader is suggesting. At this stage, I do not see the need for a new task force to be established in that way.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I was disappointed that the Government did not support the SARDI recommendations for the exclusion zone, and I introduced legislation that totally incorporated the SARDI recommendations as to the nature and extent of the exclusion zone in the Bight not only to protect both the southern right whale but also to protect the Australian sea lion colonies. We have had that debate, so I will not revisit that issue, but will the Minister tell the committee how the part-time exclusion zone is to be monitored and policed, and have additional resources been made available for this purpose and what are those resources?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond because he is very much involved in representing the agency in discussions taking place with the other departments. The decision is one that I support very strongly. The decision came out of the professionalism within the agencies. It was not a political decision, as such: it was given considerable thought by the agencies. We certainly recognise the need to protect the Australian sea lion and, with nine areas being set aside for that purpose, we believe the sea lion will be adequately protected. As far as the other area is concerned, all the professional advice we have received from agencies and outside of agencies indicates that the six-month protection period will cover the time when the whales travel through the area. It was acknowledged that a 12 month protection period was not necessary. I invite the Chief Executive to respond.

Mr Mutton: Certainly, the identified make up of the additional areas for the marine park was based on clear scientific advice from experts in the field of Australian sea lions and other sea mammals from both my organisation, the South Australian Research and Development Institute, and other bodies that have a direct interest in research in those areas. The issue of monitoring and control of the conservation zone mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition is, in essence, not something we class as being a part-time area, but a part of the park that has a range of conditions placed on it.

The number of fishers who operate in that part of State waters is very small. We are talking about a maximum of 15 separate vessels operating in that part of State waters. Under those circumstances, we have a good opportunity to have a close working relationship with those fishers who operate in those areas to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the conditions of doing it and to act as friends of the park, if you like, in looking out for other issues and activities that might be going on in that area externally to South Australian operations. They have been willing to take on that role and have also been willing to have their

catch documentation open to independent auditors as part of the process of knowing just what has been going on from the point of view of catchers in those areas.

Within the area of South Australian waters, the predominant fisher is the lobster fishery. As I said, through the South Australian Fishing Industries Council, we are building a strong and cooperative working relationship, with a limited number of fishers who operate in that area—certainly from the point of view of identifying the boundaries of the areas that we have identified for the Australian sea lion colonies as sanctuaries. They will be clearly identified by GPS coordinates and be able to be monitored accordingly. So it will be a close cooperative working relationship with the industry to do that. However, we also appreciate that some additional resources will have to be made available to manage that marine park.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to page 330 of the budget estimate papers and to the management of protected areas. I am concerned about the persistent reports that a New South Wales cotton growing syndicate is planning to grow cotton near Windorah in south-west Queensland, utilising water from the Cooper Creek. Will the Minister allay my concerns?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: This certainly is a very important question, because significant concern has been expressed by a wide cross-section of people in the community. It is not very often that you get everybody, it would seem, on the same side of an argument such as this. However, the pastoralists, the conservationists, the Farmers Federation and a wide cross-section of people have expressed concern about this development. It is true that plans have been announced that would involve the diversion of Cooper Creek waters to irrigate cotton on an initial area of 3 500 hectares in south-west Queensland, but we can assure the honourable member that the South Australian Government, while it is concerned about it and is expressing clear opposition to the proposed development go ahead, feels that it has a more significant part to play in the overall outcome than was the case previously.

Recently, with the Chief Executive Officer I met with my Queensland ministerial colleagues and a roomful of senior officials. At the conclusion of the meeting, I was able to announce a major breakthrough in cross-border cooperation on water management with in principle agreement that the South Australian and Queensland Governments would be moving towards joint legislation aimed at protecting the Cooper Creek system and the Lake Eyre Basin. I feel strongly committed to that course of action, and I believe that it is essential that that should happen. I would have to say that, at that meeting, we received a considerable amount of cooperation and support in the proposals that we wanted to put forward, which is a little different from situations that have occurred in the past.

Members will be aware that the Cooper/Diamantina inland rivers are among the last largely unregulated systems in Australia, and the extraction of significant volumes of water in Queensland for irrigation purposes could have, and I believe would have, disastrous effects on water volume and quality, and ecosystems downstream in South Australia. That is the concern that has been expressed by a wide cross-section of people in this State. A lot of interest has been expressed, and many stakeholders share this concern. A number are participating, along with the South Australian Government, in the work of an advisory party established by the Queensland Government to examine the environmental impact of the proposed development and to develop a wide-ranging water allocation policy for the Cooper Creek system.

Licensed arrangements for the proposed development and other irrigation applications in the region are on hold pending the outcome of this work. I was particularly pleased to learn of that, and that is what we were seeking to achieve in the meeting we attended.

Members of the Committee will appreciate that Australia is now paying a massive price for the degradation in the Murray-Darling Basin, for example, and we cannot afford to repeat the same mistakes with a system which has, in South Australia, Ramsar listed wetlands of international significance. A cooperative approach with the Queensland Government, key stakeholders and the community in general is vital in implementing integrated catchment management across the Lake Eyre Basin, and I look forward to the continuation of the high level of cooperation displayed to date by the Queensland Government. I look forward to working through this issue with the Queensland Government.

Mr SCALZI: On page 330 there is reference to the Mount Lofty Summit redevelopment. There is always an interest in developments such as that because of benefits to the States. Could the Minister provide an update of the progress?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am pleased to be able to do that. I do not need to remind the Committee that we have waited some 14 years for this development, and I am delighted that the progress is being made. The Mount Lofty Summit was closed for construction on 15 April. The footings for the cafe and information centre have been poured, and erection of the steel work commenced on 20 June. Excavation and trenching is well advanced for infrastructure such as sewer pipes and water tanks, and the car park is to be cut before the end of this month. The plants that were salvaged from the area cleared for the construction of the car park have adjusted well in the temporary nursery at the St Michael site, and the plants propagated from seed are also growing well.

I will refer to the car park, because that is an area where there has been some controversy. I regret that that has been the case, because I would suggest that more consultation has gone into this development than any development we have seen for a long time in this State. I was particularly pleased with the process that was adopted by Government in the establishment of the panel, and I think the panel worked well and came down with a unanimous report. After having worked well through that process, I regret that criticism has flowed since that process has concluded.

The car park design is based on minimising impacts on undisturbed vegetation, retaining the runoff on-site, recognising that it is the area of the State with the highest rainfall. It is also based on national design requirements, and that refers to safety, traffic flow and functionality. It is also based on aesthetics. I would like to express my disappointment that those who have been critical of the car park have not been prepared to accept the absolute need for the appropriate safety requirements of that car park. I would hate to be the Minister who was found to be responsible should another Ash Wednesday fire go through Mount Lofty and we were unable to evacuate people quickly or to take those public safety factors into account. I suggest that it will be one of the best designed car parks in South Australia with the effort that has gone into it.

Clearance is restricted to .8 of a hectare, of which .5 of a hectare was in very poor condition beforehand. I took the opportunity with the Director of Natural Resources and others to walk through the area prior to the work starting. I was amazed at the amount of rubbish that was there, including old building material, blackberries and everything else. That is

not to say that there was not some good vegetation and understorey as part of it, but the vast majority was pretty crappy.

Approximately half of the area will be revegetated when landscaping is completed. A further 1.3 hectares of native vegetation will be reinstated and rehabilitated; there will be a substantial net improvement in vegetation; about 150 sapling size and greater trees have been removed; all salvageable vegetation has been saved; and approximately 13 000 seedlings and cuttings have been propagated for replanting. It is almost like judging the quality of a house on the block when it is first cleared. I believe very strongly in the work that is being put into that development. In time, when the surrounding sections of the car park are able to show full regrowth, it will be an excellent development.

There has been some delay as a result of inclement weather at critical times of construction. The completion date is 30 September. It may be that we shall have to push that perhaps to 30 October, but we shall have to work through that. As I said earlier, we are dealing with a development in the wettest area of the State and one of the most difficult on which to build at this time of the year.

The Mount Lofty Summit redevelopment, when completed, is expected to attract between 305 000 and 500 000 visitors in its first year of operation. The facility will have a 100-seat bistro-cafe complex designed to provide affordable food for families and visitors, together with an associated shop/information centre and theatrette. When completed, I and many others believe that the facility will stand as one of Adelaide's leading tourist facilities. It will be something of which all South Australians will be proud and to which they will take visitors from interstate and overseas to experience and enjoy the wonderful Adelaide vista that will be provided on a 12-month basis.

Mr SCALZI: As a supplementary, the Minister mentioned that in the first year between 305 000 and 500 000 people are expected to visit the area. Do you envisage those numbers being sustained after the initial opening; in other words, are we looking at such numbers year after year?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I think there is significant potential for an increase. It has always been recognised as a significant tourist attraction. I think that with the development and significance of the area we can expect quite an increase in the number of visitors.

Mr SCALZI: My next question relates to the establishment of catchment boards under the Water Resources Act. I have a special interest in this area as the Hartley electorate contains much of the area. How have residents benefited from the water catchment levy in the Torrens catchment area?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The Torrens Catchment Water Management Board, which has now been in existence for 12 months, has produced a revised initial catchment plan for its 1996-97 program of works and measures. The plan has now been approved and will form the basis for raising the Torrens catchment environment levy for 1996-97. The levy determined for 1996-97 is similar to that for 1995-96, with a 3.5 per cent increase to account for the increase in the CPI.

The board is not simply planning; it is undertaking works and measures which will benefit the whole of the environment in the Torrens catchment. Two trash rack systems are under construction on First Creek upstream of the Torrens Lake; the board and SA Water are undertaking a project to manage the riparian zone along the River Torrens; work on the removal of exotic trees and woody weeds from specific areas of the Torrens Gorge is nearly complete; and a replant-

ing program using native species has started and is very much welcomed.

The board is proposing to undertake a pollution minimisation program in the Newton, Kensington, Norwood and Thebarton industrial areas in conjunction with the EPA and the respective councils. The board, together with the Adelaide City Council, is funding the development of a management plan for the Torrens Lake. The plan includes a proposal to dredge accumulated sediment from the lake. Everybody should recognise that the Torrens Lake is an important part of the City of Adelaide.

The board's comprehensive management plan will be completed in late 1996 and, when approved, will form the basis of the board's work program into the next century. Community workshops to assist and set the direction for the plan have recently been completed. A draft plan will be released for public comment in October this year. I am absolutely delighted with the progress that has been made with both the Torrens and the Patawalonga. I make specific reference to the commitment that has been shown by the members of those boards, in particular the Chairs, Jay Hogan for the Torrens and Lyndon Parnell for the Patawalonga. Both have shown an incredible commitment to those boards and to the work that is being carried out.

Ms HURLEY: Were workers sent to clean up the Patawalonga this morning after last night's storm?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have not had any reports on it. What is so significant about that?

Ms HURLEY: If so, will it be the standard practice that someone will be sent to clean up the Patawalonga after each storm?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: We have spent a significant amount of time today talking about those boards and the work that has been carried out on both the Torrens and the Patawalonga. I have said a dozen times that what we are trying to achieve and what has been achieved in 12 months is very significant when we consider that both of those waterways, together with all the other waterways in the metropolitan area, have unfortunately been neglected for decade after decade. No work whatsoever has taken place in those areas. For heaven's sake, I have just said what the program is and where the trash racks will be placed. As far as the Patawalonga is concerned, I have observed one of the trash racks, and there are more to go in. There are also more wetlands to go in. We need to recognise that work.

The CHAIRMAN: From my observations, Wednesday is community service order day, and people are there cleaning, sweeping and doing something. They are in the final stages of cleaning up the works, because there was a little bit of rubbish on the banks. The Patawalonga has been the highest it has ever been since the dredging. But, as I said, when I saw it first thing this morning it was the cleanest I have ever seen it. After all the storms one would expect a fair bit of rubbish, but no rubbish was floating down there at 7 o'clock this morning when I first went out. The trash rack on Burbridge Road at Lockleys was full yesterday with leaves and rubbish. They could well be cleaning that up now.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I find rather amusing some of the questions being asked by Opposition members. It is a bit more serious than that, but the questions are getting to the stage of being quite amusing. As I said on many occasions today, the poor legacy of the past Labor Government can be measured not only in economic terms but also in terms of poor environmental and social performance in this State. The Government and I stand proud on our environment record. I

suggest that as much, if not more, work occurred in the past 2½ years in the environment area than was done in the entire 10 years before it. The community is rallying around initiatives like never before. I will take the time to refer to some of these.

In the environment there are major reforms in the area of water. I have already referred on numerous occasions to the work taking place with the clean-up of the Patawalonga, the Torrens River, the Murray River and the Port River as well. We are ensuring, unlike Labor, that when people have primary contact with the water they will not be sick as a result. We are building the new Mount Lofty summit development, something the previous Government failed to do, despite throwing hundreds of millions of dollars into oblivion. We are cleaning up our effluent treatment plants. We have launched and enacted policy reform to provide a cleaner State. We have initiated a period where industry in partnership is now spending hundreds of millions of dollars on environmental efforts. We are working through a legacy of contaminated land. We have overseen a period where there is unprecedented community involvement in the environment. We are about to launch a great new management vision for our national parks. We are reviewing traditional management of our coastline. We are involved in exciting new programs around the State to protect and breed up our populations of endangered species. And we have launched national pilot programs to rid the Flinders Ranges of vermin by the year 2001.

Also, we are about to launch a new greening strategy and vision for this State. We are enacting a new litter strategy. We are about to launch a new waste management strategy for this State. We are starting work on a marine conservation strategy. We are the Government that gave this State the Great Australian Bight Marine Park when previous Governments failed to get anything off the ground in that area. I could go on, but in 2½ years I do not believe that is a bad effort, particularly when after 10 years the only Labor legacy was the sludge at the bottom of the Patawalonga—and we have cleaned that up, too. So, it is not good enough for Opposition members to ask ‘Why don’t you do something?’ after decades of neglect in this State in so many of these areas.

Ms HURLEY: The Minister said he did not know the answer to my question. In order to satisfy us that this work will be carried out only during Estimates or prior to media conferences by the Premier and the Minister, could we put on notice—

Mrs Kotz interjecting:

Ms HURLEY: We just had a 30 minute speech from the Minister. Can I preface my question?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Ms HURLEY: Will the Minister take on notice the question in respect of whether workers were sent to clean up the Patawalonga this morning and, if so, how many workers were involved, how much rubbish was removed and is this response to a storm now a standard practice?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask my colleague, who is responsible for the basin end of the Patawalonga, to provide a response to the member for Napier. I have not been advised of anyone carrying out that work. As I said, I am not surprised that that should be the case, because no-one has suggested that we have finished the job. No-one has suggested that it is perfect, but we are a damn sight further down the road in moving towards an improved situation than the previous Government ever was.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! As I said before, Wednesday is community service order day around the Patawalonga.

Mr De LAINE: In response to a previous question from the member for Newland, the Minister touched on the status of the public inquiry into the management of Adelaide’s beaches. What are the inquiry’s terms of reference? When will it report, and when will the report be released?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have already indicated that the report will be released to me I think in September. I do not have the terms of reference with me, but they have been made public in a document. In addition, the report will be a public report.

A question was asked earlier about the costs relating to sand replenishment, and I now have the figures. The cost for sand replenishment in 1996-97 is as follows: Brighton-Seacliff, \$20 000; off-shore sand source investigation, \$5 000; North Glenelg, \$50 000; Torrens-Reedie, \$40 000; Tennyson-Semaphore, \$160 000; Beachport (including some of the groyne repair), \$10 000; and Millicent, \$15 000.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to the Flinders Ranges Integrated Pest Management Program on page 326 of the Program Estimates, where reference is made to wildlife conservation under subprograms. What costs are associated with the Flinders Ranges Integrated Pest Management Program, and what progress has been made towards the elimination of feral animals within the Flinders Ranges?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The integrated feral animal control program, now called ‘Operation Bounceback’, incorporates the yellow-footed rock-wallaby recovery project in the overall program. I am very pleased to report that the program is achieving outstanding results that will secure the populations of the yellow-footed rock-Wallaby in the Flinders Ranges area.

The Government is currently investing \$165 000 per year in this project. The money is being used as follows: goat control, \$10 000; rabbit control, \$80 000; fox control, \$10 000; cat control, \$10 000; and staff and vehicles, \$55 000. The Commonwealth agency (ANCA) has contributed \$268 000 since 1993 through its pest program. Volunteer work by groups such as the Hunting and Conservation Branch of the Sporting Shooters’ Association, the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the Campus Conservation Corps, neighbouring landholders and the Friends of the Flinders Ranges National Park have made a sizeable contribution to the success of the program. This is a commendable example of the community working together with Government for conservation.

There have been some remarkable reductions in the numbers of feral animals. For example, 19 600 goats have been removed from the Flinders Ranges National Park and 113 500 from the Gammon Ranges National Park since control measures first began. Fox and cat control has been implemented through a combination of baiting and shooting. The numbers are currently the lowest they have been since the control program commenced in 1994. On a recent exercise, survey teams drove a 600 kilometre transect on park and shot five foxes and a number of cats. By way of comparison, another team drove a 52 kilometre transect on adjoining land and shot 63 foxes. I suggest that these figures speak volumes for the success of the program.

The success of Operation Bounceback is due to the integrated approach to feral animal control. Pest species are not being controlled in isolation, as has perhaps been the case. The program has identified the interrelationship between all

pest animal species and is addressing their combined impact. I suggest that it is a very good program.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to the subprogram relating to wildlife conservation. Will the Minister outline details of initiatives that have been put in place for the sustainable harvesting of kangaroos in South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Earlier this year we enacted legislation which will provide a great opportunity for sustainable harvesting of our wildlife. I am pleased that that is the case, and there has been a significant amount of interest in that part of the legislation. Kangaroos have generally been regarded by some in the rural community as pests, although recently they have been recognised as a valuable economic resource. Whilst the commercial harvesting of kangaroos has been a topic of public controversy in Australia and overseas, I feel that it is now generally accepted that the common species can be harvested in an ecologically sustainable manner.

South Australia has developed a considerable reputation for its kangaroo management program, setting kangaroo harvesting quotas in an appropriate manner that takes into account drought years as well as those times when kangaroos are abundant and are having an impact on agricultural production.

