

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Thursday 19 June 1997****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chairman:**

Mr J.K.G. Oswald

Members:

Mr K.A. Andrew
 Mr M.J. Atkinson
 Mr M.R. De Laine
 Mr E.J. Meier
 Mrs E.M. Penfold
 Ms L. Stevens

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

 Department of Transport, \$61 471 000
Witness:

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

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Payze, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Transport.

Mr T. Argent, Director, Investment and Planning.

Mr R. Frisby, Manager, Registration and Licensing.

Ms D. Poli, Accountant, Strategic Reporting.

The CHAIRMAN: As all members would be aware, the Committee hearings are relatively informal and there is no need for members to rise when they ask or answer questions. The Committee will determine the approximate time for consideration of proposed payments, to facilitate the change-over 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 4 July to the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

I propose to allow the Minister and the lead speaker for the Opposition time to make opening statements, if desired, of about 10 minutes but no longer than 15 minutes. There will be a flexible approach in relation to giving the call for the asking of questions, based on three questions per member, alternating sides. Members will also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning, but I stress that supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule; indeed, if the Minister answers the question fully there should be no need for a supplementary question.

Subject to the convenience of the Committee, members outside the Committee who desire to ask questions on a line of questioning currently being undertaken by the Committee will be permitted to do so once the line of questioning on an item has been exhausted by other members of the Committee.

An indication to the Chair in advance from the member outside the Committee wishing to ask a question is necessary.

Questions must be based on lines of expenditure as revealed in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments, Printed Paper No. 2. Reference may also be made to other budget documentation, including Program Estimates and Information, Capital Works Program, and Financial Statement. Members must identify the page number of the financial paper to which their question relates. Questions not asked at the end of the day may be placed on the next sitting day's House of Assembly Notice Paper.

I remind the Minister that there is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the Committee. However, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution to the Committee. The incorporation of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the House of Assembly; that is, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the Minister through the Chair, not to the Minister's advisers. The Minister may refer questions to his advisers for a response if she so desires. I also advise that for the purposes of the Committee some freedom will be allowed for television coverage by allowing a short period of filming from the northern gallery of this Chamber.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to pages 78 to 80 and 211 to 219 in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments and to pages 343 to 360 in the Program Estimates and Information. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have pleasure in bringing to this Estimates Committee for debate the 1997-98 budget of the Department of Transport of \$418.9 million. The Government regards transport as critical to the economic and social development of South Australia. Our distance from major interstate and overseas markets demands that our transport infrastructure and logistics systems operate at peak efficiency. Over the past year, the Department of Transport has expanded its traditional road related functions to include planning issues previously undertaken by the Transport Policy Unit plus issues associated with the sale of Australian National and the sale and lease of the Adelaide Airport. In all these matters, the Government is committed to securing the best possible outcomes for South Australia, and it anticipates strong involvement with private sector owners to deliver the best results.

During the next financial year, the Department of Transport will build on the strategic reforms that commenced within the transport portfolio in June 1994. The Government's policy of increased contestability and competition has encouraged the department to expand service levels consistent with community expectations but at a reduced cost to taxpayers. All members of the Committee will be aware of the benefits of road expenditure with every \$1 million of road construction and maintenance expenditure generating approximately 60 jobs.

In 1996-97, the department's State-funded road maintenance and construction budget increased from \$38 million in 1995-96 to \$260 million. Road construction and maintenance expenditure in 1997-98 will again be maintained at the high levels of 1996-97. Soon, metropolitan road users will enjoy the benefits of the following State-funded road investments that will be completed in the coming financial year: the duplication of Montague Road between Main North Road and Bridge Road; the widening of Port Road from the Southwark Brewery to the Thebarton Police Barracks to three lanes for

each carriageway, including a bikeway; the upgrade of Railway Terrace from Burbridge Road to Port Road as part of the Mile End redevelopment project; and the final stage of the Henley Beach Road upgrade with the widening from Marion Road to South Road.

Another project to be completed in 1997-98 will be one of the Government's major 1993 policy commitments—the Southern Expressway. Stage 1 from Darlington to Reynella will be open to traffic by December this year, while planning and design will continue for stage 2 of the project from Reynella to Old Noarlunga.

In rural areas the Government will invest \$10 million in 1997-98 on sealing more of the State's unsealed arterial roads as part of our target to seal all unsealed arterial roads in incorporated or council areas over 10 years to the year 2004. As part of this project, the Burra to Morgan Road will be sealed and available for traffic use by August of next year. Meanwhile the long-promised Berri bridge will be opened by the Premier, the Hon. John Olsen, in a few weeks' time.

Also, the Department of Transport will provide improved accessibility in key tourist areas of the State with the continued sealing of South Coast Road on Kangaroo Island and the upgrade of important tourist routes in the Flinders Ranges to an all-weather standard.

Extensive and exhaustive lobbying of the Federal Government by this Government and the Department of Transport has brought rewards with preliminary work well under way on the upgrade of the Mount Barker Road. The associated tunnel contract will be awarded next month. Other major federally funded works included in this year's budget are the replacement of the Blanchetown bridge on the Stuart Highway, completion of the new alignment of the Stuart Highway through Daveyston and continued widening of Eyre Highway between Kimba and Ceduna.

In the area of safety, the Department of Transport will commence the introduction of the national road safety package agreed to and endorsed by the Australian Transport Council last month. It will also administer the federally funded black spot program and encourage the community to participate in the nomination of sites.

In the environment, the Department of Transport will continue to play a pro-active role. An environment management system will be implemented to ensure that all construction works are undertaken in accordance with the recently developed environmental code of practice. In addition, the environmental strategic plan currently being formulated by the Department of Transport will outline the direction and challenges that the department and other agencies face over the coming years.

In the area of vehicle and driver regulation, the department will continue to participate in the development of policies and systems to achieve national uniform regulations. Also, credit card facilities will finally be introduced for the payment of vehicle and driver registration. The expanded responsibilities of the Department of Transport are reflected in its active support for cyclists and pedestrians. The introduction of new facilities and education programs will make our roads safer for all users.

In relation to recreational jetties, negotiations with a number of councils are almost complete to secure upgrades of jetties this year, before responsibility is transferred to local government. In January 1996 a \$25 per annum recreational boating levy was introduced. Funds raised from this, supplemented by funds from the budget of the Department of Transport, are being used to maintain, upgrade and establish

improved boating facilities throughout the State. In the next financial year the department will continue to provide an efficient bus and depot service operation, managed on a commercial basis, with buses being leased to public transport service operators. The introduction of new buses in the 1997-98 replacement program will ensure a more modern, passenger friendly and fuel efficient fleet. I welcome questions from members of the Committee.

Mr ATKINSON: Our first question concerns speed cameras. One of the specific objectives listed under the transport safety program at page 337 of the Program Estimates is the implementation of lower speed limits in residential precincts, in cooperation with local government. Recent media reports stated that the new speed limits could be enforced by speed cameras rented to the councils by the Government. Will the Minister confirm whether the Government is considering the hiring of speed cameras to local councils and, if so, is it also considering empowering council officers and hired security guards to operate the cameras?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: These issues have not been resolved but are being discussed currently with the Minister for Police and the Police Commissioner. For some time, in the Unley area, I know that both the Mayor and the member for Unley have championed the lower speed limit of 40 km/h and, as part of that test, they have had various levels of enforcement to see what is ideal, ranging from no police enforcement in some areas to quite intensive enforcement in others. It was seen only after a short time of 40 km/h in local streets that just a moderate level of enforcement was all that was necessary for most of the people to respect the 40 km/h limit.