In 1994, I established a kangaroo management review task group to review the current kangaroo conservation and management program and prepare a revised program. That program has now been approved and provides a framework for kangaroo management which allows for the development of kangaroos as an economic resource. The main aims of the revised management program are to maintain viable populations of kangaroos over their natural ranges, manage kangaroos as a renewable resource in an ecologically sustainable manner and minimise the impact that kangaroos can have upon other land uses.

The major features of the revised program are the expansion of the potential commercial utilisation area, the phasing out of the limit on the number of kangaroo processing permits by 1998 and provision for the potential to harvest commercially species not currently utilised, such as the tamar wallaby on Kangaroo Island.

A kangaroo management advisory committee will also be formed to advise me on kangaroo conservation and management issues. This committee will include conservation industry and animal welfare representation. I think the implementation of the kangaroo management program under the National Parks and Wildlife Act is very good. It provides an opportunity for the commercial use of kangaroos in South Australia which is, after all, compatible with the long-term conservation of kangaroo populations as well as minimising their impact on agricultural production.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: On page 330, there is reference to the management of water resources, an issue that is of particular interest to me. As I think the Minister knows, one of my 'babies' as a politician in the south is the treatment of recycled water from the Christies Beach Waste Water Treatment Plant to increase jobs and stop outfall to the ocean, and thereby correct the devastation that is occurring to the seabed. I also want to see further plantings in my electorate of up to 2 000 hectares of viticulture and horticulture. What specific initiatives is the Government taking to ensure an increased reuse of treated sewage effluent throughout South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I recognise the input that the member for Mawson has had in this area. The honourable

member was interested in this area prior to his coming into this place, and he has shown considerable interest since. The Government recognises that the appropriate reuse of treated sewage effluent must form a strategic component of a balanced and integrated approach to achieving greater water efficiency in South Australia. To this end, the new Water Resources Act will enable communities to plan for effluent reuse within their own catchment in an appropriately integrated manner by requiring their local catchment management board to address this and other water resource issues in their catchment plans.

South Australia is developing proposals for the disposal of effluent from all its waste water treatment plants to meet the upgraded standards set by the Environment Protection Authority. In many cases, these proposals include the reuse of treated effluent for a variety of beneficial purposes in a cost-effective manner. The MFP has also been working with State agencies to design and trial small-scale sewerage systems as part of its development at New Haven and The Greater Levels. These designs indicate the general economic feasibility of small-scale designs and their relative ease of inclusion in a new generation of environmentally friendly urban designs incorporating high waste and water efficiency.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has received \$100 000 from the Federal Government's Better Cities Program to review sustainable urban water design. A case study will be undertaken involving local councils in the southern developing areas of Adelaide, especially focusing in the area covered by the Christies Beach Waste Water Treatment Plant. The case study will test the feasibility of a new generation of smaller plants designed specifically for reuse, and that report should be finalised by June next year.

We all recognise the importance of the reuse of water, which is the most significant asset that we have in this State. It amazes me that we have not, before now, looked at the many uses that can be made of this important resource through working with treated sewage effluent, for example.

Membership:

Mrs Geraghty substituted for the Hon. M.D. Rann.

Mrs GERAGHTY: In the Patawalonga clean-up proposal there is an area of land for what is now a golf driving range but which was previously a rubbish dump, I think controlled by the West Torrens Council. Parcels of land are being traded, including airport and West Beach Trust land. Why was not adequate funding and land management programming done to include the total rehabilitation of the rubbish infill? What hazardous material has been identified in the landfill? Is there any potential for leachate to find its way into the Patawalonga and/or into the gulf?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: We might have to take some of the question on notice, but I will ask the Executive Officer of the Environment Protection Authority to answer the question in part.

Mr Thomas: We will have to take part of the question on notice. You will appreciate the project is not controlled by our agency but by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which is more privy to the detail on design. The EPA was involved in at least licensing, the dredging process and in the disposal of material from the dredging to appropriate tailing systems. It has been well controlled and monitored and the monitoring to date has sounded out the predictions that there have not been any leachates of any significance generated. We have not identified any significant

environmental issues or exposure, both environmental or human health, in that process. We are satisfied that the project is being conducted in a responsible manner. With regard to landfill details, I cannot give you all the information on that.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As the Executive Officer has indicated, licensing is the responsibility of the EPA and other responsibilities rest with my colleague the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations and it probably would be appropriate to redirect the question to Mr Ashenden.

The CHAIRMAN: It would be interesting to get a report on the condition of the land because many people have been mushrooming on that site in the past few weeks and it would be interesting to know whether the mushrooms are safe. It is an old rubbish dump.

Mrs GERAGHTY: That is right. The issue in which I am interested concerns the identification of any hazardous material.

Mr Thomas: In the landfill or in the material that was dredged?

Mrs GERAGHTY: In the landfill.

Mr Thomas: I do not believe any hazardous material was identified. Like many old landfills, the records were not good, and this is pre EPA of course. The critical aspects were the design of the systems that had to receive the dredge material, whether they were secure and an appropriate monitoring to demonstrate whether any leachates or unacceptable contaminants were being generated, and the monitoring so far has demonstrated that that is not the case.

The CHAIRMAN: About 15 to 20 years ago fish died in the Patawalonga and the death was attributed to leaching from that location. Like the member for Torrens, I would be grateful if someone could look at this matter, and at the mushrooms in particular. If people are picking mushrooms or artichokes on the site, they should be warned or a warning put on the site.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Also, a reasonable amount of methane is coming from the site. Have you any details on that?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: We could continue to chat about this for a while, but it is more important that the major part of the question be redirected to the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations. We will look at the question to see whether there are any further implications regarding the EPA.

Mr De LAINE: A while ago the Minister mentioned that Mr Malcolm Kinnaird, AO is still the Chairman of the inquiry into the management of Adelaide's beaches. Mr Kinnaird is Chairman of Kinhill Engineering, which developed the proposal favoured by the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Local Government Relations to divert Sturt Creek into St Vincent Gulf by cutting a channel through the sand dunes at West Beach. Mr Kinnaird is also Chairman of United Water and will therefore manage the discharge of sewage effluent into Gulf St Vincent. Because of Mr Kinnaird's involvement in these areas it seems that he will now have major conflicts of interest. Therefore, will the Minister replace Mr Kinnaird on the independent reference group?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: No. I do not believe it is necessary to replace Mr Kinnaird. As I have indicated, the significant part of the work has now been carried out. Mr Kinnaird was asked to chair this review because of the specific interest and expertise he has in this area. I believe that the work he has done in the chair has been excellent.

While I recognise where the member for Price is coming from, with most of the work being now addressed and with us looking forward to the report and the recommendations being made available in a couple of months, I do not believe that it would be necessary to replace him at this time.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 331 of the Program Estimates. As landfills are harmful to human health and place an unnecessary burden on the health budget, will the Minister consider banning landfills from all areas where people live—both urban and rural?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I think the member for Torrens asked a similar question earlier. As I have explained a couple of times today, the Government is just about to release a waste management strategy that will set down future directions for waste management in the metropolitan area. It will be a major initiative of the Cleaner South Australia program. It will be presented as a series of objectives for the management of waste over the next couple of decades, supported by programs geared towards meeting those objectives. I would like to be able to say that we could forget about landfill. Regrettably, we cannot because, as I said earlier, even with the modern technologies that we now have, there is no way that we can do away with landfills and they are probably going to be with us for a number of years.

I have already explained the problems we have that are due to previous mistakes in planning, where local government has allowed housing to build right up to the boundaries of these landfills and that has brought with it significant problems. There has been a need for a new direction for an integrated waste management strategy for a long time. There has been a lot of input into this strategy through local government and through community organisations and individuals. The strategy will see a major thrust through the need for industry, local government and the community to recognise and accept a fair share of responsibility for waste management. It will set down a number of parameters that are not in existence at present but which are very much needed.

The EPA's intent is to phase out landfills where it can close to housing and ensure that new landfills have an appropriate buffer and work to world best practice. That is what we would be working with but, until we are in a position to do that—and the strategy will give us some direction on how best we can do it—we have to continue to recognise that landfills will need to continue in some areas. Landfills are probably one of the most sensitive issues we have in the whole of the agency.

Mrs KOTZ: Page 331 of the Budget Estimates papers refers to the management of industrial wastes. The Minister is aware that, as Presiding Member of the ERD Committee, I recently brought down an extensive report on Roxby Downs, which included a range of recommendations. What is the involvement of DENR in the monitoring and management of operations at Olympic Dam, including the development of bore field B in the Great Artesian Basin? Have any of the recommendations been picked up and implemented from that report?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: This is a very important question. With regard to Roxby Downs and Olympic Dam, the EPA was asked to present a submission to the ERD Committee investigation into the leakage of ponds. Whilst the Olympic Dam operation is licensed under the Environment Protection Act, the most significant issues in terms of EPA responsibility are emissions of air pollutants. Disposal of listed wastes, including heavy metals, acids and organic solvents from the mineral activities authorised by the Roxby

Downs Indenture Ratification Act of 1982 within the area of lease or licence is not subject to the Environment Protection Act's licensing provisions. It is, however, subject to the general duty of care to avoid environmental harm, as the honourable member would know.

Since May 1994 an officer of the EPA has represented the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on the Environment Radiation Review Committee for the Olympic Dam project. His impression over that period, based on information provided in annual reports, discussions with company field staff and regular field trips, is that the company's monitoring program rigorously follows a pre-set program. Through that representation the EPA has the opportunity to view and assess with other expert officers within DENR all monitoring information gained.

The recommendations of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee of Parliament propose maintenance of the *status quo* with regard to current regulation; that is, the Department of Mines and Energy has prime responsibility for regulation. The company has continued planning for the expansion to produce 150 000 tonnes of copper per year. Monthly meetings are held with the key Government agencies of Mines and Energy, Health, and Environment and Natural Resources to ensure that design details meet all relevant requirements and that this major industrial development will not have an unacceptable impact on health and the environment.

Comments on the recommendations of the ERD Committee of Parliament relevant to the environment portfolio are as follows: preliminary discussions to address implementing the recommendations were held by MESA, the South Australian Health Commission, Department of Industrial Affairs and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources with a company in early May.

Talking of the approval process for future expansions for the tailings retention system, the EPA is not formally involved in the process but has an overseeing role through the Radiation Review Committee. New evaporation ponds have been linked with a monthly water balance to be undertaken for early detection of leaks. Future tailings storage cells will be constructed with engineered low permeability soil and operated according to the practice recommended by independent mining experts. The current operation has been converted to that practice with what I understand are excellent results.

As far as the operation of the tailings retention system, recommendation six—that the system be managed and supervised by staff fully acquainted with details of the system—has been implemented by the Western Mining Corporation (Olympic Dam), with the appointment of a staff member designated with clear responsibility for the retention system. As to recommendations 7 to 10 in response to the leakage, walls have been installed through the middle of existing ponds to ensure early detection of any changes in the groundwater regime. The EPA is satisfied that the monitoring system set out in the company's environmental management and monitoring plan of 1996 will adequately address the concerns of the committee.

There are a number of other responses to recommendations that I have been provided with, but rather than take the time of the Committee, I will make them available to the member for Newland. However, as the honourable member would know, Western Mining Corporation is required to report annually on the results of the monitoring programs to the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources. I am

sure that in her capacity as Presiding Member of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee she will be kept informed of progress that is made.

Mr CLARKE: I refer to the Islington Railway Workshops at AN and, in particular, the agreement that the former Federal Labor Government entered into to remediate the land which, as the Minister knows, is heavily contaminated with asbestos and other toxic wastes very close to residences in Kilburn. I have written to the Federal Minister for Transport, Mr Sharp, asking him to confirm the Federal Government's intention to honour the commitment given by the former Government to spend \$5 million. At the end of March this year the State Government accepted the proposal of the former Government to remediate the land for that \$5 million at the Commonwealth's expense. Does the Minister know whether the Commonwealth Government will honour that commitment of spending \$5 million remediating the land and what steps is he, as Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources, taking to ensure that the present Federal Liberal Government maintains the commitment of the former Federal Government to spend the \$5 million remediating that contaminated land?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The report to which the honourable member has referred has been assessed by the Environment Protection Authority and it indicated that, if the Commonwealth's preferred option of on-site burial is adopted, a shallow repository completed above the watertable and incorporating clay liners should be established. I am aware that my colleague the State Minister for Transport has written to the Commonwealth Minister seeking confirmation that the offer still stands. The responsible Minister in this case has indicated that the South Australian Government is certainly willing to accept the offer of the \$5 million, which was made clear previously.

I am informed that the matter is now being considered by the Commonwealth as part of its budgetary deliberations. I have no further information on that, but I would certainly be prepared to seek from Minister Laidlaw the latest advice she has from the Commonwealth regarding that matter.

Mr CLARKE: Will you, as Minister, write to the Federal Minister?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am perfectly happy to do that, but the Government has already done that. The Minister has forwarded me a copy of the letter she sent, and I was very satisfied with that letter.

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

Family and Community Services, \$153 701 000
Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources,
Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister
for the Ageing—Other Payments, \$3 236 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Deyell, Chief Executive Officer, Department for Family and Community Services.

Mr J. Fiebig, Director of Ageing.

Mr A. Parsonson, Director of Corporate Services.

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

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: As arranged with the Opposition, I will first deal with ageing. Mr Chairman, I am pleased to address this session of the Estimates Committee as it relates to two portfolios, to which I believe the State owes a great deal of gratitude. The level of commitment, innovation and care provided by the Department for Family and Community Services and the Office for the Ageing have greatly assisted the development and rebuilding of South Australia, both economically and socially across all age groups. With a focus on undergirding families in the South Australian community as a whole, Family and Community Services played a prominent, yet unacknowledged, role in helping steer this State through a period of unprecedented financial and family pressure brought about largely by issues relating directly to the State Bank debt.

The legacy of financial difficulties in South Australia has manifested itself in many ways. The resultant cost to society can be seen in areas of unemployment, personal financial difficulties, conflict within homes, the undermining of personal confidence and self-esteem and issues relating to the wellbeing of our children. The Department for Family and Community Services remains committed in its philosophy to promote a state of personal and family wellbeing and independence, whether in areas of child protection, counselling, financial assistance, or in working in partnership with a vast network of community-based organisations.

The challenge, of course, is not an easy one: many of the issues are very complex. For some there are no instant remedies. In issues of poverty, family conflict, violence, personal trauma and child protection the causes can be varied and innumerable and require a multifaceted and sustained approach. The causes can be social or economic or, of course, a mixture of both. With these increasing complexities we can no longer afford to have a one-size-fits-all community services policy. The approach needs to be broad, flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of individual situations. This budget demonstrates a Government that has a positive, inclusive and responsive approach to family services to bring about the position of wellbeing throughout the wider community.

It is important here to consider the contribution of FACS within the overall context of Government. The role of FACS must not be seen in isolation, but as part of the bigger picture of rebuilding the State—a picture that involves the commitment to wellbeing by other agencies, such as health, housing, Youth Affairs, police, the Attorney-General and departments that are working tirelessly in attracting jobs and investment to this State to bring about greater opportunities for the financial and social independence of all South Australians.

In helping to refocus and reposition South Australia in the wake of the financial and social hardship inflicted on this State, FACS has adopted an innovative role. For example, it has the energy and enthusiasm of the Office for Family and Children, and the work it does in advocating for families in Government decision making and in community life. The new Office for the Ageing and the forward thinking 10-year plan, which draws the ageing into the spectrum of the Family and Community Service's policy, demonstrates that our efforts in ageing are at the leading edge in this country. We have the important but vexing responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of children who are subjected to an increasing range of pressures and influences, both inside and outside the home and care situations, from foster care, community residential care, or young offenders in detention.

We have the resources and diversity of the community sector and the range of services provided to support and assist families, and a large percentage of the FACS budget is allocated to the non-government sector. The 1996-97 budget provides the portfolio with an additional funding of \$10.2 million in addition to the \$3 million made available to the charities and social welfare fund. That fund will be an invaluable avenue for directing resources to community groups, social welfare agencies and charities to support and complement the efforts of the department. In addition, \$500 000 has been set aside in departmental funds for the innovative Parenting South Australia initiative, and a clear commitment to growth funding for the Home and Community Care program.

The 1996-97 program will see all sections of the department forge ahead in work that is of great strategic importance to South Australia. From the reforms in health and related community services now being considered by the Council of Australian Government, there will emerge a clearer and more workable relationship between Commonwealth and State Governments. It will offer important opportunities for this State to streamline its delivery of aged-care services within the framework of the 10-year plan. The work undertaken in reforming the approach to child protection and child welfare will see South Australia restore its leadership role in this arena in the wake of immense international attention and research.

The issue of child protection has been elevated high onto the agenda of legislators around the world. Issues relating to harm, neglect, abuse and paedophilia need a community-wide approach, because the duty of care to our children must rest with every member of our society. The Government is putting in substantial effort in the area of child protection, formulating a whole-of-Government approach to best deal with today's complex situations. The paper, which will be presented by South Australia at the conference on child abuse and neglect in Dublin this year, in particular will demonstrate to the international community that we are prepared to tackle the challenges of responding to the needs of Aboriginal families and communities. The partnership with health in developing a trial in coordinated care under the COAG banner is an important milestone. The plans for the development of the department's role as the purchaser of community service obligations in Government businesses through the concessions program is a broader reframing of the micro-economic reform agenda.

The family, in whatever form it takes, is recognised worldwide as the greatest and most enduring support care and welfare system of all. Foremost, it is the family that has helped this State through its financial crisis, whether in urban or rural areas. It is the family unit at the base of these communities that has provided resilience during a time when the State and our resources were put to the test. Our new campaign, Parenting South Australia, will provide a vital vehicle for support and opportunities for parenting growth and family development through innovative services, information packages, forums and counselling to reach parents whether at home or in the wider community, including the work place. Another aspect of this campaign will be to provide a prevention model for the wellbeing of our children. International research into the increasing reports of child maltreatment has shown that many reports actually relate to concerns of parenting style rather than about harm to children.