However, there is a need for us to address the enforcement issues across the metropolitan area because quite a number of councils have expressed an interest following the receipt of the 40 km/h guidelines prepared by the Department of Transport in implementing 40 km/h within their respective areas on local streets. It would not be possible for the police, at least in the initial stages of the introduction of the 40 km/h limit, to be everywhere across the metropolitan area looking at this issue.

So, the member for Unley principally has canvassed with me and with the Minister for Police the use of the Police Security Office services, and they have been engaged by council to assist council for this purpose. There has not been consideration to empowering council officers or councils to undertake such enforcement issues.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to page 336 of the Program Estimates under 'Program Sector: Air and Land Transport'. National highway funding has again been slashed in the recent Federal budget, from \$834 million in 1995-96 to \$697 million in 1997-98. Can the Minister detail to the Committee what impact this cut in Federal funding will have on national highways within South Australia, and will she say whether the State Government intends to make up any shortfall?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is no shortfall to make up because in fact South Australia recorded an exceptionally high figure, well out of proportion for our population. That was mainly because of the Mount Barker Road upgrade. In fact, we have received an increase in Federal funding this year because of that initiative. With respect to national highways funding, \$20.76 million has been allocated for maintenance, \$4.8 million for safety and urgent minor works, and \$68.3 million for major capital works. That is a big increase to South Australia over the past year.

I should also say that, unlike the actions of the former Government, when untied local road grants were paid from Federal Government to the State Government, this Government has insisted that all those untied funds are allocated to the Department of Transport and spent on local roads and not just lost in Treasury for other purposes. The Department of Transport has done exceptionally well this year in terms of national highway funds. I repeat: all the money from the Federal Government for untied local road grants has been allocated to the Department of Transport for use over the next financial year.

Mr ATKINSON: Staying with the same lines, I point out that, according to the latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, by percentage South Australia spends less than any other State or Territory on its roads. Has the Government monitored the detrimental effect low funding is having on the quality of our roads and what information on it can the Minister provide to the Committee?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not familiar with these per capita figures but over some years now I have been responsible for the transport portfolio either as shadow Minister or Minister and I know that every report from the Department of Transport refers to the fact that they are monitoring road pavements and that there is concern about the asset management of those pavements because many of them are reaching a 30-year limit and a lot of work has to be done in the next few years. That has been highlighted to successive Governments and it certainly has been highlighted to me. There has been a big increase, although perhaps not a sufficient increase, in recurrent capital expenditure on the roads program (and this is also for maintenance purposes) from \$269.117 million in 1994-95 to \$352.451 million proposed for this year. As I say, a lot of that will be for maintenance as well as for construction work. I indicate that since the department under this Government has competitively tendered its maintenance and construction work (in terms of the question I refer to maintenance), we have been able to achieve much more for the same dollar figure, and that is important in terms of the management of our assets.

Mr ANDREW: I refer to the Program Estimates and Payments at page 335 with respect to the proposed Australian National sale. As part of its expanded responsibility the Department of Transport has been the lead agency for the South Australian Government following the Federal Government's decision to sell Australian National. What is the status of negotiations between the Federal and State Governments over the sale at the moment and, in particular, if the AN sale does not proceed because the ALP and the Australian Democrats in either the Senate or Legislative Council block the legislation, will South Australia lose the \$20 million the Federal Government has promised in the form of reform funds to support the work force in the most affected areas by the AN sale, whether it be in Port Augusta or the northern areas of Adelaide based around Islington?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will answer first the second part of the question. Yes, the Federal Government will not pay to South Australia the reform funds of which \$10 million has been assigned this year, with \$10 million to be provided next year. The bulk of that \$20 million is to be spent in South Australia because the bulk of AN's business is in this State. We will not get those funds because they are part of the whole sale package that the Federal Government has worked through in terms of the future for its rail business. This is a critical issue for South Australia and I am pleased a number of Labor members are present because they do profess to

have an interest in work force issues in South Australia and they do profess to be out there listening to what people are saying. I ask them sincerely to listen again to what the rail workers and their union representatives are saying in South Australia about this whole issue of the sale of AN.

They are actually pleading with the ALP and the Australian Democrats to support the sale of AN and to get on with it as quickly as possible. One only has to go and speak with the work force, particularly at Port Augusta, to know the heartache that the work force and their families are enduring because of the uncertainty about their future. They initially did not like the idea of the sale of AN—and I can understand that—but they have come to the conclusion that this is the only possible way to secure jobs and to continue family life, for instance, in Port Augusta.

I note that on Monday this week, Mr Tanner, the ALP spokesman for transport in the Federal Parliament, visited the workshops at Port Augusta to discuss Labor's position (which is not to support the sale of AN) with the work force and there was a stinging statement following that meeting issued by Mr Len Scharenberg, the AWU representative in Port Augusta. It is not only the Public Transport Union: it is the AWU as well in terms of the workshops at Port Augusta. He says in part:

If it is not sold we hope that the Labor Party will guarantee the jobs for those that are there.

He goes on to say:

The shadow Minister did not provide any guarantees at all.

Mr De LAINE: He can't.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You are saying that he cannot provide the guarantees, but the point is that the only guarantee this skilled work force has, at Port Augusta and elsewhere in the workshops and on the train systems, is if this business is sold to a company that is prepared to invest in that business. The Federal Government is determined to get out of it. We must understand that the work force want an opportunity to have a future and they want that for themselves, the young people in their families and their families overall. They know that the only way to do it is if this business is sold. The Federal Government is not interested in continuing to pay \$100 million a year in operating costs to subsidise the operation.

At the same time, we must recognise that rail is continuing to lose business to road and that does not help rail's viability in this State. If rail is not generating business, there is not the return to put into lines and to maintain efficient services and we get into a vicious circle which is exactly what has happened to AN in terms of management and return on investment.

In the meantime, as part of this package the Federal Government has offered, it will wipe out the debt for Australian National and that is absolutely critical because of interest payments that are making the job of running AN extremely difficult in terms of its competition with road. The Labor Party, both federally and in this State, might cry big crocodile tears and profess to be worried about jobs at Port Augusta, but it was the former Federal Minister for Transport, Mr Brereton, who approved the order for new locomotives for Australian National to be built outside South Australia and to have 15-year maintenance contracts on those new locomotives. It is for that reason that there is not business at Port Augusta today. Whether there was a sale or no sale, there is no business for the workshops because of actions taken by the former Minister for Transport. What a hypocrite he was!

Three days after he praised the work force for their efforts in restructuring their business and becoming efficient he signed off the work to Melbourne and Newcastle and effectively took away their jobs. This is what we are seeking to deal with today.

I hope that all members in this place respect what the work force is saying. After years of operating in good faith, of working through reform, restructuring their practices and seeking to be efficient, we should pay them some respect with regard to the way in which they see future jobs for themselves and their families.

The CHAIRMAN: I caution the gallery. I did not want to interrupt the Minister, but audible interjections from the gallery which can be heard by the Chair will not be tolerated in the future.

Mr ANDREW: I refer the Minister to page 335 of the Program Estimates and the reference to the proposed national track access headquarters. Has the Federal Government promised to establish the proposed national track access authority in Adelaide? If so, what progress has been made to secure the headquarters of this authority in Adelaide?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: One of the important issues that South Australia was able to secure in our early negotiations with the Federal Government over the future of rail and Australian National in particular in South Australia was a guarantee from the Federal Government that it would establish the proposed national track access authority in Adelaide. In recent correspondence from the Federal Minister (Hon. John Sharp) this commitment has again been reinforced. In correspondence to me on 12 May he stated:

The Commonwealth originally intended to establish a national rail infrastructure entity by 1 July. A number of factors have prevented this timetable from being achieved.