The reports are about parents not providing what the wider community considers to be an adequate standard of care, and many of these reports involve families with parenting difficulties or social disadvantages. I believe this campaign will substantially lift the profile and empathy with and understanding about parenting across all sectors. I also believe a quality of life index, which is being developed by the Office for Families and Children, represents cutting edge thinking in the framing of social policy objectives and again will assist in undergirding the role of the South Australian family. A vital feature of FACS is its continually evolving partnership with an active and committed non-government sector, with volunteers and carers. Non-government and contracted services feature prominently in our budget, receiving \$97.2 million, an increase of \$8.7 million over the previous year.

Finally, considerable and challenging changes will continue to face the Department for Family and Community Services—challenges that must be met by all sectors of the community, because duty of care does not rest with any one department alone but with the community as a whole. These challenges continue to include the care and rehabilitation of young offenders, the needs of our ageing community, the care of children who are under increasing stress, and people attempting to break the long-term cycle of poverty. We are addressing these issues with vigour and commitment. In the area of Family and Community Services and in the Office of the Ageing, South Australia is well placed to move into the future with a great deal of confidence.

Membership:

Ms Stevens substituted for Mr De Laine.

Ms White substituted for Mrs Geraghty.

Ms STEVENS: I would like to begin my statement by quoting from the first few lines of Issues/trends on page 344 of the Program Estimates, as follows:

There have been significant changes over the past decade in the locus of financial hardship in our community. The financial wellbeing of the aged has generally improved, whilst the risk of poverty for other populations (specifically single parent families, families with three or more children, and younger single people) has increased significantly. There is a clear correlation between poverty and family breakdown, child abuse and neglect. In addition, the introduction of gaming machines has had a substantial impact on a significant number of individuals and families.

By their own admission, the Minister and his department have acknowledged that the demand for Family and Community Services programs is expanding and new pressures, such as those created by the introduction of poker machines and a high level of youth unemployment, are placing an even greater strain on the limited resources of all agencies working in these fields. Agencies now keep statistics not only on the number of people they are able to assist but on the number of people in need that they have to turn away. This year, the Minister's media announcement headlined 'Budget strengthens focus on families and children' claimed that an extra \$2.2 million would be spend this year. This claim is as phoney as the rest of the Brown budget. This year's small increase, which includes the gaming machine windfall, will not make up the cut to the FACS budget from the consolidated account of \$10.4 million in real terms over the past two years.

State expenditure from the consolidated account fell from \$148.2 million in 1993-94 to \$147.8 million in 1994-95, and fell again to \$145.3 million in 1995-96. This year, the

estimate of expenditure from the consolidated account has been increased by \$8.4 million over the actual for 1995-96. After allowing for inflation—that is, \$4.4 million calculated at 3 per cent—and extra funding from gaming machines—\$2.2 million and \$500 000—this represents a real increase of just \$1.5 million and does not redress the cuts made over the past two years. The windfall from gaming machines through the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund of \$1.5 million and the Charitable and Social Welfare Organisations Fund of \$3 million is required to address new problems created by the introduction of poker machines and should not be considered as a replacement for the core areas of funding in community welfare. This year, there are fundamental changes to the structure of the FACS budget that have resulted in much less money for families and children and not more, as claimed by the Minister.

Family and community development grants across the seven programs of the budget have been cut in real terms. After allowing for inflation of 3 per cent, the amount budgeted this year is \$635 460 less than the actual expenditure for 1995-96. These are programs operating at the grassroots in communities and neighbourhoods across all program areas of this department. They include funding to a whole range of services from organisations such as the Salvation Army, Lutheran Community Care, the Central Mission, Centre Care, Anglican Community Services and also community and neighbourhood houses, youth projects, counselling services and community assistance projects. We also need to remember that the cuts that will be levelled this year will follow on from a similar raft of cuts in last year's budget which saw funding disappear from a whole range of programs, and I will just list some of those: the Lone Parent Family Support Service; Spark—which is due for another one this year; Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Murray Bridge; the Upper Spencer Gulf Lifeline; the Port Pirie Central Mission; People Against Child Sexual Abuse; the Australian Refugee Association; the Migrant Resource Centre; and others. We need to be really clear that this is not a budget for families. The programs that make the most difference for families, those that are happening at a community level, have been cut hugely.

The recurrent budget is also predicated on Commonwealth special purpose payments being increased by \$7.4 million compared with last year's expenditure. These grants affect expenditure in the HACC program and the SAAP program. The Opposition acknowledges the State Government's increased effort in relation to HACC but, given the decision by the Commonwealth to cut specific purpose payments by 3 per cent and the deal brokered by the Premier that another \$50 million can be cut from specific purpose payments in lieu of a cut to the general purpose grants, clearly there will be cuts to the FACS budget. It will be interesting to hear today how the Minister is managing the uncertainty that this situation has created for in his budget and for everyone involved in delivering these services.

The management of low income support funding and the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund last year are just two examples of the need for better planning and process in the Minister's department. Delays, lack of information, poor process and dithering characterise the new management model heralding the brave new world of funder, owner, purchaser and provider. Whilst that expenditure on family and community services has fallen by almost \$10 million in real terms under this Government, the cost of planning and policy development in the Minister's department continues to increase. This

year, an extra \$945 000 will be spent on planning and policy development across the seven programs. I invite the Minister to justify these increases in the face of massive decreases to services. In conclusion, in our view, this budget is a cynical and dishonest attempt by the Brown Government to cover up a callous disregard for those in our community in greatest need.

I now wish to refer to Program Estimates (page 338), in relation to HACC funding, special purpose payments. The Commonwealth special purpose payment for HACC is budgeted to increase by \$2.973 million from \$37.247 million to \$40.857 million. Given the Premier's statement to Parliament that \$83 million, made up of 3 per cent plus \$50 million in lieu of this year's cut to the special purpose grants will be cut from SPPs for South Australia, does the Minister expect to receive the funds estimated in the budget?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I look forward to responding to a number of the accusations that have been made regarding this budget and Government. It is not appropriate for me to do so at this stage when dealing with the ageing line, but I look forward to doing it when we get to the Family and Community Services line. As regards the accusations that have been made on this issue, we are not aware of what details will be made available or brought down through the Commonwealth budget. We will await that information, which will be made available at the appropriate time.

The Commonwealth Government offered growth funds to the Home and Community Care Program for South Australia equivalent to \$3.9 million in 1995-96. A total of \$3.6 million on an ongoing basis and \$4.3 million on a one-off basis has been approved in 1995-96 by me and by the Federal Minister for Family Services, Judith Moylan.

The commitment of the Commonwealth Government's growth funding for this financial year will contribute to ensuring that the HACC program funding will achieve the national funding standard over the 10 years of the plan. Priorities for HACC funding over the three years 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 include the development of carer support initiatives, respite care, home help and personal care services. Priority target groups for these new service initiatives include carers, Aboriginal people and people from a non-English-speaking background. These service development initiatives are in line with the priorities identified in the 10-year plan for aged care services.

For example, to address the issue of achieving a balance between ensuring that the mainstream services are available to respond appropriately to the service needs of people from a non-English-speaking background, \$180 000 (that is in fixed term) has been allocated to the Association of Ethnic Aged Care Organisations and \$50 250 in fixed term to MALSSA Incorporated to work with mainstream and ethno-specific agencies to improve access to service for people from a non-English-speaking background. I am very pleased that that priority has been recognised.

An expanded range of services for Aboriginal people will be available. A total of \$44 000 will be dedicated to the Ceduna Koonibba Health Service, \$93 000 to the Northern Yorke Peninsula Regional Health Service and \$31 000 to the Murray Arabana Aboriginal Peoples Committee for this purpose.

Also, our commitment to improve the range of respite care options to carers will be supported through the provision of \$200 000 to carers and the provision of \$108 300 to Southern Domiciliary Care for additional respite.

I return to what I said earlier about the lack of information on the forthcoming Commonwealth budget. I am not quite sure where the member is getting the information from relating to that particular issue.

Ms STEVENS: If the Commonwealth's contribution to HACC is cut, will the Minister guarantee that the State's increased contribution will remain as stated in this budget?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I cannot give that commitment at this time. It would be inappropriate to give that commitment until we know exactly what is coming from the Commonwealth budget.

Ms STEVENS: The grant to seniors notation on page 200 indicates a decrease of \$96 000 to that fund. However, I understand that \$45 000 from the 1996-97 budget was paid in advance to cover the costs of Seniors' Week in 1996. Even so, that leaves a decrease of \$6 000. Can you confirm whether that is the case (that is, the advance); if so, why was the \$45 000 required for Seniors' Week 1997 not provided in this year's estimate; and what programs will be affected by the \$6 000 cut?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have a feeling that some of that might need to be taken on notice, but I will ask the Director of the Office for the Ageing to provide any information that he can at this stage.

Mr Fiebig: We must look at the figures in relation to the \$6 000. An advance payment was made to COTA, and there was an increase of \$3 000 in that grant to the level that it received in the previous year. We will take on notice the other matter and provide a detailed response.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: My question relates to the aged care program administered by the State Government. Working with you as parliamentary secretary, I know how committed both you and the FACS and Ageing staff are to your respective responsibilities and how difficult it has been, given the massive debt load that has been inherited and the damage that has done to the social fabric of our State through the debacle that was brought about by the Labor Government during all those years. I also note the cynical responses that we get from the shadow spokesperson to you and the staff of FACS and the Ageing. Therefore, it is appropriate that I should ask: what is the Government's response to the Commonwealth's offer to transfer its responsibilities in aged care to the States as part of the COAG processes which are currently being worked through?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: There have now been two discussions about the possible devolution of responsibilities from the Commonwealth to the States involving all Ministers with responsibility in this area and the Federal Minister. Recognising that this possible transfer of responsibility is seen as a long-term program, a considerable amount of cooperation and openness has been shown by the Federal Minister, Judith Moylan, to the State Ministers in working through this issue.

The nature of the Commonwealth's offer in relation to the transfer of its aged care responsibilities to the States is not yet absolutely clear. Therefore, the State Government cannot commit itself to a firm position, and it would be irresponsible to do so. However, the State Government has expressed broad support for the directions of the proposed reform, subject to some important issues being clarified. These include the need for the current levels of aged care funding to be maintained, the need for the Commonwealth to address present capital and infrastructure problems before the transfer and the importance of growth and indexation to continue to be built into future funding agreements. It would be totally irrespon-

sible for any State Government to accept the transfer if that information was not forthcoming.

The State Government has been in regular contact with consumer bodies and aged care organisations in relation to the Commonwealth's proposals, and there is an ongoing commitment by all parties to continue this process. It has been a very open process to date, and I understand why there should be so much interest in the process that will be followed by the different agencies which have responsibility in this State. There has been some consultation between the Federal Minister and lead agencies at the national level.

With the questions that are now being asked at a State level, it is important that more information and more opportunity be sought and provided for there to be discussion among those agencies and the State Ministers as well as with the Commonwealth Minister. I took the opportunity yesterday to meet with some of the people who have a direct interest in what may occur in relation to this evolution. It is my intention that that will continue.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to page 339 of the Program Estimates. What was the specific response of consumer and service provider organisations in South Australia to the potential transfer of the Commonwealth's aged care program?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Understandably, there has been a lot of interest in what might occur and what might come out of this transfer. As Minister, I am not nervous about such a move being taken. It is appropriate for the States to have a greater say in what should happen in this important area and to recognise the significant importance of the ageing community in South Australia. There are some very real advantages to be gained in working through and exploring the possibility of this transfer.

At this stage, the nature of the Commonwealth's offer to transfer its aged care responsibilities to the States remains unclear. Understandably, consumer and aged care organisations have been reserved in their response to any such transfer, and that is why I am keen to continue with those discussions. However, cautious support for the States' taking on aged care responsibility has emerged from some quarters of the age care industry in recent weeks. The South Australian Branch of the Aged Care Organisations Association (ACOA), for example, has talked to the State Government about the potential for positive opportunities (and that is how it has put it) to be created by such a move.

The State Government has been in regular contact with both industry and consumer groups throughout discussion with the Commonwealth to date. We have made a commitment to continue to work closely with them as the details of the Commonwealth offer evolve. As I said, I see it as being an exciting challenge and one that, as long as everyone is kept informed and works through the process, will work well. The State Government shares the concern of those groups that the integrity of the program funding must be maintained. It is absolutely essential that that should happen. The Commonwealth should address current capital and infrastructure problems before the transfer, and the growth in indexation should continue to be built into future funding agreements.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to page 339 of the Program Estimates in reference to the 10-year plan for the ageing. What major themes arose from the consultations for the 10-year plan, and how does the plan address them?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I was very pleased indeed with the response from the community. I recognise the huge amount of work that the officers of the Office for the Ageing put into the development of this very important plan. Most

people in the community recognise that there has been a need for a positive direction to be indicated regarding the future of aged care in South Australia. It is an extremely diverse area of responsibility, and it was essential that we work towards such a plan. Not only was it important to have that direction, but also I felt very strongly that it was important to make quite clear that all agencies of Government across Government needed to have an important input into aged care responsibilities in this State. I was far from satisfied that that was happening previously.

Several themes arose in consultations with respect to the 10-year plan. It is impossible to reflect all of them this afternoon, but I will highlight some particular priorities and talk about the plan's response to them. Regional funding and planning was one issue. Country submissions to the plan's development focused on the importance of local circumstances, innovations and difficulties being recognised in the planning and funding process. Of course, the plan commits the Office for the Ageing to the development of a regional approach to planning and funding in the future.

One of the real positives to come out of this resulted from the commitment that was shown by those in charge of the driving of this project in the development of the plan. I was particularly pleased with the amount of consultation that took place across the State. Those who had that responsibility were determined to ensure that not just those in the metropolitan but also country people throughout the State were provided with the opportunity to have input into this important plan.

Another highlight related to carers. Many people told consultations in both country and metropolitan areas of the need to extend the support available to carers throughout South Australia. Certainly, that is something which we all recognise. The carers in this State—and I suppose throughout Australia—are the unsung heroes. They are the ones who do a lot of work without many other people knowing about it. The plan and subsequent Home and Community Care funding has created an extended network of support for carers and also additional respite options. Research was another area.

Many submissions highlighted the contribution which was already being made to the ageing through local research. However, it was also recognised that the State Government had a role to play in coordinating effort in this area and in providing direct support for such research.

The plan and subsequent Home and Community Care and Office for the Ageing funding will create an important boost to local research, and it is important that that should be the case. The Office for the Ageing has also taken the lead role in bringing together researchers and representatives from the non-government and Government sectors to create a coordinated research agenda for South Australia.

Recreation was another area that was highlighted. Several submissions to the consultations addressed the problem which many older people have in gaining access to recreation and leisure opportunities as a result of isolation, physical frailty, cultural barriers, financial disadvantages, etc. The plan proposes the development of a recreational strategy for older people, and the process will be led by the Department of Recreation, Sport and Racing.

I do not have time to mention more issues, but transport was another where older people in the country and outer metropolitan areas talked throughout the consultations about the difficulties they experienced in accessing transport. I am sure that all of us, particularly those in country areas, understand that the lack of opportunity for people to travel from one town to another for medical attention or whatever

the case might be is a significant issue. As a result, the Passenger Transport Board, with support from the Office for the Ageing, will now review options for establishing community passenger transport networks in country and outer metropolitan areas.

Finally, recognition of the contribution of older people needs to be referred to. Older people wanted the plan to reflect not only their needs into the future but also the very important contributions which they make and which they will continue to make to the community. Importantly, the plan therefore gives considerable emphasis to this, and it commits the State Government to recognising these contributions through an award program and through the implementation of a strategy to promote positive and realistic images of ageing. A number of initiatives that have come out of the plan will be picked up through this process. I again commend those who have been involved in the preparation of this plan. Its future direction will be of benefit to all older South Australians.

Ms STEVENS: I have received a copy of a letter that was sent to the Minister regarding funding for an aged care services coordinator for the Greek Orthodox community of South Australia. Nicholas Niarchos, the President, referred this matter to me asking me to take up with the Minister their submission for support to continue funding for their aged care services coordinator as that funding was due to terminate on 31 December 1995. The Minister has received this letter, so I presume he is aware of its contents. Essentially, this is a crucial and critical position for the Greek community, and they are very concerned that it continue. Can the Minister provide any further information.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am aware that funding has been made available through the community service welfare fund for this position, and that that funding will continue. A cheque will be sent to this group. I agree with the honourable member that this is an important organisation. I will ask the Director whether he has any further information.

Mr Fiebig: Funding from FACS has gone out previously under this budget line, which was created under the Community Social Development Fund. That funding will be administered from 1 July from the Office for the Ageing. We have made arrangements for funding to continue, and a cheque will go out next week not only to this Greek welfare group but also to three or four other organisations that receive funding under that particular program. We will be in touch with them fairly shortly to talk about what those new arrangements might mean.

Ms STEVENS: The most significant issues regarding older people raised with me as shadow Minister for the Ageing concern the health system. On 6 May 1995, in a joint media release, the Minister for the Ageing and the Minister for Health announced a strategy to implement recommendations of a consultancy on the impact of casemix funding on older persons. This included the formation of an advisory committee on casemix and older persons. As part of the health of older persons' policy released in July 1995, which was endorsed by both Ministers, an older persons' health council was to be established to provide advice on the health status and needs of older people and, as part of its role, to advise on the effects of changes within the health system on older persons and to monitor the implementation of the health of older persons' policy. What are the outcomes of the strategy to implement the recommendations regarding the impact of casemix funding on older persons?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The health of older persons' policy was endorsed by the commission in July 1995 when a joint announcement was made. Consideration has been given to the composition of the council, but no announcement has been made. Yesterday, I met with one of the people who has been asked to be a member of that council. The policy has been developed as one of a series of health policies with a population focus. It is part of the Health Commission's primary health care policy, and of course it is working in conjunction between the Health Commission and the Office for the Ageing. I do not have details with me to answer the direct question asked by the honourable member, but I will ask the Director if he is able to assist.

Mr Fiebig: The casemix committee was set up by the South Australian Health Commission, and the Office for the Ageing is part of that committee. It is our understanding that the Health Commission is awaiting Commonwealth developments in relation to casemix funding. That is the basis on which the group has approached its last meeting or so.

Ms STEVENS: I would like to clarify whether there have been any outcomes of that strategy.

Mr Fiebig: The committee is still meeting, so it therefore has not produced a report. I cannot speak further for my colleagues in the South Australian Health Commission.