The principal factor is resistance from the New South Wales Government to participate. He continued:

Nevertheless, I want to press on and pursue the establishment of a national regime which provides for a one-stop-shop approach based on consistent access, pricing principles and operating and safety arrangements, thus encouraging a greater utilisation of this important transport asset.

He confirms that Adelaide is to be the base. In subsequent discussions with the Minister it would appear because of this continuing resistance from New South Wales that the Federal Government will establish the national access headquarters in Adelaide but focus initially on east-west business and, at a later stage, look at north-south business. So that is to South Australia's advantage.

In terms of the work force which will be involved in this national access headquarters, I envisage it to be some 20 to 30 people. That will be established from the existing work force of Australian National, so there are guarantees of jobs in that sense.

Mr ANDREW: With respect to the Program Estimates at page 335, I refer the Minister to the Adelaide to Darwin railway proposal. I appreciate that you and the Department of Road Transport have been involved in negotiations with the Northern Territory Government regarding the construction of this missing link in the Adelaide to Darwin railway option. What progress has been made to ensure that this project proceeds in the national interest? Are recent media reports advocating a railway line from Melbourne to Darwin any threat to the construction of the Adelaide to Darwin link via Alice Springs?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It would be fair to say that since 1911, when South Australia ceded the Northern

Territory and gained what we thought was a firm undertaking for the construction of the missing link—from Alice Springs to Darwin—this Government, more than any other since 1911, has done the most to secure the missing link. Legislation has been passed by this Parliament and the Northern Territory Parliament in the last few months to establish an Australasian rail corporation. That legislation has not yet been proclaimed but will be when we gain a firmer commitment from the Federal Government. Further discussions are under way in terms of Federal funds and infrastructure bond arrangements. In the meantime, in arguing the case for those Federal funds and bond authorisations, we are indicating that almost all of the corridor is secure under title. That is a very important undertaking, and the South Australian Government has invested much money in terms of the survey work.

There are ongoing discussions at the moment with Aboriginal communities concerning some small parts of the corridor, in terms of native title and a whole range of things, but those issues are being worked through amicably. So, about 80 per cent or more of the corridor has already been secured. But, more importantly, so have stone quarries, which have been cleared by Aboriginal communities as well. This is very important, because if we could not get access to the ballast near the site of the track, the costs of transporting the ballast would be absolutely enormous, and probably prohibitive. So, that has been an important issue. The environmental impact reports have all be completed, as I understand, and there have been many discussions with potential investors. So, South Australia is ready to go when we get the nod in terms of our commitment for a \$100 million investment, which will be some \$20 million each year over five years.

It was very apparent to me, in terms of the Melbourne to Darwin proposal, that this was a beat up—and it is. No feasibility work has been undertaken at all, unlike the Alice Springs to Darwin railway, where the return on investment has been tested. It is currently about 20 per cent return on investment, which is very important for private sector involvement. No feasibility study has been undertaken on the Melbourne to Darwin line. No land has even been identified, let alone surveyed and title secured. No environmental study has been undertaken.

At a recent conference of transport Ministers, it was quite apparent to me that there are some people in the eastern States extraordinarily threatened by the prospect of the Adelaide to Darwin line through Alice Springs and they will do almost anything to thwart the success of this line. I believe that they see success in our grasp and that is why they are putting up some very ill-conceived proposals, simply to muddle the picture and confuse the investing public. We have done a fair amount of work with Federal officers and also with investors to confirm again the merits of the Adelaide to Darwin proposal. The fact is that so much work has been done and we are ready to go. The others are simply pie in the sky proposals.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 355 of the Program Estimates. I was interested to hear the Minister's comments earlier about the need to sell Australian National. I cannot see why any private company would want to buy Australian National unless it is a potential money spinner. I believe that Australian National has been run down by successive Governments ready to sell it. I cannot see, if the private sector can run a service such as Australian National profitably and efficiently, why Government cannot do the same. However, some of the world's biggest rail operators have been short-listed to buy Australian National. I understand that several

major global companies are frontrunners to buy all of AN—its freight, workshop and passenger businesses. These include the US-based Wisconsin Central, which has taken over privatised rail in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In the Legislative Council, the Minister has said that she will use the railway transfer agreement to protect future services after the privatisation of AN. How would the State Government exercise any veto power over the decision to close unprofitable lines and services once these are under the ownership and control of a private contractor?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is a lot to reflect on, in terms of the comment and questions from the honourable member. You ask why anybody would want to buy it and say that they would only do so if it is a potential money spinner. You ask why, if the private sector can do it, the Government cannot. That is a very reasonable question. We know from the New Zealand experience, where the railway was sold, that the same management was kept but they got rid of the Government as a policy provider. It was almost an oversighting management by Wisconsin of the old New Zealand railway services; the same management was maintained. The profits and reliability of the service have absolutely skyrocketed by having a new private sector input with commitment, by contrast to the Federal Government—of both persuasions, I would suggest—over a long time. I believe that is the essence of the argument here. As you may recall, AN provided three business plans to Mr Brereton when he was Federal Minister for Transport, and Mr Brereton and his officers did not endorse any of them: they just sat there. So, AN did not have those directions, which it required, because the Federal Government was the major investor.

New Zealand proved that even with the same management—and, to be truthful, I do not believe that the work force wants the same management in terms of AN—by having a different investor which is committed to the business, and without the bureaucratic stranglehold of Canberra, the business can thrive. We also know that, finally, South Australian Cooperative Bulk handling is ready to work with rail, to look at a new strategic site policy, which will help the grain lines to be much more efficient than has been the case to date, because the way in which we are dealing with our rail business now is antiquated. But it needs commitment from SACBH in terms of its investment policy.

The honourable member made a comment about statements that I have made in the Parliament about the use of the Rail Transfer Agreement. That has always been my reference there and the Government's commitment has always been in the context of a pre-sale issue, because the sale cannot go ahead unless we amend our legislation and, in amending the legislation, you certainly would not retain over the private sector these rights to seek arbitration.

As a result of negotiations with the Federal Government to date—the agreement, which is yet to be signed off, will be brought to this Parliament in early July—if the track is to be owned by the private sector, the private sector must invest over a period of five years, and, if they wanted to get out of it, we would take back the line including its investment, and there would be no return to the private sector on that investment. That is one approach that we are taking to ensure that, first, the private sector invests and, secondly, that it is committed to that investment and to the future operation of the line. We have what we call 'step-in' rights: if the private sector does not wish to run any of those lines in the future they will come back to the State. That is exactly what we need in terms of the State's managing the business but

without South Australians being required to invest in the business, particularly the line upgrade.

Without question, we have the best of both worlds in the negotiations that have been undertaken with the Federal Government to date. They are yet to be signed off, but I trust that they will be sealed by passage of the legislation through the South Australian Parliament.

Mr De LAINE: If that option is taken up and if the Government takes back the line, what will it use for engines and rolling stock?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We will not look at taking back the line unless the private sector purchaser does not wish to continue to operate it. In my view, that is a long way off. As I have indicated, with the Government's support and encouragement SACBH will undertake a rationalisation of the way in which it conducts its business, and that will help the railway line to be more profitable. This is an important breakthrough in terms of rail operation in this State and the future viability of rail services. I do not envisage that the lines will come back. However, if the private sector does not wish to continue to operate them, they will return to the State for their future to be determined. If we were not interested in the rail corridors, we would not have bothered to secure that undertaking as part of the negotiations for the sale of AN.

Mr De LAINE: My question was: if they do come back, what will you do for rolling stock to run the service?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Some of the locomotives and wagons will be owned by National Rail, and others will be purchased by other operators of AN's business. That will be a private sector responsibility. We do not envisage that the State will invest in locomotives. The technical term is that there will be line haul contracts.

Mr De LAINE: If any of AN's freight operations are closed as a result of the sale, there will be a rise in road damage caused by an increase in the number of trucks using our roads. Has the Federal Government promised any additional funding for road damage resulting from its policy; if not, will the State Government seek redress from the Commonwealth Government?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We have not sought such road funding because we do not anticipate that the lines will close. Part of the intense negotiations and the reason they have been so protracted has been our determination to secure the standardisation of the Pinnaroo line. That matter has been before this Parliament by way of questions over many years. The former Federal Government made a commitment to standardise all the Murray-Mallee grain lines. The majority of those lines (but not the Pinnaroo line) have been standardised. The AN board would not approve the loan funds for that work to be undertaken over the past 18 months.

We now have a negotiated agreement, but it is still to be signed off in terms of getting a Federal commitment and funds for the standardisation of that line. As part of that process, and for the very reason that the honourable member has identified, the Department of Transport or the Government generally intends to invest up to \$2 million in the standardisation of the line. As the honourable member has said, having that business on our roads is unthinkable. I think that Mr Argent, who recently went through the metropolitan freight study workshops, would feel that the community would also see it as unthinkable.

Mr De LAINE: John Sharp recently introduced a Bill to enable the sale of Australian National, yet there is still no sign of any legislation to establish a regulatory regime that is critical to the future success of the industry. Has the South

Australian Government been consulted on the regulatory arrangement, what is the status of its development, and will it be in place before the sale?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It will have to be.

Mr Payze: Regulations in terms of rail safety have already been uniformly introduced across all States. The rail safety Bill has been assented to but not proclaimed, and the regulations in this State are being compiled, so rail safety in terms of a regulatory regime is, I think, covered. The Minister has already spoken about the access regime and the establishment of a National Rail Track Authority or at least a National Rail access regime. I think that still rests with the Federal Government, but there are some significant discussions going on between the Federal Government and the States to rationalise and regulate access arrangements.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The question was whether this would be in place before the sale. As I have indicated, because New South Wales is not cooperating the focus will now be east-west with the base in Adelaide. That must be established, and it will be. In the meantime, the bidders for the lines have been particularly interested to know what the access charges and rates will be. They have been told that they will be at the same level or less than Australian National charges now and that they must work on that basis.

Mrs PENFOLD: What initiatives has this Government introduced to address the specific interests of livestock transporters?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This matter has been of particular interest to me from Opposition days, because in our pastoral areas in particular but also on the Eyre Peninsula a lot of livestock transport is undertaken. It was quite clear that a mass limit way of conducting our business in terms of livestock was not meeting the particular needs of the industry. Very early in the life of this Government, it moved to adopt livestock volume loading rather than a mass limit basis for conducting its business and helping the livestock carriers to do theirs. We started off with a trial scheme that was endorsed by the National Road Transport Commission. There was some resistance from other jurisdictions at the time for our getting approval for this scheme, but it has been so successful that all eyes are on us now around the country for the adoption of a similar scheme for livestock purposes.

In speaking to the Livestock Transporters Association on Saturday about two weeks ago—the long weekend (which shows my dedication to this issue and to the interests of livestock transporters)—I was able to confirm with them that the trial had been successful and that we would now be applying to the National Road Transport Commission to have it formally endorsed, that we have been so impressed with the responsibility of the livestock transporters themselves that we are now prepared to introduce 25-metre B-doubles with length controls on livestock trailers as the means by which they can operate more efficiently because of that greater length. This reflects the fact that most livestock transporters are looking for those sort of efficiencies. We can move with greater lengths mainly because the 25-metre B-double is of a much improved construction in terms of weight, and therefore impact on our roads, than much earlier model vehicles.

In terms of Kangaroo Island—in the district of the member for Flinders—a number of transport livestock operators have approached me since I made this commitment regarding 25-metre B-doubles to say that, because of the ferry operations which they must utilise, they are not able to use 25-metre B-doubles and that their maximum is 23 metres. I

have said that we would be prepared to look at introducing a variation for livestock transporters whose business is registered on Kangaroo Island and they would be able to have the benefits of 23-metre vehicles as well as a lot of the other things that will come from the Government's package for livestock transporters. They can have those benefits, even though they are a 23-metre vehicle.

We invested through the Department of Transport some \$20 000 in the TruckSafe scheme to assist with improved training for all truck drivers. There will shortly be further announcements about support training by the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to Program Estimates 'Government services-obligations' on page 339. Following the Government's decision last August to invest dollars into repairing South Australia's recreational jetties as part of the program to transfer the jetties to local councils, how many jetties have been upgraded and transferred at what cost?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am able to advise that councils to date have agreed that 16 coastal jetties can be transferred to local councils on a long-term lease basis. There are quite a number in the district of the member for Goyder. In terms of transfer, I will indicate the Government investment in each instance: Ardrossan, \$520 000; Edithburgh, \$10 000; Marion Bay, \$370 000; Port Augusta East, \$35 300; Port Augusta West, \$207 000; Port Elliot, \$75 500; Port Hughes, \$986 500; Port Julia, \$55 000; Port Neill, \$50 000; Port Rickaby, \$100 000; Port Victoria, \$520 000; Port Vincent, \$20 000 for the jetty and \$12 000 for the wharf; Stansbury, \$200 000; Tumby Bay \$366 000; and Wool Bay \$260 000.

In addition to these 16 coastal jetties councils have agreed to have the following four river structures rededicated to be under the care, control and management of the council: Goolwa, Meningie, Morgan and Narrung. In each respective instance the investment from State sources will be \$16 500, \$7, 500, \$180 800 and \$36 200 respectively. In the meantime, members will note that not one metropolitan council—and I stress this to the member for Price—has agreed to participate or generate for their community such a big investment in terms of upgrading their jetties, and that is a shame.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Otherwise you would! We are doing railway stations there. The honourable member's council is Port Adelaide-Enfield. That council has a number of jetties. I do not think it is too smart not to move with the Government on this because a set sum of money is available, and it looks as though the country areas are eating up this money quickly in terms of the transfer and upgrade of those jetties. The honourable member may like to mention a strong word in the ear of his new Mayor.

In the meantime we are looking at public liability and taking on that responsibility from the State Government sense and looking at the issue of insurance and storm damage, as that will help councils to get more involved. I congratulate those local councils which have participated so readily in country electorates to date.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to the Program Estimates, 'Government service obligations', page 339. Since the introduction of the \$25 recreational boating level in January 1996, what projects have been approved for funding and at what cost?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have seven pages of information. Could I get it circulated through the Chair for the information of members? I point out to the member for

Flinders that a lot of money is being spent in her district in terms of recreational boating facilities. At Arno Bay funding of \$177 000 has been provided for the construction of a new boat ramp and protective breakwater. A total of \$40 000 has been allocated for an additional pontoon landing at Port Lincoln; \$33 000 has been provided for navigation aids at American River, but that is being shared with a few other council areas; \$8 200 has been allocated for upgrading the land at Coffin Bay adjacent to the township; \$52 750 has been provided for upgrading the boat ramp at Franklin Harbor; \$4 000 for maintenance of the existing Port Neill boat ramp; more for navigation aids for Arno Bay; \$24 775 for Cowell; and another \$20 000 for the Tumbly Bay marina and boat ramp. Here we have quite a number of funding applications received but not yet dealt with from across the State, including the metropolitan area.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair will arrange to have that document copied and distributed.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to page 339. I did note with interest the money being spent on jetties and recreational boating. I want to focus on railway stations and, in particular, the upgrading of the Elizabeth railway station. As the Minister knows, Elizabeth is the designated regional centre for the northern metropolitan area, and its railway station is far from anywhere near the standard required for a regional centre. There has been a small upgrade of the centre and some of its worst features, such as the underpass, were removed, and some painting and minor improvements were carried out.