Ms STEVENS: I gather from what the Minister said in reply to a previous question that even though the health of older persons' policy was announced in July 1995, the older persons' health council has not been established. I was going to ask the Minister who its members are, how many times it has met and what progress has been made in implementing the health of older persons' policy.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have already indicated that the composition of the council has not been finalised. Following a meeting yesterday, it is my intention to meet with my colleague the Minister for Health as soon as possible to discuss that issue.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to funding for the aged of a non-English speaking background. We are all aware of our ageing population in South Australia—we have only had to look at the newspapers over the past few days. A significant number of these Australians are from a non-English speaking background. Given that many of these Australians arrived here well into their working life, they contributed significantly to the development of this State by immediately working and paying taxes without being involved in health and education as would someone who was born here. What is the Government doing to address the needs of this particular group of Australians?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I recognise the importance of servicing the needs of people from non-English speaking communities. Approximately 14 per cent of South Australia's population aged 65 and over were born in a non-English speaking country: about 13 per cent were born in Europe and, I am advised, about 1 per cent in Asian countries. These percentages will increase, particularly as migrants who arrived in South Australia after the Second World War fall into this age group. Both the 10 year plan for the ageing and the health of older persons' strategy include strategies for responding to the needs of older people from a multicultural background. These strategies take a two-pronged approach. Where possible, encouragement and assistance to use mainstream services is given through mechanisms to encourage and assist these bodies to plan, develop and deliver services in a style appropriate for their multicultural clients.

Also, recognition is given to the need for some ethno-specific services which cannot be met by mainstream organisations. State policies are designed to encourage the use of mainstream services by older people of non-English speaking backgrounds. Services which can link this group to appropriate services are Ethnic Link Services and Multicultural Respite Care Services. The Home and Community Care program has also recently allocated \$50 200 to the Multicultural Advocacy and Liaison Service of South Australia to work with mainstream agencies to increase their responsiveness to communities of NESB. For those people who have needs that cannot be met by the mainstream areas, some ethno-specific areas, including residential options, have been developed. For example, in South Australia there are currently 11 nursing homes, six hostels and four independent settings with a primary emphasis on the aged care needs of particular ethnic groups, including Greek, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Croatian and Ukrainian, to name a few.

In 1995 the Central Adelaide Mission received funding for 45 community aged care packages which it will develop both with and for ethnic groups. These packages will allow older people the option of being supported over a longer period in the community in which they are familiar. It is essential that that should be the case. In 1994 the Association of Ethnic Communities for Aged Care, known as Multicultural Aged Care, was formed to support the smaller communities which are asking to respond to the needs of their older members. Multicultural Aged Care now assists Vietnamese, Maltese, Russian, South Asian, Spanish, Philippine and Arabic communities to identify accommodation and aged care needs so that culturally appropriate solutions can be developed.

Funding of \$180 000 from the Home and Community Care program has recently been allocated to support this program. Overall, the HACC program provides \$1.3 million of funding to specific ethnic communities and, in the 1996-97 State Budget, the Grants for Seniors program allocated \$27 270 to ethnic communities out of a total of \$196 000 and an additional \$40 000 is likely to be allocated through the Office of Ageing grants program. Other strategies of the Office of Ageing in responding to the needs of the NESB communities will be guided by the 10-year plan, the Ethnic Aged Strategy of the Commonwealth and the Health of Older Persons policy. Also, \$200 000 has been allocated through the 1996-97 budget for ethnic aged care organisations as well. The honourable member can see that a considerable amount of assistance being provided, recognising the high proportion of South Australians who need culturally appropriate services provided for them.

Mrs KOTZ: Still relating to the 10-year plan (page 339 of the budget estimates), I refer to the rural sector. In another place last night the Labor Deputy Leader waxed reasonably lyrical on the Opposition's concern for the rural community, although it is about 10 years too late. In addressing those concerns I am interested in what the 10-year plan for ageing may offer as a benefit to older people. Can the Minister refer to any specific initiatives from the 10-year plan that benefit older people living in country areas?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I thank the member for Newland for that question. As I said earlier, one of the positive things that came out of the 10-year plan and the consultations on the plan was the involvement of older country residents. I have had a significant number of comments passed to me in appreciation by older people in country areas who felt that it was totally appropriate and pleasing to be able to comment and make representations in the way that they did in prepara-

tion of the plan. I would like to comment on a couple of matters. I refer to regional funding and transport. I refer particularly to regional funding, because the move to a regional approach to the funding and planning of aged care services will provide significant opportunities for service delivery models to be innovative and to focus on the strengths and needs of particular areas.

Certainly, it is hoped that it may also provide opportunities in some instances for the pooling of resources of related services to create options that can be matched to individual needs. If we cannot achieve that, we have really failed in this exercise. As to transport, the Passenger Transport Board, as I mentioned earlier, has funded a number of feasibility studies to look at the development of community passenger transport networks in some regions, including the Willunga Basin—and the member for Mawson would be interested in this—the Riverland and the Mid North. It was only a week ago and again last night, but wearing my other portfolio hat, that I visited Barmera and Murray Bridge. Particularly in Barmera there was considerable comment about the difficulty of not just older citizens, but particularly older people, travelling from one centre to another. The other areas currently under consideration include the Murray-Mallee and Strathalbyn areas.

The Office of the Ageing has allocated funds to the Passenger Transport Board to employ a project officer for 1996-97 to identify HACC consumer needs for community transport. Particular attention will be given to transport needs in country areas. The Office for the Ageing is currently holding discussions with the Passenger Transport Board also to look at ways of coordinating and linking current requests for funding to the work in progress to develop passenger transport networks in country regions.

So far as carers are concerned, the 10-year plan proposes the extension of regional carer networks, including country areas. Some of these new support networks have now been established as a result of new funding through the Home and Community Care program. The last one to which I would refer, and there are others, but I recognise the time, relates to recreation where the 10-year plan proposes the development of a State-wide recreation strategy for older people, with particular emphasis on the needs of disadvantaged groups, including older people in country areas. The recreation strategy will be developed by the Department for Recreation, Sport and Racing and is one that would be strongly welcomed. Certainly, Recreation for Older Adults, which is a well recognised and supportive organisation, has been discussing those needs for a long time, particularly as they relate to country areas.

Mrs KOTZ: Continuing with reference to the 10-year plan, there have been a number of media reports of crimes against older people, which is most unfortunate. I believe that some society values, although continuing to change, still do not accept or wish to tolerate these cowardly or unwarranted assaults on defenceless, frail, aged people. Although I realise they are minimal they should not occur at all. What is being done within the 10-year plan and elsewhere to assist older people to safeguard themselves against such crimes?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: First, we would all recognise that these crimes against older people and the media attention given to them are most regrettable. The incidents themselves are, in many cases, absolutely shocking and totally unacceptable, but it does not help the situation when the media, as is often the case, sensationalises the events also because it simply spreads fear amongst other older people in a wide

cross-section of the community. It is important that the community, including the media and older people themselves, know that statistics actually show that older people are victims of crime far less frequently than are younger people. That gives little comfort to those who have in some way been affected by such crimes against older people, but it is important that older people recognise that. Nevertheless, the State is aware of the need to take steps to maximise community safety and to reduce the risk of crime. This theme also came out quite strongly in consultation on the 10-year plan.

The State Government has in place a number of strategies to reduce crime including the crime prevention strategy, administered by the Crime Prevention Unit of the Attorney-General's Department. Most of the funds are allocated to local crime prevention committees and these committees develop appropriate strategic approaches to local issues. Further strategies include the South Australian Police Community Safety Program and the Neighbourhood Watch Program, which focus on assisting individuals and communities, including older people, to take preventative measures. The South Australian Police Security Advice Unit provides independent practical advice on crime prevention measures and is well used by older people and their organisations.

The Home Assist Scheme, which is funded by HAAC and administered by local councils, provides security advice and security hardware subsidies to older home owners throughout the State. The State Government, through the Office for the Ageing, is currently updating the booklet 'Crime Prevention and Safety Tips for the Elderly'. That booklet is about to be printed and will be available for release in the next few weeks.

In addition, with my colleague the Attorney-General, I met recently with representatives from the Office for the Ageing, the Council on the Ageing, the Australian Nursing Homes and Extended Care Association and the Aged Care Organisations Association to consider crime prevention strategies with a special focus on older people. That was a very successful meeting. The main outcome of that meeting was that COTA and ACOA have agreed to work together in cooperation with the Office for the Ageing and the Attorney-General's Department to provide community information and education on measures that older people can take to improve their safety. Many initiatives have been introduced and are being worked through in this area. It really is important, to reiterate what I said earlier, that older people be aware of the precise level of crime as it relates to them as so often these issues are sensationalised by the media, which does not help anyone at all.

The member for Elizabeth asked a question about the Grants for Seniors Program for 1995-96 and I will provide that information now. As the Committee would know, grants are made on a one-off basis to voluntary agencies, community organisations and self-help groups towards the cost of materials, equipment or other elements that will encourage a more active and independent life for the elderly. Applications for assistance under this program were advertised in September 1995 and 390 applications were received up to mid November. The Grants for Seniors Advisory Committee met on five occasions to assess applications and I approved the committee's recommendations on 1 May last year. A total of \$202 000 was available for 1995-96, which included a carry over of \$6 000 from the previous financial year. The current financial commitment to the program is \$196 000 per annum. A total of \$155 189 has been allocated to groups this

financial year, with an additional \$42 000 designated to COTA (South Australia) for Seniors' Week activities, and \$45 000 was also advanced this financial year to COTA for Seniors' Week activities for 1996-97.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Ms J. Whitehorn, Director, Policy and Development, Department for Family and Community Services.

Mr R. Squires, Director, Community Services.

Ms M. Hedges, Director, Residential and Youth Services.

Mr L. Carpenter, Executive Director, Field Services.

Mr J. Southgate, Manager, Financial and Physical Resources.

Membership:

Mrs Hall substituted for Mr Scalzi.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to the Office for Families and Children, at page 200 of the Program Estimates. The Minister's media release on the budget said that an additional \$500 000 will be provided although a positive parenting campaign to be coordinated by the Office for Families and Children. There are serious concerns about the achievements of this office and many believe that it operates as a publicity machine for the Premier. On page 33 of last year's FACS annual report, under a photograph of the Premier, it was reported that the major outcomes for the Office for Families and Children for 1994-95 included the management of a conference, the introduction of family impact statements on Cabinet submissions, the production of a film and discussion papers. Will the Minister explain how he justifies these activities as major outcomes for families and children in South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is disappointing that the member is prepared to carry on as she is presently on this issue. To suggest that the Office for Families (as it was known when first established), and now the Office for Families and Children, is just there for publicity purposes for the Premier is absolutely scandalous. I have very much appreciated, as I presume the member for Elizabeth would appreciate if she were Minister, the support I have received from the Premier, in particular, in this area. As part of our policy prior to the last election, we made a commitment to establish an Office for Families and Children, and that is exactly what we have done. The achievements and the initiatives of the Office for Families and Children are absolutely fantastic. As far as I am concerned, the office has my total support in the work that it is doing. In just over 12 months since the Office for Families and Children was restructured (with the incorporation of the Domestic Violence Unit and the Children's Interest Bureau under the umbrella of this office), a significant amount has been achieved.

The Office for Families, the Children's Interest Bureau and the Domestic Violence Unit were amalgamated to become the Office for Families and Children in May 1995. I believe the restructure has resulted in significant gains, including a broader and more cohesive approach to issues and families, a cost-effective management structure and enhanced efficiency and effectiveness through the sharing of resources and expertise. I am certainly proud of the achievements of the office which include, for example, the Domestic Violence Unit's strategic plan, which has now been finalised; the violence intervention and prevention model for responding to domestic violence which has been developed and which is about to be trialled; and the review of the Children's Interest Bureau which is now complete and which will enable the

clarification of the bureau's functions and operations, and that has been needed for a long time.

I am well aware of the concerns in that area as a result of the previous Government's not being prepared to make a decision as far as the future of the Children's Interest Bureau was concerned. Family ambassadors have been appointed. The ambassadors are all well-known South Australians who work to raise the profile of family issues across the community. They do so with much frustration, I might add, because they are all active people. They are all very committed to the promotion of and support for the family, but almost on a weekly basis, when attempting to have input into public issues through the media, that opportunity is not provided to them, which I find very disappointing.

Advice has been provided to other Australian States regarding the model of family impact statements that South Australia has established. I indicated last year that it was a commitment of this Government to reintroduce family impact statements. They were effective during the last Liberal Government—between 1979 and 1982. The Labor Government that came to office after that time discontinued the use of family impact statements. This Government was determined to reinstate them, and I believe they are working extremely well. A range of community education activities have been undertaken, including the publications *To Hit or Not to Hit*, *Violence Within Families*, *The Challenge of Preventing Adolescent Violence Towards Parents*, and *Just Good Sense—Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities*.

A number of very worthwhile publications have come out of that office. The program, Parenting South Australia, which will be implemented in the coming financial year, has been developed by the Office for Families and Children in conjunction with other agencies. That is a program which I very strongly support. The member for Elizabeth asked how the \$500 000 recently allocated for the Parenting South Australia program will be distributed, and other questions were raised about that money. The funding for Parenting SA will be coordinated by the Office for Families and Children; it will be distributed to a wide variety of agencies to develop programs that support parenting.

I believe the program we are looking at to involve people in the work force, particularly, will be very positive. It will be done in line with a set of priorities established by an inter-agency group. Some priority will be given to promoting the Child, Youth and Parent Help Line, and a range of self-help programs. Decisions on the remaining allocation of the funding have yet to be made, and clear guidelines will be established for this process. The allocation of \$500 000 for the Parenting South Australia campaign appears in the budget estimates under 'Planning and Policy'. It is not operationalised at this stage because we have already indicated that it will come into being in the next financial year.

The assertion of the member for Elizabeth in her opening statement that the department is spending additional funds in areas that will not impact on direct services is clearly not borne out.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Well, it is not. We can argue until 10 o'clock on that particular point, if we want to, but that is just the situation.

Ms STEVENS: Minister, you raised the issue of family impact statements. As you would recall, last year I had many concerns about those statements and their real value. As you expressed confidence in relation to those statements, will you

table a range of family impact statements so that members can see what they are and get some idea of their value?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I know that the member for Elizabeth seems to have a thing about family impact statements. We spent a considerable amount of time talking about them last year, and it is quite obvious that the Labor Party does not support family impact statements. If it did it would not have discontinued them during its term in Government. The member for Elizabeth knows, because I have indicated this on numerous occasions, that family impact statements make up an important part of Cabinet submissions. The main purpose for family impact statements is to advise Cabinet, the Premier and other Ministers sitting around the table of the impact a particular decision will have on a family, whether it be policy or any other initiative to be introduced by Government.

It is an important part of the Cabinet submission. On numerous occasions I have considered how we can move outside that, and I would like to give further consideration to that. I believe it is important that family impact statements continue as part of the Cabinet submission but, because it is part of the Cabinet submission and because such a submission cannot be made public, it is difficult to explain to others outside the process the effect and importance of those statements. I am trying to give some consideration as to how that issue can be resolved. It cannot be resolved as it is part of a Cabinet document because, as the member for Elizabeth would know, Cabinet documents are of a confidential nature.

I repeat that if the member for Elizabeth thinks that these family impact statements are a waste of time or that they are not achieving anything I suggest to her that that is not the case. Considerable recognition is given to these statements by the Government, and it is important that that should be the case. I do not know how the previous Labor Government went about its business, and it is not for me to know, but all I can say is that the family impact statement is a very important procedure. The benefit of being in government and of being a Minister is that if I want an impact statement I will have it. This Government will continue to provide for family impact statements, whether the Leader of the Opposition likes it or lumps it.

Ms STEVENS: With regard to the positive parenting program, I would like to quote from the Minister's press release of 30 May 1996 as follows:

The campaign to be launched later this year will involve a telephone information and counselling service—the release of parenting information dealing with all ages of child and adolescent development through programs that target all parents, whether at home or in the work force.

I quote from the low income support section in Program Estimates (page 344), as follows:

There is a clear correlation between poverty and family breakdown, child abuse and neglect.

Government responses need to be targeted to ensure that those most in need receive assistance, and particularly that vulnerable families receive services which ameliorate the stress caused by poverty and increase their ability to be financially self-sufficient.

Would the Minister not agree that the \$500 000 allocated to the positive parenting program may have been better directed to the family and community development program, which has been cut by \$635 460?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: On that last point about the \$635 000, I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to refer to that, because I do not believe that it is appropriate. Of course, we have a responsibility for vulnerable families and for those

who are most at risk. That is the core responsibility of this department: to assist, to be aware and to work towards assisting children and families that are at risk. Regrettably, difficulties in families are restricted not just to those families that are most in need. We have looked at similar programs that have been introduced in Victoria and Western Australia. Last Saturday morning I had the opportunity to meet with Cheryl Edwardes, the Minister for Family and Community Services in Western Australia, and we spent a considerable amount of that time talking about their positive parenting in Western Australia which has been extremely successful. The point was made that that program needs to be available for all families, and I believe that is the case.

As I said earlier with regard this program, any opportunity that can be given to a parent or parents to assist them in the upbringing of their children must be of benefit. I have been determined to ensure that the positive parenting program was addressing prevention as well, because to be able to get in early and work with families to prevent children from leaving home, families breaking up, children getting into difficulty or whatever the case might be is also vitally important. It is not just matter of waiting until families are at a low ebb and children are at risk before we start doing work in positive parenting.

We have talked a lot about how we can be most effective in this area. For a long time, there have been opportunities for parents to go along to FACS offices and to other organisations for evening meetings, or whatever the case might be. I do not know that that always works. What we keen to do in this positive parenting program is take this program into the workplace, for example, so that where opportunities exist, a number of workers or whomever can get together over a lunch break, or anything else, and have an opportunity for people to come in and talk to them if they are having difficulties in raising a minor or a teenager. As we know, at some stage, all parents, particularly those who are isolated or without family support, require assistance. Through this positive parenting program, we are looking at making sure that that assistance goes to the people rather than the people having to make a special effort to seek out further information. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to provide more detail.