The Elizabeth council, on receipt of moneys through the Better Cities Program from the previous Federal Labor Government, did undertake some infrastructure works because the council wishes to shift the station so it links in with the Elizabeth City Centre redevelopment. However, it is a long way from being of a standard suitable for a proper interchange leading into a regional centre. What are the plans and time lines in relation to this upgrade?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have some information on this project but under the TransAdelaide lines, and I do not have that material with me at the moment because we are dealing with the Department of Transport. I am also aware that the program in terms of Elizabeth is actually the responsibility of Housing and Urban Development, and that former Minister Ashenden did quite a lot of work on this. Now it would be the responsibility of the Hon. Stephen Baker. I will check on the material I have been provided under the TransAdelaide lines over the lunch period and, if I do not have enough information, I will speak to HUD and provide the honourable member with a detailed answer later today.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to transport accessibility on pages 332 and 335, and my question concerns the Motor Registration Division. I, and I am sure other members, have received dozens of complaints over the length of queues and the time it takes to be served at offices of the Department of Transport registration and licensing branches. Is the Minister aware that these problems occurred as a direct result of her failure to take into account the massive increase in numbers of people who would be using the branches following the introduction of quarterly registrations, and will she make the necessary funding available so that registration and licensing offices are able to cope, and so that people are not standing in line for sometimes up to two hours?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I had anticipated a question on this line because of the majority of telephone calls of complaint that I receive at my office. I am also receiving too many letters of complaint about the service we are providing,

and Mr Rod Frisby is well aware of that and has been seeking to address it expeditiously. I will ask him to speak to some of the issues in a moment.

I am able to confirm that a revised central telephone service for the Adelaide registration and licensing office will commence operation on the 23rd of this month. That is absolutely critical. We will also be providing 10 more work stations with a flexibility to expand to 15 stations if required. This Government has already introduced the 131084 information help line, and we have extended the hours of operation for the telephone service from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. Monday to Friday.

As the honourable member noted, the number of calls has just been phenomenal. In July 1996 there were 25 000 calls. Last month, there were 85 000 calls. That has resulted from a number of initiatives. The Government indicated in its transport policy that it would introduce quarterly registrations, and I am thrilled it has been so popular, but I do not think anybody in their planning had anticipated quite how popular it would be. We have to improve the way in which we can address this issue.

Also, we have had all the complications of introducing national heavy vehicle and light vehicle reforms and charging. When all of this came together, we had the firearms registration matters to deal with. It has just been mammoth, and I think the staff have been heroes and heroines in the way they have dealt with an often angry public. It is not their fault but the fault of the system that has not supported them. By the time people get through to the counter or the phone, they are angry with somebody who was not to blame. The management of resources and support for staff is just a critical issue. The Registrar may wish to tell us how he is dealing with it expeditiously on behalf of the staff.

Mr Frisby: Quarterly registration was introduced essentially with a view to providing a more reasonable option for farmers who had a need to operate a lot of vehicles on a seasonal basis. We did not anticipate the extent to which the general motorist would choose the option to register quarterly. We are seeing that most motorists who previously registered for 12 months are continuing to do so, but many of the motorists who previously had chosen a six months registration period are now choosing a quarterly period. It looks like it will result in about an additional 500 000 transactions per annum in our branch offices.

We will be pressing on as fast as we can to introduce electronic commerce which will allow accessibility to our services without the public having to come into a registration and licensing office. That has been difficult for us because there have been some whole of government issues that needed to be sorted out with respect to introducing electronic commerce, but that is progressing. Once we have the facility, we will look as quickly as possible at introducing payment by phone using credit cards and that will again reduce the number of people who need to come into a registration and licensing office.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That assumes that we have enough people to handle the phone calls.

Mr Frisby: As the Minister mentioned, starting next Monday we will be beginning with a new teleservices centre which we have just had established and this will give us the opportunity to increase the number of telephone service operators by up to 15. It will be a 30 per cent increase on what we have had before. The dilemma in regard to queues in branch offices is that, while we have sufficient personnel to staff all the counter terminals/service points, if we were to

increase the infrastructure cost of changing counters to add extra terminals, we would only just get that work completed when the other initiatives come into play and we may not need the extra counters.

Ms STEVENS: As a supplementary, out in my area money is tight and people will often take a cheaper option. Credit cards are not as popular or people do not seem to have as many of them in my electorate as in other areas and there will still be the issue of the long queues. I take the point about what you are doing and I am pleased about that, but I alert you to the fact that money is tight and people will choose the cheaper option because that is all they can do and they will often have cash. Tempers have frayed and there have been times at Elizabeth when the line has stretched outside Elizabeth House on to the pavement.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I give an undertaking to the member in terms of the issue at Elizabeth. We will pay particular attention to it because we have been provided with the detail.

Mr De Laine interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: And at Port Adelaide. We will get back to you.

Ms STEVENS: People are saying that there is a range of areas where the same issue will arise for people.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Because of the demographics of the area.

Ms STEVENS: And because people do not have a lot of money.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We undertake to do that and be in contact with you.

Ms STEVENS: When can we look to see some improvement?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have already indicated to the member that the new phone service starts on 23 June involving up to 15 new stations, and Cabinet has given authority for the credit card facility and it would not necessarily take long to implement that.

Mr Frisby: The specifications are currently with Treasury and the Reserve Bank to negotiate and prepare a tender specification for the supply of the credit card facility. We expect that that will take no more than a month to go to the tender process.

Ms STEVENS: My question relates to page 337. I want to talk about the provision of a wombat crossing outside Lyell McEwin Hospital. We are interested in having a wombat crossing on Haydown Road opposite the Lyell McEwin Hospital where many people using walking frames find it difficult to cross. There was an issue raised because that road is serviced by TransAdelaide and Serco buses. Apparently there was no problem in travelling over a wombat crossing by Serco buses but I understand there was a problem from the point of view of TransAdelaide. I understand there was to be some sort of investigation about this matter in order to get some sort of resolution but I believe it is still not resolved and I would like to know where it is up to.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will ask the CEO, Mr Payze, to pursue the matter with TransAdelaide's General Manager. This would probably be the Womma Road bus section, based at Elizabeth. They essentially make the decisions themselves about how they operate. There may have to be some discussion because we have certainly devolved decision making within TransAdelaide. Mr Payze may have to be persuasive or may have to go out to Womma Road as well. I know the area and I can understand why this would be an issue.

Mr MEIER: I believe that \$20 million of State funds have been allocated to the Adelaide Airport runway extension this year. Can the Minister outline the proposed time table for the completion of all the complex issues associated with the extension of the Adelaide runway. Can she also indicate how much money has been spent to date and for what purpose?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The question without notice is excellent and the timing is perfect. Only 10 minutes ago Mr Payze received a phone call message that the Federal Airports Corporation has today called tenders for the runway construction at Adelaide Airport and they will close on 16 July. This will be the first time the Federal Government through the Federal Airports Corporation has actually invested anything in the project to extend the runway and do all the other associated works. All the money that has been spent there to date has been State Government funds from the \$20 million assigned. The State spent \$1.7 million in 1995-96, \$15.2 million this year and we anticipate \$3.1 million next year.

The Federal Government is providing a budget allocation of \$25 million in 1997-98 and a further \$23 million in 1998-99 and that sum in 1998-99 includes the \$20 million refund to the State. It is then the State's intention that that would be invested in the redevelopment of the airport terminal, the integrated terminals. That is investment and I think Mr Payze had discussions yesterday with the FAC and there were other officers in Sydney yesterday and still today discussing the sale of the lease of the airport and the fact that all bidders and interested parties are aware of our \$20 million lure or attraction fee for bidders to also share our commitment to the terminal integration project.

Mr MEIER: Minister, I refer to pages 335 and 336 of the Program Estimates and I note, as you highlighted in your opening remarks, the Southern Expressway (which has come to fruition after a decade of broken promises by the former Labor Government) and the upgrading of Mount Barker Road to national highway standard. What funds have been spent on the respective projects to date, what works have been carried out, to what extent have South Australian contractors and subcontractors been employed, and is the Minister able to indicate how many jobs have been created on either of the projects? Perhaps as an aside, I am aware that the use of air exhaust brakes by some heavy operators on the Mount Barker Road is causing concern to residents and I wonder whether the Government has any proposals to stop or limit this practice?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is a long question. The exhaust brakes issue has been brought to my attention by people from as far away as Hahndorf and also throughout the metropolitan area where trucks are travelling. It is a particular issue on the lower reaches of the Mount Barker Road near the intersection of Portrush Road and Cross Road. The department intends to install signs by the end of this month at the intersection of Portrush Road, Cross Road and Glen Osmond Road advising heavy vehicle operators not to use their exhaust brakes. The South Australian Road Transport Association has confirmed that there is no need for the use of air brakes in the city. I had an experience the other day when I was returning late at night from Murray Bridge and the noise of the air brakes was absolutely penetrating. It must have been heard from this one truck for kilometres around. The South Australian Road Transport Association is circulating information to all its members and there will be advertising and other efforts through relevant magazines to alert truck owners and operators that we do not want the use of air

brakes in the metropolitan area, but probably along other reaches of the Mount Barker Road as well. But, initially, with support from the Environment Protection Authority we are focusing our effort at this site—Portrush Road, Cross Road and Glen Osmond Road intersection—and we will be monitoring success of requests to operators.

In relation to the Southern Expressway, I mentioned in my opening statement that stage 1—Darlington to Reynella—will be completed by December. I think this month we are calling for final road construction contractors for the Panatalinga intersection where it joins the Southern Expressway. The technology contract has been awarded to Philips. In terms of jobs we may not have all the figures at our fingertips but I know that it has been a huge job creation scheme on site. I know that some 23 local firms have been involved in subcontracting work with MacMahon being the principal contractor, a South Australian based firm.

All contracts to date in relation to Mount Barker Road have been local. There will be particular interest in the tunnel project and that will attract big interstate interests because of the special nature of that work. What Mr Payze cannot answer we will forward by 4 July.

Mr Payze: I cannot add to the numbers of jobs but I could give information in respect of the specific contractors and consultants that have been used on both projects. It is fair to say that all have had a particular involvement in this State if they are not based specifically in this State. If you would like further information on the contractors I can provide the details, but there has been the local contracting industry involvement and local consulting industry involvement in both projects.

Mr Argent: In relation to the contract with Philips for the traffic management system that will be implemented on the Southern Expressway, some interesting information can be shared with the Committee. The system will be unique. It will be the first system of its kind, certainly in this country. Recently, some people associated with the project, including DRT officers, visited the United Kingdom and Europe to inspect similar sorts of systems that have been installed. They discovered that what we were proposing was essentially at the leading edge of sophisticated management systems in the world. They were comforted by the information that they received and work is now progressing in designing that system.

Of course, that system will be linked to the Adelaide coordinated traffic signal system which is managed from Walkerville and that is the system which links all the existing traffic signals throughout metropolitan Adelaide. A management system will also be installed in the Mount Barker Road project, particularly associated with the tunnel, and that also will be linked to the system. There will be a comprehensive incident and management system installed and associated with both projects.

Mr MEIER: I refer to the matter of disabled parking permits (page 337 of the Program Estimates). From time to time, I have received representations from people with a disability seeking access to disabled parking permits and from people who have a temporary need for such a permit. Does the Government propose to extend the current permit arrangements to address these needs?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, we do, but legislative change is required. I can indicate that in the next session of Parliament we will be introducing legislation to extend disabled persons' parking permits for temporary use and also to allow access by organisations. This is an important issue

for many people who have physical mobility problems. I think South Australia is probably more advanced than anywhere else in Australia, if not overseas, in catering for people with disabilities whether via access buses or taxis or when using a motor car. Certainly, with the cooperation of local councils and most building owners—not always the cooperation of the public who sometimes use the spaces designated for people with disabilities—we are keen to see an extension of this scheme.

The provisions to extend the scheme in terms of amendments to the Local Government Act and the Motor Vehicles Act have been incorporated into major legislation for review of the Local Government Act which is out for consultation with councils at the present time. If that consultation takes longer than the Minister would wish, or I would hope in this instance, we will take out these sections of the Local Government Act and introduce a specific Bill to address these issues. The scheme is actually operated by the Minister for Local Government Relations—not the Department of Transport—but I have a very keen interest in disability issues and assistance to people with disabilities to make life more rewarding when it is not easy. I am also fortunate through the Motor Vehicles Act to be able to do something about it.

Mr De LAINE: The next three questions refer to page 335 of the Program Estimates and Australian National. What is your estimate of the number of AN jobs that are likely to be lost in South Australia as a result of AN's privatisation?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The bulk of the jobs were lost over the period of the former Federal Labor Government. We do not have that many jobs left in South Australia; I think the work force is down to about 900 (I will get the specific number). Without question the work force went from 7 000 to 3 000 when Federal Labor was in power. Today we are dealing with some extraordinarily skilled people who, in good faith, have done a hell of a lot of work to reform their practices and make their businesses efficient and they deserve every bit of understanding and support that we can provide. They want the sale to proceed.

Mr De LAINE: You do not see further jobs being lost?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Jobs will be lost, and there are jobs going now. That is why the Federal Government has offered this \$20 million reform fund and has sought applications. I chair the advisory committee which is assessing applications, and there are some outstanding applications. That will help immediately with jobs and, in the longer term, provide a lot of jobs. But that money is at risk if this sale does not go through. Every way you look at it, whether it is the dignity of the work force or whether it is longer term jobs because of the investment of this new money in new businesses, the sale should proceed.

Mr De LAINE: What analyses has the South Australian Government undertaken as to the likely impact on the fragile South Australian economy of the privatisation and restructuring of AN? What do these analyses reveal? Who undertook the analyses? Will the Minister release them?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Department of Transport did not do them but the Economic Development Authority might have. I will make inquiries about it. I reinforce the statement I made earlier: this is not an easy issue. AN is losing business and that makes jobs vulnerable; it has lost business in the workshops and there is now no work for the workers. They want to get on with their lives. They want jobs and want to have a management and support system that will

go out and win work and they know that under the current arrangements that is not happening.

As I say, jobs are going now: that has been agreed between the work force, unions and management. At the moment it is a slow death for AN and we want to halt that and start afresh. The work force knows not only that there will be further reductions in job opportunities and placements because of the sale but also that many jobs will be retained in rail, and that is what is essential for us at this time.

The honourable member must remember that the Rail Transfer Agreement contains limited means for us to do much to protect the very people who Labor profess to be concerned about. It has no power in terms of Port Augusta because that was a Commonwealth business. The Rail Transfer Agreement only has powers in terms of the former South Australian railways, so the Port Augusta issues are not ones that we can do anything about in terms of the agreement. Even with the Rail Transfer Agreement, what the former Federal Government did was allow AN to stop services on the Mount Gambier line but it never triggered the legal means in the agreement to allow us to seek an arbitrator.