Mr Deyell: The amount allocated in the Program Estimates for family and community development grants in 1996-97 will be an increase over the amount allocated for those same programs in 1995-96. The expenditure in 1995-96 contains some one-off items. We were able to carry forward from the previous year the figures in the Program Estimates, which represent a return to the base for those programs, which is higher than it was for 1995-96.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The response we have had to this program from industry, welfare groups and from a number of other organisations has been extremely positive and supportive. It will target the vulnerable families, and it is important that that should happen. Parents in isolation also need particular support. I can only say that, if the Opposition does not find that it is able to support such a positive program I am disappointed.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to page 338 of the budget papers. Now that the charitable and social welfare fund formation is nearing completion, how long will it be before charity and welfare groups see those funds being distributed?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I thank the member for Mawson for that question, because it is of interest to a lot of people. The Gaming Machines (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill

which creates the Charitable and Social Welfare Fund from July 1996 requires that I establish a five member board to direct the application of the fund. That Act has recently been assented to and will come into operation from 1 July. The Government's intention has been to create such a fund since the end of last year when the Hill inquiry was completed. The Family and Community Development Advisory Committee, which advises me, has put considerable work over a number of months into considering the most useful applications for the fund and has provided me with advice accordingly.

Work on the structure, membership and functions of this board has been undertaken in anticipation of proclamation of the Act some time in June. The terms of reference for the new board are being drafted to ensure that the distribution of the fund to charities and social welfare organisations will be in keeping with the findings of the Hill inquiry and as complementary as possible with current policy settings in the Family and Community Services portfolio.

I anticipate that the membership of the board and broad guidelines for the operation of the fund will be announced in July. Calls will be made for applications to the fund as soon as the board has considered priorities and procedures for distribution of these public moneys. While this will take place as soon as possible, a desire for haste has to be balanced against the need for a well considered and accountable distribution. I shall be happy to make the member for Mawson aware of the appointments to that board as they are made, and so on.

I recognise the importance of the responsibility that rests in the determination of the composition of that body. With any group that is given the responsibility for making funding available in the community, it is essential that such a board be absolutely independent, and I am determined that that should be so. While it is early days, those whom I have approached to see whether they would be prepared for me to put their names before Cabinet for this board are of a very high standard and would, I believe, provide the independence which is so vital.

I am aware of the need to get this up and running as quickly as possible. There is an enormous amount of interest in the community in how the funding will be distributed and the terms of reference that will be put in place. Recognising that it will be on stream from 1 July, it is essential that that board be in place and that the Government and the department are ready to move from 1 July or as soon as possible from that date.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: We have been seeing quite a bit in the press lately about the reform agenda through COAG. What implications do you see for your portfolio as a result of the reform agenda in Health and Community Services following the recent endorsement by COAG?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: There are certainly some implications, so this is a very worthwhile question. The COAG meeting on 14 June agreed to broad directions for reform of Health and Community Services and an approach to implementation. The key elements agreed to by COAG include working towards arrangements which place all health and related community services under the umbrella of a single multilateral agreement. They also include further exploration of global funding arrangements and options for establishing a nationally consistent information payments system.

Interim steps to consolidate and rationalise a number of existing arrangements, including consideration of the transfer of responsibility for managing aged care programs to the

States, to be developed in parallel with work on the longer-term approach, are under consideration. I referred to that in a previous answer.

Health and Community Services Ministers will progress the work with the involvement of COAG senior officials reporting back to the next council meeting. The council has instructed that appropriate consultation with consumers and the industry should take place before any final decisions are taken by the council. I believe that to be totally appropriate. As Minister for Family and Community Services and for the Ageing, I welcome the directions which are now unfolding through COAG. The key plank of that agenda is the need for all jurisdictions and stakeholders to have a continued and legitimate and joint interest in building a better set of arrangements. This is the context in which we are developing our position in South Australia.

The need to address some of the fundamental underlying structural problems rather than shifting problems to other parts of the system is critical to the ongoing ability of this State to provide care in the community. The interim arrangements for the development of new aged care agreements has my full support, as I have indicated previously. Some details of those agreements will need to be carefully negotiated on a bilateral basis to ensure that this State is able to provide the level and quality of care consistent with the 10-year plan and the expectations of the community.

In respect of the longer-term agenda, it is important for Ageing and Family and Community Services that output and outcome measures at the core of the multilateral agreement should include those which relate to care and community perspectives, which are about wellbeing. Overall, while we recognise the challenges that come with the reform agenda, I think it is an exciting time. We need to recognise the opportunities which are part of this reform in working towards improved support for South Australian communities.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Most South Australians recognise that the new Federal Government has a State Bank revisited when it comes to debt. Therefore, at the meeting of Premiers recently the new Federal Government advised the Premiers that there would be a 3 per cent cut in special purpose payments to the States. What impact do you see these cuts having on your portfolio?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have provided some of the answer, but I should like to provide more information in this area. The basis for the information in the Program Estimates was the most recent available to State Treasury and departmental officers at the time of the construction of the budget. Until the outcome of the Federal Budget is known in August, it is not possible to know the details of outcomes for a number of these programs.

The original proposals for taxation of the States would have had significant implications for my portfolio, along with others. Not only would there have been an impact on Government-provided services, but there was significant concern in the non-government sector that such taxation arrangements would have flowed to the charitable welfare sector, and that would have been unacceptable. I say that because it would have touched hundreds of organisations and programs in that sector. I believe that we have been well served in this portfolio, in particular, by the representations made by our Premier at COAG to overturn that taxation proposal.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to the Charitable and Social Welfare Fund at page 338 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister guarantee that the funds will not be held over until

next June for distribution as those in the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund were in 1996?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have already said that I am keen for the council and for the workings of this new fund to be in place as quickly as possible. I would want to be able to distribute the funds as soon as possible. It is not a matter of holding any over for a future year. I have indicated what I see as the need for independence as far as the council is concerned in getting on with the job that we have to do.

Ms STEVENS: Why did the Government pre-empt the distribution of these funds by allocating \$200 000 to the ethnic aged care agencies before the advisory panel was established?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Because we felt that it was totally appropriate that that should be the case. We had talked about that over a period of time. Where some people would object to that, there are others who have been very supportive of that move. We saw it as a priority, and I have no qualms about having made that decision.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to the Community Benefits Fund—\$500 000 (page 200 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments). I note that the program for services to families and children at risk now includes for the first time the allocation of \$500 000 from community benefits. I understand that this is to be funded from the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund. What would be the process for allocation, and what are the guidelines for distributing these funds? Will they be held over to Christmas for announcement by the Premier as his personal Christmas present—as they were last year on 23 December—or will they be distributed earlier?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to answer that question.

Mr Deyell: The \$500 000 referred to is funds removed from the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund and, as the honourable member pointed out, it now appears in the budget as a dedicated line. The intention is to target priority services for families, in line with the reorganisation of the alternative care services in South Australia. Because we have been able to add those funds to the alternative care pool, we have already been able to give guarantees of ongoing funding through the rest of this calendar year to programs such as Keeping Families Together. That means that the ongoing allocation of the \$500 000 will be considered to target families as a result of the decisions in the alternative care review.

Ms STEVENS: When will they be given out? How long will it take for the money to be distributed?

Mr Deyell: The availability of the money has already meant the continuation of some services where the funding was uncertain.

Ms STEVENS: How much of the \$500 000?

Mr Deyell: The continuation of Keeping Families Together to the end of this calendar year is in the order of \$450 000.

Ms STEVENS: There is only \$50 000 left.

Mrs KOTZ: There is one issue that I believe the mere mention of is guaranteed to send a shudder of revulsion down the spines of most responsible adults and family members, and that is paedophilia. It is an area that has been an issue within this State for a long time, particularly in recent times. In your position, Minister, you also have responsibility for wards of the State whom we hope will be protected from this particular area. We have seen changes in recent times to some of our legislation that has sought to tighten up the protection that is offered to children from people who prey on them in this manner. I also know that you have advocated a national

approach to paedophilia. What initiatives are you pursuing to ensure that there is a cooperative approach with other State Governments in this particular area?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I thank the member for Newland for that question. Undoubtedly, it is a very important question and an important issue for the community to tackle. The member has referred to the national approach in this area and at the last formal meeting of the Family and Community Services Ministers I placed on the agenda my concern regarding the responsibility that Government, Ministers and departments have in working with children under our care, and particularly in this area and particularly those children who are most vulnerable who have behavioural problems. It was an issue that was placed very late on the agenda of that committee but it probably received more discussion than any other at that meeting, and the matter has been placed as the first item on the agenda for the meeting in Hobart the week after next for further discussion.

It is of significant concern to all Ministers. As has been indicated previously, it is of particular concern to me that we have youngsters who have not committed a crime and so are not to be detained but who are finding their way to undesirable locations and putting themselves at considerable risk. A number of attempts have been made by my colleagues interstate to deal with that issue. I know that in Western Australia they have put a considerable amount of funding into a facility in which they hoped to be able to keep some of these children under a form of care. They would have been detained but they are not able to do that under one of the conventions.

It really is a matter of trying to sort through this one. The issue of paedophilia, of course, has achieved prominence in recent months through the revelations of the New South Wales Royal Commission into Police Corruption. At the leaders' meeting on 12 April this year the Premiers considered an issue paper on national strategies to deal with paedophilic activities and committed themselves to the development of coordinated national strategies to prevent paedophilia and to bring persons engaged in such abuse to justice. I think we need to recognise that paedophilia is essentially a criminal activity and it must be dealt with in that manner. I, therefore, have limited responsibilities in this arena; but that does not take away the concern that we all have in this particular area. I am certainly committed to cooperation and coordination between State welfare agencies and issues such as the exchange of information regarding paedophiles. I do have specific responsibility for the safety of children who are under my care and protection.

The New South Wales royal commission also revealed the exploitation of young people in care by paedophiles. We know that a small number of such young people are extremely vulnerable to prostitution or the activities of paedophiles in this State. These adolescents have extremely complex problems, and developing appropriate responses to meet their needs is a major challenge in itself. They tend to have a history characterised by abuse, particularly sexual abuse, and they manifest extremely at risk behaviour including living on the streets and substance abuse. An interagency group, which includes representatives of my department, the police, the National Crime Authority and the Health Commission, is working hard to develop a coordinated multi-level response to this issue. The New South Wales revelations concern children who were placed in residential facilities. It is acknowledged that children in residential care can be at greater risk of abuse than those, for example, in foster care.

We are fortunate in South Australia to have a system in which the vast majority of care is provided in foster homes. We also have measures in place to ensure that the quality of care in our pure residential facilities is extremely high and to guard against infiltration by paedophiles. All people involved in providing care for young people, whether in secure residential or foster care, are subject to routine security checks including police checks. It is a major issue, one on which all Ministers have sought advice from each other, and we will need to work together to sort through this extremely difficult area.

Mrs KOTZ: I would like to make an observation. During my past six years' experience in this Parliament I have not been aware of any Estimates Committee or any committee of Parliament that has sat in this Parliament being made up entirely of women members of Parliament, as is this Committee at present. I thought that was well worth pointing out.

I would like to address the issue of low income support programs. There has been a certain amount of comment about the time taken to announce the successful agencies with respect to those programs. Does the Minister believe those comments are justified?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I think it important that I explain the criteria used to distribute funds under the low income support program and then perhaps deal with the criticism. The relevant points that I want to make are that, first, the funding policy was developed following long and intensive consultation with more than 180 agencies. So, there has been a significant consultation process. A comprehensive services planning and tender selection process followed, based on advice from key people from both within and outside the Department for Family and Community Services. Selection of the tenders was based on their meeting the principles and objectives outlined in the policy. Those objectives and principles included: the avoidance of service duplication, priority of focus being given to specifically nominated risk groups, issues of access and equity, maximising the self-reliance of service consumers, the facilitation of viable local community networks, and the provision of an appropriate range of services.

The new funding model ensured that funds were distributed more effectively and equitably across the whole State. That necessarily entailed some funding reallocation. It was essential that the full implications of any funding changes were examined before those changes were announced or were appropriate and alternative funding sources identified. I think that is also important. I do not believe that the criticism levelled at this program and the way it has developed was justified in any way, but the Chief Executive Officer might wish to comment.

Mr Deyell: An important part of the process was the opportunity to consult with agencies involved in providing services for people of a non-English-speaking background. The total funding increased by \$40 000, so it was important to consult with service providers to develop ways to better provide services through that program. That discussion contributed to the time that was involved. As the Minister said, it produced a realigned range of services, which better targeted the needs that were established in the review of the policy.

Mrs KOTZ: Recently, in the northern suburbs Messenger an article claimed that there had been a systematic cutting of services. I doubt that the fact that it was a northern suburbs Messenger would surprise the Minister. A number of articles are usually induced by the member for Elizabeth when it

comes to negative sources of information about the cutting of services.

Members interjecting:

Mrs KOTZ: Well, I can assure you that we will not shoot the messenger at this stage—not literally, anyway!

Ms Stevens interjecting:

Mrs KOTZ: I do not resile from the fact that the member for Elizabeth is usually the main source of these negative comments. Has the Minister any response to this claim that these cuts in the northern suburbs were made via the Government?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: In terms of community services, I believe the facts should speak for themselves.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Well, let me explain some of those facts, and we will see what the reaction is. The Government is as committed to the people in the north as in any other area, and it has made that blatantly clear.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Well, I will tell you. In fact, this can be seen in a substantial investment in money and energy in that region, whether it be the provision of services, exploring job opportunities, housing initiatives, or the upgrading of the hospital. That effort, energy and investment of money is certainly there, and in substantial amounts. The department is committed to the region, as can be seen by the continual provision and innovation of new services. In HACC alone, there is approximately \$4.5 million: \$403 000 in family development funds and \$81 000 in low income support (that is \$21 000 more than the previous allocation to the former anti-poverty program), and a new allocation of \$120 000 for gamblers' rehabilitation programs has also come into the northern suburbs.

It is intended that the violence intervention program (the VIP model) to combat domestic violence will be trialled in the northern suburbs, thus bringing resources to the region, and Care 21, the coordinated care trial sponsored by the department within the Office for the Ageing, is also focused in the northern suburbs. That trial will bring infrastructure funding into the north.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I know that we have excellent staff in the north. Care 21, the coordinated care trial sponsored by the department within the Office for the Ageing, is focused in the northern suburbs, and this trial will bring infrastructure funding into the northern region and provide opportunities to improve the outcomes for the frail aged and their carers as part of a national reform agenda in health and community services. Information presented to the media selectively clearly does not do justice to the commitment that this Government has shown to addressing the needs of families and communities in the northern suburbs for a whole range of community services.

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

Ms STEVENS: As to the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund, question 103 on the Notice Paper asked the Minister for a reconciliation of the fund detailing all receipts and payments to be provided by the commencement of the Estimates Committees on 18 June. This followed two questions in the House about the same matter, one on 10 April, when the Minister did not know the answer to these questions, and then again on the following day when he still did not know and made a joke of it. I hope that he will have the answer to the

question today, because I understand that the information has been forwarded to the Minister. Can he explain why the information has not been provided?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I take exception to the suggestion that I made fun about the question. I simply said that the identical question had been asked the day before. It is important that we get the facts right about the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund and look at what the plans are for the fund's future. First, no unexpended funds from the fund have or will be diverted into Consolidated Revenue. That issue has been raised on a number of occasions by the Opposition. The fund operates on a rolling \$1.5 million per annum basis and is not tied to the financial year for the purpose of expenditure. Funds have been allocated as service systems, in keeping with the fund's policy, and have been developed and purchased in the community sector. Unspent funds simply mean that the program will be able to be funded for a longer period ultimately and I see no difficulties so far as that is concerned. The funds continue to be available to the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund Committee to meet the needs of the target group and the committee continuously reviews priority needs for new services.

I advise the Committee that I recently arranged a review of the fund's implementation to be carried out by a joint team involving key service providers. The review reported that spending in haste was both unwarranted and detrimental in a new service system which is not yet able to provide outcome evaluations that would justify significant changes or hasty expenditure. Reconciliation of the fund is available and I will go into that later. The post implementation review recommended that agencies currently funded have their funding approved for a two year period. This has now occurred and will reduce the uncertainty amongst those agencies and allow them to turn their attention to the crucial business of developing and delivering quality services. Further, I take great exception to the allegations of 'tardiness' and 'dithering', which are the words that the honourable member used in respect to the fund and levelled at the department in her opening statement.

The post implementation review established clearly that the planning, calling of applications and approvals of services in three months is efficient by any measure. In fact, South Australia is recognised nationally as a State which developed a service system to address problem gambling quicker than any other. I think it was Professor Dickenson who very early recognised and gave support to the way that South Australia was handling this issue, and since then he has been supportive of the approach adopted by South Australia. So much so, that providers have since expressed concern about the haste of the process. We need to realise that this was a brand new ball game. The Government and the department certainly had not had an opportunity to become involved in such a program previously and had not had the opportunity to be able to evaluate the program. Of course, that is what the review was intended to do.

The fact is that we have just not the information at this stage to be able to evaluate some of those services. It also needs to be recognised that the services did not exist and had to be developed. We had to start from scratch and it does take time to get a new service system under way and I would have thought the member for Elizabeth would have realised that. We now have the system up and running in South Australia with funding committed for two years. I am pleased that we now have that system running for two years because it

provides more certainty in the funding for those organisations that are seeking funding to assist problem gamblers.

I now refer to the key recommendations of the post implementation review of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund. First, whilst acknowledging that the haste of the process did have some detrimental effects on the establishment phase, the committee believes there is no benefit to be achieved from making substantial changes to the allocation model for 1995, 1996 and 1997, and the service mix should remain consistent with current arrangements. It also recommended that the formal evaluation of the allocation and operational model in terms of service outputs and outcomes should be undertaken as planned in the latter half of 1997.

It also recommended in the meantime that the emphasis should be placed on optimising both the ability of the new service system to respond and the opportunities for future decisions to be informed and well considered. I do not think there would be anyone who could reject those recommendations. I have released the post implementation report for discussion with the major shareholders and I understand that it is believed generally that the review has addressed the major concerns satisfactorily. On the basis of the findings of the review, as I said earlier I have approved a two year allocation of funds to current providers and I am considering recommendations regarding the membership of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund Committee.