What Labor did formally at the Federal level the Liberal and Coalition can easily do too—and that is to cease services. We have no power to stop that because it has not formally indicated that it will not run a rail business on those lines. That is where we are so vulnerable. Notwithstanding that, we can frustrate the process by a whole range of means but I have chosen not to do so out of respect for the work force and the fact that only with new management, new commitment and new investment will we see rail win business from road again in this State.

Mr De LAINE: Does the Minister accept the findings of the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies that the closure of AN at Port Augusta will lead to the loss of about 872 jobs over the medium term of the next four to five years?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Jobs are going there already, for the reasons that I have outlined because of the former Labor Government. There is no point allocating all this blame: it is fact.

Mr ATKINSON: But you will, anyway.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: And the work force does, too. They know where the rot set in and they know that we are simply picking up the pieces and dealing with it before it is a death by a thousand cuts. 'Bring an end to the agony' is what most of them want so that there can be a fresh start and there can be new commitments and new investment. They know that the business in the Port Augusta workshops has run out, that there is not the work coming in. They are not gainfully employed. They are aware that we have no power under the Rail Transfer Agreement in terms of using any of the provisions for the Port Augusta work force because it was a Commonwealth business before 1975. They are also aware that, in relation to the \$20 million package of reform funds over two years, the Federal Government has indicated that the bulk of the funds are to be directed to Port Augusta.

The committee which I chair (and which I mentioned previously) is aware that we are looking at \$7.4 million of investment in the first round of \$10 million, with some big projects which are important for Port Augusta and the region and which provide not only short but most importantly long-term jobs and look after the interests and well-being of apprentices. I have wanted to make sure that the apprentices—first and second year apprentices in particular—are given every opportunity to finish their trade training. There

is money for those things to be recommended. We are finalising the first round.

I know the Federal Government will not release those funds if the sale legislation does not go through. So what we have is the rot setting in at Port Augusta but with no injection of new funds for new jobs and new life for the town. I hope every member feels that responsibility as intensely as I feel it.

Mr ANDREW: I refer the Minister to the Government's cycling strategy. At the last State election, in December 1993, this Government promised to introduce a cycling strategy. What progress has been made to implement the recommendations since the strategy was released formally last October and, in particular, what initiatives have been taken to improve the cycling behaviour and conditions of employment for bicycle couriers?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I want to talk about this issue of bicycle couriers, because I am quite a keen cyclist. Most people's experience in observing cyclists occurs in the CBD, and the behaviour of many bicycle couriers has shocked observers. Indeed, it has been a cause for concern to the police and the Adelaide City Council and has made a bad impression overall with regard to cycling. Therefore, as part of the cycling strategy, a code of conduct was identified for bicycle couriers. That code of conduct is due to be released today, with the support of the industry and the couriers. There will be a trial period of three months, and if it does not work we might have to go to a legislative solution. I do not believe that any of us wants to do that but we do want to see a greater sense of responsibility within the industry on the part of both management and couriers.

All six bicycle courier companies based in Adelaide will participate in this trial. A number of important issues have to be implemented by the bicycle couriers, and they have made a commitment to do so. The first is to set realistic delivery times. Couriers are often under extraordinary pressure to meet times which are totally unrealistic, and the bicycle courier companies have undertaken to set those realistic times and to promote realistic delivery times to customers. So, when they are speaking to the customer, they must indicate that it is not possible to make a delivery within an unrealistic time and that they will not put the safety of their courier at risk. They will also document deliveries, and that is important, so that we can check to see whether the time allowed for the delivery was realistic.

In terms of safe cycling for couriers, there are a number of responsibilities that the couriers must undertake to improve the image and performance of the industry, and couriers, for their part, have agreed to adhere to the road rules (and we do not always see that; it is a pretty big breakthrough), to ensure that bicycles are roadworthy, to wear a bicycle helmet at all times while riding, document all deliveries—so that, in terms of this code, we can check what the company said was a realistic time and how long it actually took the courier—to report all incidents to the company management and to cooperate with the police.

The police, in turn, will be much more diligent in identifying couriers who infringe the law. The couriers will be readily identified in terms of company colours and a company code and number, and the police will be able to work with them in identifying infringements. At first they will be given a warning but, if the practice is continued, infringement notices will be issued or they could face charges in the court if they continue to fail to obey the road rules.

I am pleased to be able to state that all those approaches have been agreed to by all courier companies. So, if a company is seen to be forcefully and diligently implementing this code of conduct, because all the other courier companies are involved in this code of conduct, the courier will not be able to swap between businesses. We have seen this occurring with taxis for years: when one taxi company sought to discipline a driver, they would just go and work for another company and the bad practices continued.

Mr ANDREW: With respect to the Government's plan for rural arterial road sealing—which I know has been particularly appreciated and more than well accepted in country areas—I ask the Minister what progress has been made to realise this commitment made by the Government under its transport policy in November 1993 to seal all arterial roads and incorporated areas over the 10 year program to 2004. Specifically, could the Minister clarify, with respect to the Berri bridge, whether any of the funds involved in this program are Department of Transport rural arterial road responsibility? What are the plans for the two ferries at Berri which will no longer operate when the bridge is opened next month?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Berri bridge is an arterial road, designated as such, and it will be paid for from that fund. But certainly the big investment will not affect in any way the moneys that have been allocated for other rural arterial roads that are being sealed. I mentioned earlier in my opening remarks that \$10 million is set aside next financial year for sealing of the following roads for the following sums: Burra to Morgan, \$7 million; Hawker to Orroroo \$600 000; Kimba to Cleve, \$1.2 million—actually, I see that an extraordinary amount of money seems to be going into Eyre Peninsula when I bring all these programs together; and Elliston to Lock, \$700 000.

Mr ATKINSON: Don't worry, they won't be grateful.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They won't be grateful?

Mr Andrew interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: With productivity, yes. Snowtown and Magpie Corner, \$50 000—that is preconstruction work; and on the Blythe to Brinkworth, there is also preconstruction work involving \$50 000. This comes on top of over \$8 million spent in this current year, and it is the intention that every one of these roads be sealed by 2004.

Many communities never dreamt that their roads would be sealed at all. Now, they want them sealed immediately. What they have lived with for over 150 years in those districts in some instances they are not prepared to live with for five more years. It is an interesting exercise. There is not much diplomacy by or appreciation from some councils in terms of understanding that the commitment is there for this work to be done by 2004. It will be done even if Mr Payze and I are not around, because it is in the forward commitments. That is what we must tell local communities: that the money is committed and that the work will be completed by 2004. It is of credit to the department that this work is being funded through savings that the department has made from competitively tendering country road and construction work.

Mr ANDREW: The issue of road safety is a high priority for all members. This year, the Government has substantially increased funding for road safety. It has focused on many things, including a new advertising campaign, and there has been increased enforcement by the police. Thankfully, it appears to be having a significant effect as road fatalities, particularly in country areas, are down.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Road deaths are still high in country areas.

Mr ANDREW: What further action is proposed as part of the Government's road safety strategy to reduce road deaths by 20 per cent on the long-term trend rate? Does the Government still propose to introduce alcohol ignition interlock systems and, if so, when and how?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We propose to introduce alcohol ignition interlock systems by way of a trial in July. We will invite people who have lost their licence and not sought to renew it to participate in this scheme. It will be a condition of relicensing that they help us to help them by being part of this trial, which will be paid for by the Department of Transport. This pilot, which was agreed to by ATC Ministers last month, will be incorporated as part of a national road safety package. This package contains many legislative changes and it will be introduced over the next 12 months.