I believe the post implementation review has made a positive contribution to stabilising and focusing this new service area. I am certainly grateful to the departmental officers and non-government sector representatives who worked so efficiently to consider and report their findings. I am totally satisfied with the report that has come to me. I am happy to table the reconciliation of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund and it would be easier to do that because, although I could read it into *Hansard*, it is complicated. As it is of a purely statistical nature, I seek leave to have the document inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Reconciliation of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund
1994-95

Contribution to the fund	\$	1 500 000
Allocations against these funds:		
—Expended	\$	378 750
—Allocated for specialist and other services still being established		636 200
Total Committed		1 014 950
1995-96		
Contribution to the fund		1 500 000
Allocation against these funds		
—Expended		613 960
—Allocated for specialist and other services still being established		471 000
—Allocated to one-off funding to address particular implementation difficulties		300 000
Total Committed		1 384 960
1996-97		
Committed contribution to the fund		1 500 000
Allocations against these funds		
—Anticipated expenditure for existing services		1 072 000
—Allocated for specialist and other services to be established in 1996-97		320 000
Total Committed		1 392 000

Ms STEVENS: I heard the Minister's explanation and noted that he was surprised that I was not able to understand the complexities of starting up these programs, but in relation to the review of this program it was a statement in the review

document itself that alerted us and raised our concerns in relation to this process. I will quote it as the Minister needs to understand where the initial concern came from: the Minister's review committee. In relation to funding review and evaluation of the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund, one paragraph talks about the fund being established and states:

It is our understanding that the consolidated account has no provisions for carrying funds over.

It was that statement and the concerns of the people in the sector about the fact that those funds were not being spent and concern that those funds would be lost and kept within Treasury that started all our questions about this. When we did not get the answers, it compounded the concerns. An amount of \$110 000 was paid out of the rehabilitation fund to the Department of Family and Community Services this year for coordination, policy and development. How was that calculated?

Mr Deyell: I refer to the reference to the uncertainty about the ability of the consolidated account to hold unexpended funds. The paper being referred to may be the issues paper, which the review group initiated to discuss with the sector concerns that should be addressed in the review. The subsequent report the Minister received clarified that matter because in the course of the review information and advice was sought from Treasury that clarified that there was no prospect of any unexpended moneys being diverted into the consolidated account and not being available for the fund. The review report was able to clarify that the full funds available and committed to the Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund would be spent for that purpose.

The Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund Committee recommended on two separate occasions to the Minister funding levels for the department to assist it implement the policy. One amount was for \$50 000, which assisted in the development of the services plan. The second amount was for \$60 000, which supports the coordinator who now supports the network. They are two separate amounts and directly address supporting the network that has been set up to implement the gamblers' rehabilitation policy.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to the SAAP grants, financial paper 2, page 199 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments. Why were receipts from the Commonwealth under the SAAP program for 1995-96 down by \$4.9 million from \$12.016 million to \$7.127 million? Was that because State contributions failed to meet targets to access Commonwealth funding?

Mr Deyell: The change in the figures in the allocation for the supportive assistance accommodation program include a number of carry forwards and a number of repayments and I will go through them in some detail. Initially there was a return of Commonwealth funds of \$3.8 million that were not matched by the State. There was a budgeted carry over of \$1.9 million 1994-95 Commonwealth funds that did not eventuate. Some additional funding was approved to support programs that were sponsored by SACOSS and additional Commonwealth funds of \$783 000 were provided for the subsequent year. That is the rationalisation of those figures and accounts for the net difference.

Mrs HALL: I refer to pages 338 and 339 of the Program Estimates. I seek information on support from the non-government sector. There has been constant criticism, much of it not based on fact, about funding that emanates from the Department of Family and Community Services. Will the Minister inform the Committee about the amount of support

the department provides to the non-government sector and how this has changed from previous years?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I appreciate the member for Coles asking that question because it provides the opportunity for me to respond to the member for Elizabeth, who made some allegations in her opening statement about funding for the non-government sector. It is important that the record be set straight as far as this issue is concerned. Support for contracted providers in the non-government sector through HAAC, SAAP and the family and community development program continues to grow as a proportion of the overall allocation to the Family and Community Services portfolio. While the portfolio overall has been required to contribute to the State's budgetary target, the sector has been and continues to be quarantined.

The allocation in the last budget for the three programs was \$86.2 million and the estimate for the current budget is \$93.5 million. I acknowledge that there are unknown implications for those programs which are currently specific purpose payments and we will review the situation when the outcome of the Federal budget is known. Nevertheless, this Government continues to strongly demonstrate its support for and commitment to the delivery of services by the community sector. It should also be remembered that last year's allocation for SAAP and the family and community development program included significant additional funds to meet the requirements of the SACS and cash awards and these flowed on in the estimates for 1996-97. It is important that the community recognises that.

In addition to the program allocations the charitable and social welfare fund will provide a new avenue for community agencies to assess resources for services and infrastructure in the community and the fund restores a vital capacity for Government to respond to those initiatives that support and strengthen families and communities. Financial support for preventative, self help and community development responses have become increasingly difficult as program resources have had to be targeted to those most in need. In this respect the establishment of the fund is extremely good news for the families and communities of South Australia. It is important that that message is received by the community.

Mrs HALL: Correctly.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Yes, correctly. When possible I have taken the opportunity to address large numbers of people from the non-government sector who have been concerned about rumours and statements that have been made by and attributed to the Opposition. That has caused considerable concern in the community and, when I have been able to put the facts on the table, most of those organisations have recognised the true situation.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: They do believe us.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: We can argue about that for a while. I would like to work through the situation as to who has the most credibility at the present time, but that would be pretty pointless in this forum. So much misinformation has been peddled by the Opposition, and particularly by the member for Elizabeth, in recent times that there is community concern about what they can and should believe as to the correct situation. We spend an enormous amount of time correcting misinformation peddled by the member for Elizabeth and the Opposition.

That time could much better be spent in positive pursuits within the department, because I assure the member for

Elizabeth that many areas are far more important to the department than continually sorting out issues in the community that arise as a result of misrepresentation and misinformation being peddled by the Opposition. It is important that we know the exact situation and the effect that that misrepresentation and misinformation is having in the non-government sector.

Mrs HALL: I refer to page 345 of the Program Estimates and the program title 'Services for Families and Children at Risk'. The first sentence under 'Issues and Trends' states:

The number of child protection notifications and incidents of confirmed abuse continue to increase. The resulting challenge is to target investigatory responses to situations where an approach is needed, whilst providing alternative responses and positive assistance to families with other child welfare needs.

Will the Minister provide to the Committee some information about the program, Future Echoes, and its association to young people in care? I know that the department considers this group to be a key voice for young people in care. Will the Minister provide the Committee with some information about this group because it is clearly an impressive program.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I would be delighted to do that, and I say that because I have considerable respect for the enthusiasm shown and the commitment made by a relatively small group of young people who have, in recent times, come out of care—and some are currently in care—who are contributing a significant amount of time and effort in looking at ways in which other young people in care can be assisted. I have had the opportunity and the pleasure of spending significant time with some of these young people, and they are people for whom I have enormous respect.

Future Echoes is the South Australian branch of the Australian Association of Young People in Care. The young people participating in Future Echoes are extremely active in advocating for children in care and developing awareness of their issues and experiences. They have held conferences, and last year my wife and I were fortunate to attend the State conference with a number of officers from the Department for Family and Community Services, and I take this opportunity to commend the officers in the department who recognise the significant part that these young people play and the support they give to young people in care.

Last year my wife and I were able to attend the State conference held at Belair. It was a very moving experience; and it was a fantastic opportunity to learn first-hand from young people who had been there and done that about some of the issues relating to young people in care. I believe those young people have an enormous amount to contribute to ensure that we are aware of the concerns and that we work towards improving the situation.

I am certainly strongly committed to the work of Future Echoes and to ensuring that it receives ongoing support. Last year it received a grant of \$32 000 to assist in its development. Additional support has also been provided, including accommodation and direct personal support by officers of my department, to which I referred earlier. Funded agencies in the community sector are also active in their support, particularly Emergency Foster Care and Anglican Community Services, which have been providing strong support.

I met with Future Echoes at its most recent activity in South Australia, which was the launch of a national book. Launched by the national coordinator, the book very graphically and sensitively relays to the community some of the

issues and experiences of young people who have agreed to relate their experiences to enable the book to be printed.

I found it to be a very worthwhile activity. The Government and the Opposition have shown support for this group, and it is terribly important that we get behind it and work with it; and if we are able to show this group real support we will be able to gain from its experiences. Recently the Chief Executive Officer and I invited to dinner at Parliament House a number of people from Future Echoes to talk through how we can more effectively be guided by them to learn how we can improve the situation for young people in care. It is certainly my intention to redefine policy and to gain from the experiences of those young people.

I know that the Chief Executive Officer and officers of the department are keen to do that. I will be meeting with the national coordinator of the association very soon, and funding for Future Echoes will no doubt be a major item on our agenda. The Australian association receives financial support from a number of quarters, including the corporate sector. I am very keen to do what I can to encourage the corporate sector to show real support for these young people, because that sector could become much more involved than it has been in the past.

Future Echoes is considered by the department to be a key voice for young people in care and will therefore be considered for funding under the department's industry support and development plan for peak bodies. Affirming its status as a peak body places Future Echoes in a strong position to advocate on behalf of young people in care. Within the Department for Family and Community Services, each division regularly consults with representatives of Future Echoes regarding changes in policy planning and service delivery arrangements that impact upon young people who are currently in care.

South Australia is also developing a charter of commitment for young people in care, which is being coordinated by the Children's Interest Bureau and developed in collaboration with young people and service providers across Government and non-government sectors. This group of people is fantastic, and needs all the support it can get.

Mrs HALL: I understand that South Australia is the first State in Australia in which the service is being developed. What, if any, is the level of financial commitment from the Department for Family and Community Services to SOS Kinderdorf? What licensing criteria will be provided and applied? What consultation process, if any, has been involved to date and is provided for on a continuing basis?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I would like to comment on the attitude of the Opposition in relation to SOS, as it has been quite disgraceful in this situation. The way in which the Opposition has maligned children needing care is totally distasteful.

Ms STEVENS: That's absolutely false.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is not false, and you know it. If you believe that is false, I suggest that you get hold of many of the letters that have been written to editors in local papers and to my office on this matter. If you did that, you would be clear on what the community thinks about the attitude adopted by the Opposition to this matter. The Opposition's attitude does not take into account issues of the children's long-term wellbeing. The way that the Opposition has launched into a tirade about these innocent children and tried to incite prejudice in the community equates to nothing more than new age bigotry. It is absolutely disgraceful.

SOS Kinderdorf is an international charity organisation, with sponsors throughout the world. It builds, staffs and operates children's villages across the world as an alternative care option. The organisation is politically and denominationally independent, and is also a member of UNESCO.

South Australia is the first State in Australia in which the service is being developed. That is something that we should welcome rather than ridicule, as has been the case with the Opposition. The concept was first proposed in South Australia in 1993, and support in the form of information and advice has been given to the project, and it is a project that I support very strongly. No Government funding has been committed to SOS Kinderdorf. The service will be subject to the licensing criteria under the Family and Community Services Act, and the carers must be approved by the department.

The training of carers is intensive and includes components of departmental and non-government agency training packages, as well as components of TAFE child-care training. Protocols and referral processes, practice standards and guidelines are being developed between SOS Kinderdorf and the department. It is expected that SOS Kinderdorf will provide a valuable service to children who require long-term care and who cannot be cared for in traditional foster care programs, and will particularly service multiple sibling groups who can seldom be placed together in the system.

SOS is responsible for consulting with the community about its initiative. As members would be aware, several public meetings have been held in the area over the past few months. SOS Kinderdorf is not a return to the congregate care model of residential care that was used some 15 to 20 years ago. I know that is something which the Opposition has attempted to peddle in the community. It is not the case. As Minister, I have no intention—and the department has no intention, I can assure Committee members—to return to institutionalised care that was the flavour of the month perhaps 20 or more years ago.

SOS Kinderdorf will provide a family oriented form of care in separate homes, adjacent to one another. The care is provided by a permanent staff member. Of course, we realise that this is quite different from the larger congregate care model which operated in the past and which included the rostering of staff on duty. SOS provides security and continuity through those people who are able to provide support to these young people throughout their younger years.

It is anticipated that the SOS Kinderdorf service will be operational by mid August 1996. Children will be accepted into the service in accordance with appropriate matching with the individual carers and over time with the other children who form a family group within individual homes. The investigations I have carried out personally indicate clearly that the services provided to young children in other countries by SOS Kinderdorf have been outstanding. The recognition of this organisation in other countries around the world is also outstanding.

While I realise that there may some concerns about those who have responsibility as a house parent and the culture that the organisation has brought with it in that regard—and that is something about which I can understand some concern being expressed—the overall concept of the support that this organisation is able to provide to young people certainly demands the support of the community in this State.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to Program Estimates (page 345). Minister, I take exception to your remarks in relation to the role of the Opposition in this matter. The concerns of

Opposition members are twofold. The first issue was the fact that there seems to have been a change in policy of the Department for Family and Community Services without any discussion within the department in relation to the policy with regard to fostering.

The second issue was the lack of consultation with the neighbours at Seaford Rise. As the Minister would know, it was that issue which caused the big disturbance in Seaford Rise. That is why we raised those matters, many of which were raised with us not only by residents in relation to consultation—

Mrs KOTZ: I rise on a point of order, Mr Chairman. We do not appear to be hearing a question from the honourable member. This is not a grievance debate. Is there a question?

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mrs KOTZ: I am waiting for a question to be asked. Is this not what the Estimates are about? My point of order involves repetition on a previous answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Members can make statements and comments in rebuttal. The Minister is quite capable of looking after himself. This is an information gathering process but, at the same time, in the budget Estimates members can make statements, give an explanation and ask a question.

Ms STEVENS: There were two concerns: the issue of the change in FACS policy came to us via many people in the non-government sector. There were concerns about the apparent change of direction without consultation and discussion. The concern about the lack of consultation came from the residents. We raise those issues and ask questions in Parliament. I should like to continue with more questions on the matter.

On 14 June we received copies of papers under the Freedom of Information Act relating to SOS Kinderdorf. FACS said that after considering the intent of the FOI Act our application had been granted in full; that is, no documents withheld. Did FACS make any submission to the Minister on the proposal to establish a children's village for foster children; did the Minister approve a change in policy prior to the Acting Chief Officer of FACS writing to Deyerling on 7 April 1994 giving a commitment to support the establishment of a children's village; and, if so, why are the copies of the submission to the Minister and the Minister's approval not included in the documents released under FOI?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I think we need to clear this up once and for all. I understand that there is no change in policy as far as the department is concerned. SOS Kinderdorf fits clearly in the alternative care policy, which is a strong platform of the department. SOS Kinderdorf has been strongly supported by non-Government agencies. On the lack of consultation between that agency and the community, that is no business of this Government and it is certainly no business of mine. As a matter of fact, I understand that the first correspondence on SOS Kinderdorf became evident under the previous Government.

Ms STEVENS: Little nibbles.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I don't care whether it is little nibbles or big bites. I am led to believe that all documents were released to the Opposition.

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I think it is important. In view of the question which has been asked I think this matter needs to be pursued, and I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond in more detail.

Mr Deyell: There has been no formal approval in the sense that has been asked for because none has been required at this stage. The agency has no children in place; it is still arranging its services. The licensing process is yet to be completed, so there is no need for a formal decision up to this stage.

Ms STEVENS: When will that start to happen?

Mr Deyell: The agency is proceeding on the assumption that it will be successful through the licensing process. That is entirely its own decision. It has made its own capital investment of its own initiative, it is going through the licensing arrangements at this stage, and no formal decision has been made.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It has been made quite clear to the agency that no commitment has been given. When the appropriate time for licensing comes to be considered, that will occur.

Ms STEVENS: The Minister said that no commitment has been given, yet five or 10 minutes ago you said that they would start taking children in a few months.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: That is right, because they have indicated that is what they want to do and that they will be in a position to take children.

Ms STEVENS: So you are giving approval now?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am not giving approval. We have not approved one child at this stage. I should like the Chief Executive Officer to complete his answer.

Mr Deyell: The reference to the likely timetable when the organisation will be up and running was a reference to the fact that the department is in regular contact with the agency discussing all the licensing arrangements. Subject to its meeting the licensing requirements, that is the timeframe for which it is aiming.

Ms STEVENS: Will children be referred by FACS to the SOS Children's Village at Seaford Rise in preference to foster parents and has the Government given SOS Children's Village any undertakings to refer children to SOS to fill and maintain the 40 places at the village?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond.

Mr Deyell: No undertaking has been given to guarantee the placement of children. The discussions to date have been about the nature of placements and the sorts of placements which are needed in South Australia for a small group of children. It is not possible for placements at SOS Kinderdorf to replace foster care. In South Australia there are about 1 000 children in foster care. This facility is seeking to place only 40, which is a small but critical group for which we need to find placements. This is not an alternative to the standard foster care arrangements which will continue to be of critical importance to placing children in South Australia.

Ms STEVENS: I should like to return to the issue of the Minister's approval or non-approval of this project. You mentioned that no approval had been given by you. I should like to quote from a letter from Mr Leigh Carpenter, Acting Chief Executive Officer, dated 7 April 1994 to Burckhard Deyerling, SOS Children's Village, 1 Queens Avenue, McMahons Point, NSW. It begins:

Dear Burckhard,

Following the very interesting and constructive meeting with you and your wife earlier today, it gives me great pleasure to confirm the commitment which I made to support your proposal for establishing a children's village in South Australia.

Did FACS make the decision for you, or do you still stand by your original comment that no approval has been given?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have clearly said that I support the concept of what SOS Kinderdorf is all about.

Ms STEVENS: That is not what I am asking.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: It is what you are asking. I suggest that there is a distinct difference between support for a project and approval being given for that project. I have said dozens of times that I support what SOS Kinderdorf is all about for the reason that on occasions siblings in the one family are unable to be kept together under foster care. I find it incredible that this organisation should be working very successfully in supporting children and providing security and continuity in more than 100 countries around the world, yet we are quibbling whether we support or approve this development in this State. As the Chief Executive Officer said, we are talking about 40 children at most. I do not believe that the community would have expressed any concern about this matter if it had not been stirred up by the Opposition in the first place.

Mrs KOTZ: My question relates to Family and Community Services funding child sexual abuse services. Mr Chairman, I know that you, like all of us, have an interest in this area. What is the Minister doing about supporting children who have been sexually abused and their non-offending carers? I am also aware that funds were redistributed in this area. Will the Minister give the end results of that redistribution to the Committee?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am pleased to be able to respond to this question. There are a number of points that I would like to make. Funding for child sexual abuse support services through the Family Development Services Program were maintained in the implementation of the new family development services policy in May of last year. The needs based redistribution of funds which accompanied the new policy resulted in services being established for the first time in Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Whyalla and the Murraylands. The program now purchases services from the Adelaide Central Mission and the Victims of Crimes Service Incorporated for the Modbury, Enfield, Woodville, Adelaide and Marion district centre areas; from Mission SA for Gawler; from Centre Care services for Elizabeth and Salisbury and the Murraylands; from Victims of Crime Services Incorporated from Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta; from Surviving Sexual Abuse by Finding Empowerment in Noarlunga and Happy Valley; and from the South-East Anglican Community Services for the South-East region.

Those requiring support services also utilise the mainstream counselling parent education and mobile creche and homemaker services funded through the Family Development Services Program as well as services provided by other agencies and, in particular, by the Health Commission. All agencies that are funded through the program work closely with child protection services at both the Women's and Children's Hospital and the Flinders Medical Centre.

Mrs KOTZ: I note that in that answer the needs based redistribution was mainly in areas in which the Labor Party has been involved for some years. It is pleasing to see that there is equitable distribution of funds on a needs basis across the board. At page 338 of the Program Estimates reference is made to family development services and the funding of neighbourhood development. Minister, there is great appreciation for the support that you have shown for neighbourhood houses. Will the funding for neighbourhood development, neighbourhood houses and community centres still continue?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The current level of funding for neighbourhood development is \$1 113 548. In total, some 40 agencies have been funded for the financial year 1995-96. Twelve agencies whose services agreements were due to expire on 30 June 1996 have recently been extended for a further 12 months, and it is planned to undertake an evaluation of this program within the next 12 to 18 months. It is important that that evaluation take place. There is no current plan to reduce neighbourhood development funding.

While I am referring to funding, I would like to clarify some information provided previously about the SAAP program. The funds referred to the Commonwealth were accumulated over the past five years, that is, from 1991-92. That needs to be clarified as far as the record is concerned. The funds to which I referred in an earlier response were returned to the Commonwealth and were accumulated over the past five years from 1991-92.

Mrs KOTZ: On page 338 of the Program Estimates reference is made to another extremely important program, that is, Keeping Families Together. Now that the evaluation of the Keep Families Together program has been released, will the Minister guarantee funding at existing levels for what have proven to be excellent services?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: In response to the member for Newland's question, I pick up the point that she makes in regard to the standard of these services. They really have been excellent. I recall attending the launch of the Keeping Families Together program when in Opposition. I was very impressed with what I saw and the commitment that was also made by the—

Ms STEVENS: By the Labor Party.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Yes, I have no problems with that whatsoever. The program was introduced by the previous Government, and it is an excellent program. If I have my way, we will improve on it even more. The launch of the program took place at Salisbury. It is certainly an excellent service that is provided. The evaluation of the Keeping Families Together program indicated that the program has been successful in diverting children from alternative care placements and in improving family functioning. The evaluation also indicated, however, that the program was far more effective with some families than others. I guess that that can be understood. In particular, it would seem that this model of working with families is not so effective for families with complex chronic problems and, regrettably, it was not so effective in working with Aboriginal families. It is therefore incumbent on us to review not just the funding of the program but also its focus, in the light of the evaluation report.

It is important to target this kind of response towards situations where effectiveness has been very clearly demonstrated. It is also important that other responses be developed for people whose needs are not met by the program. All members of the Committee would share the same concern in knowing how best we can work constructively and effectively with Aboriginal families in particular. That is a huge challenge. It is something which we all need to give a lot more thought to in terms of how we can work with those people.

All agencies operating intensive family preservation programs were advised recently that they will retain their funding at the current level until the end of 1996. We believe that this provides for services with the same funding status as other programs within the alternative care system. Funding of alternative care services beyond 31 December 1996 will

be contingent upon the outcomes of the planning currently being undertaken for this system. The funding for Keeping Families Together and other preventative initiatives will be considered within that context. In addition, over the coming year we will explore and trial other modes of intensive intervention services, in particular for Aboriginal families. As I said earlier, I see that as being a huge challenge for all of us. I say that because of the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care. It is absolutely essential that we do not continue delivering services which we know are not reaching those people. We have to give more thought to how we can do that better. We need to give thought to how we can develop responses that offer real assistance to those families, in particular Aboriginal families, to care for their children. I believe that the Keeping Families Together program is an excellent service, and certainly one that I personally support.

Ms STEVENS: I am sure we are all very concerned with the following statement relating to child abuse, which appears on page 345 of the Program Estimates:

The number of child protection notifications and incidents of confirmed abuse continue to increase.

It refers to methods of dealing with that problem and putting in place services to amend that situation. I would like to know the number of base grade social workers in district centres, because these are the people who are the first line troops when it comes to dealing with abuse. What is the number of social workers—and I do not mean by that supervisors, youth workers or senior practitioners—in each district centre as at 30 June in the years 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will take that question on notice. I would like to make a couple of comments about child abuse. Child abuse is an issue that faces legislators around the world. Because Adelaide will host the Australasian conference on child abuse and other issues next year, I would very much like to attend the conference in Dublin later this year, which will bring together experts and authorities on this subject from all over the world. This issue does not face South Australia alone, it is a world-wide problem. It requires a partnership across all States and the Commonwealth and, to a large extent, I think that is now being achieved.

I would like to say what a welcome change it is to have a Federal Minister prepared to take the lead in respect of this issue. The Federal Minister is prepared to support the States in tackling and raising the issue head-on—a far cry from the situation that we have had in the past. This refreshing new partnership with the States is enabling an important and positive outlook. South Australia is responding to the challenge of protecting our children on many fronts. Apart from restructuring the way in which the department is looking at the issue, we are also responding with parenting campaigns. We are in partnership with the Attorney-General's Department trialling new ways to deal with child abuse through a pilot program. We will be involved in a new national television and education campaign, and we are also working with colleagues and other agencies to confront the issue.

This is a social and community issue, far above any base politics or any divisions that may occur within the community. I think we would all agree that where the welfare of children is involved it is up to us to put up a united front rather than become bogged down by petty politics. Children are too important for that, and I think it important that we

should all recognise that. I am happy to provide that information for the honourable member.

Ms STEVENS: The issues and trends state further:

It is also clear that effective protective intervention must occur within a continuum of services. The development of a framework which allows greater coherence between the department's protective responsibilities and responsibilities of family and community support, and promotes the functional linking of and flexibility between allied services, is thus an important priority. The focus on prevention has been strengthened during the year through the work of a cross-sector working party.

So, there is a working party and a framework, but what about the continuum of services to start this effective protection intervention? What is the continuum of services that has been established, and what is the extent of staff attached to those services?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I refer to the review that has taken place. In July last year, I established a working group comprised of representatives from Government and community sector agencies in the human services area to develop a child abuse prevention strategy. I was pleased that Paul Madden who heads Mission SA was able to chair that particular group. The strategy development process included obtaining information and advice concerning the range of services currently available, models of service delivery and strategies that have been proven effective (both nationally and overseas)—

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I will get around to that—and the specific needs of groups in the community and views from across the community on prevention. The working group has completed the task, and the strategy report has now been finalised. It is to be considered by Cabinet in the very near future, and a Government response will be determined. The report canvasses a wide range of possibilities, such as: community attitude and awareness, school based education and support, family support and early intervention, parent and professional education, locally based family services, services for child victims, and treatment for offenders. I am currently considering the recommendations of that review and options for their implementation, and I will make a decision about those in the near future. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to respond in more detail.

Mr Deyell: A significant amount of work has been going on in the department to address the need to have the continuum of services to which the Program Estimates refer. In particular, a task force has been in operation since the end of last year. It has undertaken a lot of extensive research into the different developing models of child protection, both nationally and internationally. It has particularly addressed the need to involve a range of agencies in a multi-disciplinary approach and look at the need for services that span the continuum. The ideas that we are developing are to change our very investigative child protection response to all notifications to appropriately target investigative responses, assessment services, and support services for families, bearing in mind that those different responses require different skills and the involvement of different agencies.

The interagency assessment panel for child sexual abuse cases which the Attorney-General announced will be a step in that direction. We will be looking to build on that trial alongside some reconfiguration of our own services more directly to target the right intervention for the right sorts of families, working with the non-government sector where the response required is one of support for the family rather than

investigation or assessment. That is the continuum we are talking about: developing a new way of responding to the notifications that we receive.

Ms STEVENS: Are you saying that you have this task force, that you have recommendations but you have not any continuum of services at the moment; is there nothing at the moment and we are waiting on a report?

Mr Deyell: There clearly is a range of services provided at the moment, within and outside the department and in other statutory authorities.

Ms STEVENS: You have not answered my question. What have we got now?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: If the honourable member is asking for that key detail, the best thing we can do is take it on notice and provide a list.

The CHAIRMAN: Members should direct their questions through the Chair to the Minister.

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: We have said a lot tonight about the Positive Parenting program, but that program really is about promoting safe, secure and functional families, which is why I would have thought the Opposition would support that program. I would have thought that that is what we all want to see.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to page 338 and the neighbourhood development section of the Program Estimates. My question relates to the Aboriginal and Multicultural Women's project at The Parks. I have been contacted by that organisation's management committee, which is concerned that it has not been refunded. I will outline my information so that the Minister can answer the question. First, I refer to the letter written by the Chief Executive Officer of your department to Ms Debbie Martin, Chair, Aboriginal and Multicultural Women's Project at The Parks. The letter states, in part:

On this occasion it has been decided that a tender for the service will not be awarded due to the emergence of higher priorities for funding under the Family and Community Development Program.

They have also sent a copy of the letter they sent to you in which they outline some of their questions and concerns about that decision and I will refer to a few parts of that letter to set the scene. As to the background, the submission states:

The Aboriginal and Multicultural Women's Project has been funded by the Department for Family and Community Services for 6½ years. At the advice of your department the Aboriginal and Multicultural Women's Project developed a joint submission with Our Place Community House for a neighbourhood development worker. This submission has strong support from the FACS District Centre.

The next point is as follows:

How our submission fits with departmental planning. The department's own needs-based funding allocation model based on demographic information identified in the Clive Foster report (Doc. 1991 which looked at areas of multiple disadvantage in Adelaide) and the social health atlas identifies Woodville Gardens and Woodville North as a high need area. We were submitting, as were others in Woodville Gardens and Woodville North for funding targeted specifically by the department for that area.

The next step is as follows:

The decision making process. We are advised that the department recommended our submission to be funded. The Aboriginal and Multicultural Women's Project has had six extensions to its funding. Each of these has been for a three month period. During this time we have had open and constructive dialogue with the department and received strong indications that the funding proposal met all requirements. In fact, feedback received indicated that it would have been successful; however there are problems with the level of funds available.

Finally, it states:

How our submission fits with Community 21.

That is your own department's strategic plan. It continues:

At a meeting on 21 May Mr Rod Squires said, 'There is a close alignment between this program and the range of issues identified in Community 21.'

They went on to quote those things. The letter goes on and outlines other issues that they want to talk to you about. Why has this program not been funded? The submission was for \$37 000 and I believe that the sum of \$37 000 is left unspent in your department. Will the Minister comment on that?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: We need to get the facts on the table. The Department for Family and Community Services has been responsible for redirecting funding to communities experiencing high socio demographic disadvantage—

Ms Stevens interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Just listen—under the Neighbourhood and Community Development Program. This has included increased funding over the past two years to Elizabeth, Port Adelaide, Thebarton, Munno Para, Kilburn, Blair Athol and Noarlunga. Whilst making funds available to those areas we have also been able to maintain funding to a range of other neighbourhood houses and centres across the State. In 1996-97 the Government will be providing funding to 39 communities, including significant agreement with local government in Salisbury, Tea Tree Gully, Noarlunga and Unley. Whilst recognising the high level of needs in The Parks community it is important to note that the Government already commits more than \$2 million a year to The Parks Community Centre.

I have also needed to consider a range of priorities in other program areas such as family support. That range of priorities has included the introduction and extension of valuable initiatives like Keeping Families Together, as we have just been talking about, and the Caring for Families Project operated by the Port Adelaide Mission. That program is one that I have taken particular note of and on two occasions have taken the opportunity to visit the program and the people running it. It is a highly successful program. The last time I went down there the opportunity was provided for me to meet with a number of clients who made it their business to talk to me about the success of the program and the assistance they were being provided with through the program. Do not let us have anyone say that this form of assistance is not being provided. I reiterate that \$2 million is already being provided to The Parks community.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to the program title 'Services for Families and Children at Risk' at page 345. Unlike the tunnel vision, negative reactive attitudes of the shadow spokesperson, I know that the Minister, as well as being reactive—and we all know why we have to be more reactive these days and should be—is actually proactive in trying to put some thought, vision and lateral thinking into positive opportunities. I refer to the positive opportunities for the prevention of child abuse. Minister, recently you instigated a child abuse working party chaired by Mr Paul Madden. The Minister has already mentioned the national approach to child abuse. Will he report to the Committee the current situation with respect to the consequences of the working party into prevention of child abuse that he instigated under Mr Madden?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I have referred to some of the detail of that State report. I am pleased to advise that we are working closely in relation to that State report and the national prevention strategy. I have been delighted with the

cooperation shown by Judy Moylan, the new Federal Minister. It was only a matter of weeks after the new Federal Government took office that Judy Moylan arranged a telelink with all Ministers or, if Ministers were not available, their representatives around Australia to talk about this issue. It is so refreshing because it was like drawing teeth in getting anything out of previous Ministers in regard to this issue in determining where they were going.

The national strategy for the prevention of child abuse and neglect was first announced in 1993 by the National Child Protection Council. There has been some question about when that strategy will be implemented. Recently at the Health and Community Services Ministers Conference, Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments offered their commitment to a new partnership together for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. A very positive contribution was made by all members and all Ministers on this subject. The national child protection strategy received full support from Ministers. It was agreed that the Federal contribution was most appropriate in areas of community education, data collection and research, three areas in which significant need has been recognised in the past.

My colleagues and I viewed a presentation of a national community education program, including a television program, which focuses on a positive parenting approach, promoting more effective parenting and support for families at risk. I felt that the presentation was excellent. It is positive while at the same time presenting a strong message to people throughout Australia.

The South Australian Government welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to this area. It works in closely with the work we have been doing in South Australia through the Madden review, and we see that we now have a coordinated national approach to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and recognise that it is of significant importance. I am particularly pleased that the Commonwealth approach will fit in hand in hand with the work that we are doing in South Australia.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to the Program Estimates, page 338, and to the community non-government sector caring for families, specifically with respect to the Port Adelaide project. I recall a Government election commitment to the caring for families project operated by the Port Adelaide Central Mission. Will the Minister give an update on how that project is going?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I referred earlier to the Port Adelaide Central Mission and the work it was doing through the caring for families project, to which we made a commitment in our policy. The Liberal Party and I were particularly keen to see a program that would provide encouragement to the community to care for other members of the community. It seemed crazy that in so many cases you have a situation where you might have a single mother battling with two or three children and in the same street you might have a person who has been widowed or for some reason has time on his or her hands and would welcome the opportunity to become more involved in a supportive role in assisting other people.

When we first thought about this project it was along similar lines of Neighbourhood Watch. While that is a policing program, we felt that a need existed for other people to keep an eye out on how they could positively help other people in their street or community. That was the basis for the caring for families project, which is now being operated by the Port Adelaide Central Mission.

The project is an example of our commitment to strengthening families through innovative community based approaches to both care and support. The Port mission was funded for the caring for families project on a two year pilot basis in order to test new and creative models of intervention, and that is why I have been interested in the progress of this program. The mission has received \$90 000 per annum for the project, which will be completed in September this year. The project has supported a number of initiatives, including a fostering families program; a self help support program for parents with adolescents; utilisation and support of informal caring networks in the community; and, community education and family relationship courses.

The project is currently being independently evaluated to ascertain its strengths and effectiveness. The evaluation is due for completion within the next month, and I will be making a decision with regard to the future funding of the caring for families project in the light of the outcomes of the evaluation. From what I have seen of the program so far, I have been particularly pleased with the progress that has been made. It is important that we have an independent evaluation carried out also.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I refer to pages 342 and 343 of the Program Estimates, specifically to planning services for Aboriginal people and services for young people who offend or are at risk of harm. Whilst some in the community say that we should lock up people and throw away the keys or worse, others say that we should be creating programs that are alternatives to detention for young offenders in particular to give them a chance to rehabilitate and get them on the right track to becoming good citizens. What is your department doing currently with respect to developing alternatives to detention for young offenders?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The department is steadily building up a range of options that can be used as alternatives to detention. I would like the Director of the Residential and Youth Services Division to refer to some of those options because there has been a considerable increase in these, particularly in the last quarter of this financial year, and she can provide specific details. We all recognise the importance of having these alternatives in place. What concerns me at present is the community attitude that the only thing we can do with young people is put them in detention and throw away the key, as the member for Mawson said.

I wish that more people had the same opportunities I have had in the past two and a half years to talk with and find out more about the past histories of many of these kids who finish up in those centres. In the vast majority of cases they come from families or situations where they have been given very little, if any, support, and we need to take those things into account before we determine that the only thing we can do with those young people is put them behind bars for a while. I now ask the Director to comment on some of the alternatives that are being considered.

Ms Hedges: A range of alternatives to detention programs has been developed and some are continuing to be developed. One program we are currently trialing is the Quorn Aboriginal Program, which is based on cultural awareness issues. A need for such programs was expressed in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. That program focuses on alternative programs for Aboriginal young people. Frahn's Farm has been established for some time and is funded by the department as well as by the Aboriginal Sobriety Group.

The Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth Team is conducting a program called Family Connections, which focuses on family support for Aboriginal young people and trying to keep them out of detention centres, or at least encouraging them not to reoffend, if they have not already reoffended.

The Duke of Edinburgh Awards program is available to all young people in South Australia. Some components of the program address the needs of young offenders in particular, and are again aimed at keeping people out of detention. Currently we have people located in the Gammon Ranges participating in the Duke's Wilderness program, which attempts to change the direction of their lives and give them other options and other ways of viewing the world.

The Duke's Plus program is also being developed. The Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme in South Australia is known, probably internationally, for being a leader in the field of working with young offenders. A coordinator has been appointed to manage the home detention program, which will probably be operational next month and which places young people in a home setting to enable their sentence to be conducted outside an institution.

Places for young people have been set aside through the Operation Flinders program. We are also doing some work with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, examining possible locations for alternative detention programs. That is a sample of some of the alternative programs that are available.

Ms STEVENS: As the Minister would know, on 1 July 1995, the Spark Resource Centre's funds will be cut by \$38 000—a cut of 30 per cent. The centre is saying that, despite an independent review applauding its efficiency and success, this cut will mean its imminent demise. It was reported in a Messenger article that the Minister was trying to find funds from other sections of the budget to ease Spark's imminent funding cut. What other sections of the budget is the Minister thinking of? Is the Minister committed to the continuation of this centre and its services?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: With regard to the demise of this organisation, the first thing that I would say is that this organisation will still receive \$83 000 per annum. It was previously \$113 000. If we are talking about demise, let us recognise that it is continuing to receive \$83 000 per annum. I am aware of the concerns Spark holds with regard to its reduced funding. Representatives from Spark have met with Robert Brokenshire, my parliamentary secretary, to discuss alternative funding sources such as the SA Parenting Campaign, the Charitable and Social Welfare Fund and the supported accommodation assistance program. The family development services policy, developed in 1994-95 to guide the allocation of resources under the family development program, meant that some funding redistribution had to occur. Obviously, I supported that program.

This policy established that resources in the program should be targeted to direct local service provision for the most vulnerable families, specifically where children are at risk of abuse and neglect, and all services under the program were reviewed in light of the criteria established in that policy. In addition, the allocation of service funding sought to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources across the State, with particular regard to the needs of Aboriginal people in rural and remote communities.

Following this reallocation, funding to a number of services was reduced. Spark was just one of those services. However, a number of agencies received an increase in their funding as well. I presume that the Opposition would support

the fact that some of those agencies received increased funding. Spark's funding was reduced by a third for the year commencing 1996-97. However, it was decided to review the agency to provide a more detailed account of its services and the need for a specific agency dedicated to the needs of single mothers and their children. The review completed in March this year has confirmed that \$83 000 per annum would purchase family development services from this agency for delivery in the central metropolitan area.

Spark makes up part of the new service network founded on needs based funding which replaces the former submission driven approach to services. I would have thought that the majority of people would support that change in base funding. Spark's service delivery in the central metropolitan area will complement the service to single mothers provided by other services in the metropolitan area, particularly by those agencies operating in the northern and southern regions. Those agencies include Catholic Family Services, Second Storey and the northern parent resource program.

Single parents are now in a position to access locally based services that provide intensive home based services, including homemaker services and personal and family counselling, locally based parent education and improved mobile creche services. I would have thought that even at the new funding level of \$83 000, the grant to Spark is one of the larger grants through the total program.

I have indicated to Spark that I will do what I can to assist with further funding if it is required. I have suggested that it may be appropriate for it to seek some assistance through the positive parenting program, and it has been made aware of that. We should not be going on as if this organisation will have to fold because of the reduction in funding when it has one of the larger grants under this program. It receives \$83 000 a year, so I hardly see that as resulting in the demise of that program.

Ms STEVENS: My next question relates to homeless 13 and 14-year-old adolescents. The editorial in the February/March 1996 issue of *Shelter SA* states:

Concern is growing in the community sector about the recent surge of adolescents aged 13 to 14 who are seeking accommodation. Many non-government agencies have noted a big increase in referrals of younger adolescents, particularly 13 and 14-year-olds.

Comments made to Shelter SA indicate that surprisingly many of these referrals came (or originated) from the Department for Family and Community Services—the agency which has legal responsibility under the Children's Protection Act 1993 for young homeless people of this age.

In pursuing the issue about why FACS was not accepting responsibility for these adolescents, agencies reported the following dubious reasons were sometimes used: the young person had a 'bad attitude' to being at home and could return home if they 'changed their attitude'; the young person has an accommodation issue, not a care and protection issue (despite what the Act says!) It is not a FACS responsibility.

Rod Squires, Director of Community Services, Department for Family and Community Services, was contacted and comment sought on this issue and in response he said, 'It is part of the changing needs occurring with young people having difficulties at home and precipitating them leaving home.'

FACS has several programs including emergency foster care, the department's own care arrangements and support workers who deal with issues at home. These programs are stretched to capacity and funding is inadequate to deal with the social and legislative responsibilities.

The Government body legislated to undertake responsibility is not coping and referring to the already over extended non-government sector, without increased resources, is not the answer.

Why is FACS not carrying out its statutory responsibility in relation to homeless adolescents aged 13 and 14?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am aware of the article in the recent edition of *Shelter SA*. It was brought to my attention by the member for Newland, who also raised a number of questions relating to the comments in that editorial. Under the Children's Protection Act, a homeless adolescent under 15 years is clearly considered as being at risk. Therefore, legislative responsibility flows to FACS. This responsibility is discharged through the provision of case work, accommodation, support and protection services directly by the department and by services funded in the non-government sector.

Service delivery to adolescents is extremely complex and workers across the sector operate under considerable difficulties and constraints. In many instances the young person's behaviour and needs prohibit their accommodation in the family situation, such as foster care. A significant proportion of adolescents do not wish to be placed directly within the FACS system and choose a transient lifestyle which might include youth shelters. This gets back to my comments in response to an earlier question. It is impossible to force young people to enter or remain in accommodation against their wishes and to demand that they return to their families.

Young people often have complex and multiple needs but cannot be forced to seek help or receive services. It is a matter of working with these people to encourage them and, through encouragement, to have them seek out those services or have them—and this is probably the best thing that can happen—return to their families. A significant proportion of adolescents in this situation need to be worked through these issues. Evidence of the increase in young adolescent clients in the shelter system is, at this stage, extremely anecdotal. For example, one shelter, St Johns, reported to my department on increasing numbers of young clients earlier this year. Discussions have since taken place between that agency and departmental staff, but no other formal approaches have been made to FACS by the sector.

Available statistics identify a very small number of young adolescents in the system, with a number of these referrals originating from FACS. At these times shelter services may be the only available option for that young person or the only option they are willing to accept at that time. The recent review of metropolitan youth services, completed in March this year, did not identify the issue of underage clients as an increasing problem. Concerns expressed in the review centred around the need to ensure case management and proper planning for these young people. I recognise that that is the case. There is widespread acknowledgment of the difficulties and issues in service delivery to adolescents. Addressing these issues requires a cooperative and coordinated approach across the sector which shares responsibility for the provision of services.

My department is currently formulating a youth policy which will facilitate the development of such an approach. The restructure of the alternative care system, due to be completed next year, is also expected to deliver increased placement options for adolescents and greater integration among available services. I remind the honourable member that the Prime Minister established a pilot program which was announced recently, and South Australia is involved in the development of that program as well.

Ms WHITE: I ask the Minister a question about youth homelessness which he may wish to take on notice in respect of the Federal Government's Morris report. Which of that

report's very many recommendations will the Minister implement for South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: Perhaps if I answer some of that now and, if necessary, provide more information for the honourable member. Youth homelessness, as I have already said, is one of the major issues confronting our community—there is no doubt about that. The report by Alan Morris on youth homelessness is recognised as an excellent document. It served to highlight the needs of youth and, in particular, it served to encourage new thinking about responses to some of the problems that have been with us for a very long time. At the Federal level, the Prime Minister has taken the lead on this issue with the establishment of the Youth Homeless Task Force. This task force is about to pilot programs designed to ensure that proper efforts are made to assist young people to return to their families. As I said earlier, I believe that to be the ultimate where it can be achieved. Where such a return cannot happen, they should be assisted to find other suitable long-term solutions. We will watch these developments with interest and will also have appropriate discussions with the Commonwealth on issues under consideration. In my portfolio we have a number of responses to the needs of homeless youth.

First, we provide crisis accommodation under the supported accommodation assistance program. A review of the metropolitan YSAAP services has just been completed. That review makes a number of recommendations which we believe will help services to better address the needs of homeless youth in particular. Some of those recommendations address assessment and referral practices, which will be refined. Appropriate responses and protocols for under 15-year-olds will be developed. A specific review of services for homeless sexually abused young people will be conducted. Work will be done to increase the options for young people moving out of SAAP services into permanent accommodation, and we anticipate that this work will be completed by December this year. SAAP services are our major point of contact with homeless young people. It is important that these services are of a high quality and consider a young person's needs other than simply their immediate need for accommodation. I know that this is happening and that the services we fund and support across the State are carried out by people who are highly committed in their work. They are working cooperatively together with my department and other agencies to improve outcomes for these vulnerable young people.

In addition, the Department for Family and Community Services, through its district centres, provides casework services to a number of homeless young people and those considered at risk of homelessness. It is important that we seek to prevent youth homelessness wherever we can. We therefore provide and fund services aimed at addressing conflicts when they arise in families in order to prevent family breakdown and the movement of the young person out of that family and onto the street. The evaluation of the Keeping Families Together program has identified that this program is working extremely well with parent-adolescent conflict issues. Certainly, that is a model that we will continue to explore. We also provide alternative care services such as foster care and residential care for adolescents who have moved out of home. We have found, however, that once young people have been on the streets they generally do not want to move into foster or residential care and prefer their own casual arrangements or the shelter services that can be obtained.

Clearly, as we said earlier, we cannot force young people to stay in our facilities. It is important that we prevent as much as possible the move by a young person into homelessness. A major emphasis on the restructure of the alternative care system is to develop additional options for adolescents who are difficult to place in our existing facilities. We have said quite a bit about that tonight. In addition, my department is currently formulating a youth policy which will assist in the development of a coordinated and cooperative approach to the delivery of services to vulnerable youth in South Australia.

Mrs HALL: I have an interest in one of the specific targets and objectives for 1996-97 on page 343, which states:

Commencement of Magill replacement project.

As the Minister knows, I have a personal interest in the magnificent environs in which the Magill Training Centre is situated. Will the Minister provide the Committee with details of the future of the Magill Training Centre and outline what steps have been taken to find a possible replacement site?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The member for Coles would realise that there is a need to replace Magill Training Centre. That need was identified in 1987, when in-principle agreement was given by the then Cabinet to upgrade and construct two purpose built juvenile detention centres. One has been completed at Cavan and began operation in September 1993. Magill Training Centre is an ageing and uneconomic facility with high maintenance and operating costs. It is simply not an appropriate facility for young people in detention and has a very limited capacity to achieve best practice in the provision of custody, security and care of juvenile offenders. The poor and outdated design of the centre is also contributing to high injury and accident rates amongst workers.

We sought an independent consultant's view on this issue, and in 1995 they prepared a report confirming the requirements for the replacement of the present facility at Magill. The report also developed a service delivery model that placed an emphasis on alternatives to institutional care. That is some of the information that was provided in the previous answer to a question. Detailed proposals are currently being finalised and a value management study is being conducted to establish the central elements.

At this stage it is proposed that a new centre will be built on another site, that the Cavan Training Centre is expanded to accommodate recidivists, particularly recidivist male offenders, and that the range of non-custodial programs for low security offenders be increased. At this time no sites for the building of the second detention centre have been confirmed, although options for suitable sites are being examined. The building of this facility is a major and complex capital works program and obviously must be undertaken with great care. There have been no delays in the time frame to date, which has been consistent with what is necessary in such a major project.

In closing, I support strongly the need for an alternative to Magill to be found as quickly as possible. I find the current facilities depressing, and they do nothing in the difficult job that we have in working with those young people who are detained at that facility in guiding them to an improved future.

Mrs HALL: I seek information from the Minister about tendering and refer to page 347 of the Program Estimates. The broad objective outlined is as follows:

To ensure that the contracting of community services results in services which are effective, efficient and responsive.

Will the Minister inform the Committee of the commercial tools for competitive tendering which are being applied to the not-for-profit sector in South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am happy to do that. I am fundamentally committed to using the public resources for which I am accountable for achieving the best outcomes for families, individuals and, if it comes to that, the wider community. The Government has moved away from submission based funding to tendering out and there has been a degree of misunderstanding about this process. I understand that that should be the case. It is regrettable that it should be so, but I understand that it is easy for there to be some misunderstanding. It is a brand new process and a new direction that the department has taken, but it is a direction that I support, because I believe that performance contracting is critical to achieving the outcome focus. I refer to the transparency, the value for money and the accountability which I as Minister and the Government require as the stewards of the public purse. I know there are concerns in the sector about the use of commercial tools.

I am sensitive to many of the issues being raised. There are problems and risks. In the absence of profit we must be clear that the incentives in the not-for-profit sector are in service improvement, and we must be sure that contracting tools employed will deliver the required outcomes. There are difficulties in defining and measures outputs and outcomes and the risks of focusing only on those that can be measured. There is a need also to ensure that we do not lose from the sector characteristics that are valued such as diversity, interdependence and collaboration. There is also a need to ensure that the contracting mechanisms, whether they be tendering, expressions of interest or some other mode, are adopted to the specific circumstances of the program or service area.

The department, in conjunction with the Office for Public Sector Management, has developed a position paper on contracting which it is about to publish and which will clarify the misunderstanding that has fuelled much of the concern in the sector. It will lay the groundwork for a productive and effective approach to performance contracting in South Australia.

Mrs HALL: I refer to Program Estimates, page 338. We had quite an extensive discussion on families and the importance thereof earlier in the evening and, as was agreed earlier, the Minister and the Government have demonstrated a commitment to families and children. Will the Minister therefore outline to the Committee when the Government will meet its commitment to hold a families summit?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: This is from a recommendation in a report, entitled 'First things First', which came out of the International Year of the Family. I am pleased to advise that the family summit will be held on 1 November this year and will involve key agencies and individuals from the Government and non-government, community, corporate and media sectors. The family summit will identify priority family policy issues for Government and the wider community to pursue. It is certainly our aim that this will not be simply a talkfest. Those of us who were involved in the activities in the International Year of the Family will realise that a considerable amount came out of the debate that took place on a number of issues relating to families. Positive issues and recommendations came out of the report 'First Things First'. I hope that the family summit will identify those priority family policy issues that we need to consider.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to SAAP grants and page 199 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments. While the Commonwealth SAAP grant is budgeted to increase by \$4.112 million, this does not reconcile with program expenditure figures, which have not increased by a commensurate amount. The increases under programs add up to only \$2.597 million—a shortfall of \$1.515 million just on the Commonwealth contribution. Does this indicate a cost shifting exercise by the State by budgeting for increases in Commonwealth special purpose payments without commensurate increases in its own contribution?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: No, it does not.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to services for young people who offend, page 343 of the Program Estimates. The Minister's department has reported a substantial 21 per cent increase in average occupancy rates of youth detention during 1995-96. Does this indicate a failure in the department's preventative programs and a lack of alternatives to detention?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: I am informed that it is advice coming from the courts. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to provide more detail.

Mr Deyell: The range of alternatives to detention that were mentioned in a previous answer are assisting the courts in making decisions about alternatives to detention. As that range of programs becomes more established we are optimistic that the courts will take advantage of those programs. In the meantime it is purely a reflection of the number of detention orders that the courts order.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to page 342 of the Program Estimates and the Program Title 'Planning of Services for Aboriginal People'. What is the level of salary for the Director of Aboriginal Services? Is this officer paid at a rate lower than other directors and, if so, why.

Mr Deyell: The position of Director, Aboriginal Services, is paid at the rate the Commissioner for Public Employment has assessed as appropriate for the range of responsibilities. Director positions are paid different amounts, so therefore it is true that this director is paid a different amount than other directors.

Ms STEVENS: I asked whether the salary was lower and, if so, why.

Mr Deyell: It is true that the current classification for Director, Aboriginal Services, is lower than other directors on the basis of the characteristics the Commissioner for Public Employment accepts as relevant for determining levels of salaries for positions in the Public Service.

Mr BROKENSHERE: I refer to Program Estimates page 338 and the reference to the Office for Families and Children and family ambassadors. Minister, you touched on family ambassadors but, as a member of Parliament, I was delighted by the announcement last year of family ambassadors and the calibre of people selected: Anne Skipper, Maude and George Tongerie, Archbishop Ian George, Peter LeMessurier, Peter

Coombe and Jane Reilly. This is a fantastic initiative, Minister, because once again it shows our Government and your department's commitment to positive proactive family development, and the repairing of that social fabric that we saw being torn apart for 10 or 11 years. Will the Minister list some of the achievements of the ambassadors over the past year since their appointment?

The Hon. D.C. Wotton: The role of a family ambassador is to promote family issues and provide me with independent advice. I believe that the family ambassadors have achieved a considerable amount. They have negotiated an agreement with the *Sunday Mail*, together with the Office for Families and Children, for a joint regular column on families. Family ambassadors are promoting and leading the family summit to be held on 1 November, to which we have just referred. The ambassadors prepared an independent budget briefing for the Premier outlining and prioritising family issues for consideration in budget decisions. The family ambassadors were appointed for a 12-month period, and the program will be reviewed in August 1996. They have had considerable input into policy, and I have appreciated very much the support they have been able to provide.

While I am on the subject of policy, I have been made aware that this evening the Opposition has put out a press release claiming additional FACS money will be lost in planning policy and that it is more interested in the development of bureaucracy. That notion is totally offensive. The FACS Management and Policy Division is a very lean outfit. Its belt has been tightened substantially to meet financial challenges. The notion of the Opposition is also inaccurate, reflecting again that the Opposition is preoccupied with spreading myths and misinformation to denigrate my department.

Policy development is vital. We live in a changing world with changing expectations and mounting pressure for full accountability for public funds. Further, the honourable member in her release claims an amount that includes the \$500 000 positive parenting campaign. Again she is wrong, and that has been pointed out already this evening. It seems that, when the Opposition wanted to peddle information, it just determined that that should be the case. I reiterate that I believe the policy division of the department is a very lean machine and is very effective in the work which it carries out for this Government, which it has carried out for previous Governments and which it will carry out for future Governments in this State.

The CHAIRMAN: Time having expired and there being no further questions, I declare the examination of the votes completed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.2 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 27 June at 11 a.m.