The South Australian Road Safety Consultative Council has also been working on a rural road safety package. The fact that the number of deaths in country areas is down does not mean that they are down in terms of a proportion of the whole: they are very high in that proportionate sense. I am referring not only to deaths on country roads but also to country people being killed on country roads. The honourable member and his country colleagues do not always like to have constraints placed on their life, but we may have to talk through this rural road safety strategy.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: If the honourable member can convince me that we will not see any change or a big drop in the number of deaths of country people on country roads, I will not pursue the issue further. However, I am not yet convinced.

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

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to page 335 of the Program Estimates and a program entitled 'Transport accessibility'. Earlier this year the media reported that a project to build a large, modern passenger terminal costing up to \$160 million at Adelaide Airport was expected to be announced within weeks. I understand that the Federal Airports Corporation and the State Government have been meeting to determine the concept and funding. Nothing more has been heard since. Is a decision on the passenger terminal imminent and, if so, has the State Government committed itself to contributing to the cost and when is work likely to begin and be completed?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This project is not being led by the Department of Transport but rather the Economic Development Authority, which has been responsible for all the negotiations in terms of design, feasibility studies and gaining the support of the airline companies. As part of the sale of the lease it has been specifically agreed that all bidders will be made fully aware of South Australia's expectation in terms of an integrated terminal. They will all be fully briefed and will all be aware of the South Australian Government's willingness to contribute \$20 million to that project, that money being returned to the State following the final payment from the Federal Government for the extension of the runway, which is 1998-99, as I believe I stated earlier. When that runway is completed we will get back our \$20 million and it is the State Government's intention that that be invested in the terminal project.

Even yesterday in discussions Mr Payze had with FAC officials that fact was made known and the FAC and the Office of Asset Sales agreed that bidders would be made fully aware of our willingness to make such a contribution and that that should be used as bait to generate the interest of bidders to make such an investment in this major project. I can gain more information from the Minister for State Development, the Premier, who leads on this project.

Mr ATKINSON: It was recently reported that Premier Olsen was reconsidering Adelaide Airport's current 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew; indeed, he was advocating its abolition. Will the Minister rule out any change to the current curfew and, if not, what changes to the curfew are being considered?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is no proposal for, or any consideration being given to, abolishing the curfew. No application has been made to the Federal Government, which is responsible for the issue. We have been working closely with the Federal member for Hindmarsh, who has a Bill that she wishes to advance on the curfew issues. We have been prepared to support her in that.

Mr ATKINSON: Why does the Premier say these things?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Why do you not ask the Premier? We have only recommended, between April and September, some relaxation of the 6 a.m. curfew. That is a special issue between April and September and the airlines, local councils, local members—Federal and State—all work with that issue during that period, but that is the only effort we are making in terms of any relaxation of the curfew. That has been a standing arrangement for some years.

A DC9 freighter service run by Mayne Nickless made an arrangement in December 1996 for that craft to land at Adelaide at 4.20 a.m. for a four week period. That was a specific case, but no general approach has been taken to relax the curfew hours.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to page 335 of the Program Estimates and to heavy vehicle routes through metropolitan Adelaide. In February I and other members of Parliament attended a value management workshop organised by the Department of Transport, which considered the best route for interstate semi-trailers and B-doubles coming off the South-Eastern Freeway into Adelaide. My understanding was that National Highway 1 through suburban Adelaide for those vehicles was Portrush, Hampstead and Grand Junction Roads. Will the Minister advise the Committee whether that route has changed already and, whether or not that is so, has she made a decision about what the preferred route should be? Is the recommendation of the value management workshop that from Fitzroy Terrace the heavy vehicles go via Torrens and Churchill Roads or is the recommendation that from Fitzroy Terrace the vehicles go via Torrens and South Roads, because I detected some ambiguity in answers to questions on notice from the Minister recently?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The national highway urban link nominated by the former Labor Government was without consultation with anybody, unlike the process this Government is going through at this time. We are even including Labor Party local members, which shows how genuine are the consultations. The national highway urban link nominated in 1993 on Portrush Road, and as described by the honourable member, remains the nominated urban link and will continue to do so. That attracts Federal funding. In fact the Federal Government is fully responsible for construction and maintenance.

That is not an issue and should not be confused in terms of the preferred route for heavy vehicles, as nominated as part

of the value management study. In terms of the preferred route, trucks would be on State roads, if approved as recommended, and we would therefore be responsible for associated roadworks. The two issues should not be confused. Portrush Road will remain a Federal responsibility in funding terms. It is only a funding issue.

Mr ATKINSON: As a supplementary question, because I am now thoroughly confused: Portrush Road gets all the Federal funding for upgrades because it is National Highway 1, but other roads in Adelaide not getting Federal funding may well become the preferred route for interstate semitrailers and B doubles coming off the Mount Barker Road—is that what the Minister is saying?

Secondly, could the Minister explain the recommendation of the value management workshop? In her answers to previous parliamentary questions, in one instance she has canvassed Torrens Road at Ovingham and Churchill Road as the route, and in another she has canvassed Torrens Road and South Road at Renown Park and Croydon Park as the preferred route. Which is the preferred route of the value management workshop? What was its recommendation to the Minister?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: As a participant of that study, the honourable member would have already received the outcomes. The department is currently doing more work on that matter. I will get Mr Argent to reflect on those issues in a moment. There is no difficulty in my mind. I am sorry if there is a difficulty for the honourable member in terms of these funding issues.

We are not saying that all vehicles have to travel on the preferred route, but we will certainly upgrade it to accommodate that option. I imagine that, because of issues of destination and the like, many vehicles will continue to use Portrush Road—and why not? It is a good road and it leads where many of the vehicles want to go, but it does not mean that because there is another preferred route which is upgraded sufficiently to take more heavy vehicles that will not be used by more vehicles in the future. Companies will know that that is the preferred option, but it is not a requirement.

Mr Argent: To add a little further to the issue of the national highway link and getting rid of that, members should realise that a proportion of the heavy vehicles that actually enter the metropolitan area via the Mount Barker Road or South Eastern Freeway do not have Adelaide as their destination. They bypass Adelaide, but they come into the metropolitan area because that is the best link. There will always be a proportion of that traffic that will use the most direct link, which is obviously Portrush Road, if they are heading out to Port Wakefield Road. That is a reality.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Much of the reason for that is that we do not have B doubles and other designated routes through the Adelaide Hills, so they have to come into Adelaide.

Mr Argent: As to your specific question about the Churchill Road and South Road issue, you might recall that a priority system came out of that workshop. If I remember correctly, Churchill Road was the first priority and the South Road option was second priority.

Mr ATKINSON: South Road, north of Torrens Road.

Mr Argent: Yes. South Road south of Torrens Road does not rank and it is just not logical. The reality is, as you would be aware that our proposals are in fact to encourage or enable heavy vehicles to use that route because it would be the preferred route from their perspective in terms of efficiency. To enable that to happen, there needs to be not massive but

some modest works on that route. Those works, identified during the workshop, start at Glen Osmond Road and include the Britannia roundabout, Robe Terrace, etc.

At the end of the day there is some sort of misconception that we are proposing a route for all heavy vehicles. That is not the case. Some of the heavy vehicles will continue to use Cross Road, because their destination is the western suburbs. It is merely trying to create a more efficient link through the metropolitan area and leave it to the freight industry to make their own choice.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question relates to page 340 of Program Estimates under 'Organisational Support'. I am sure the Minister will be delighted by this question! I would be very interested to learn more about the department's family and work project, including the vacation care initiative and the proposed work from home scheme.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am immensely proud of the Department of Transport and the lead that has been taken across government by the department in what I and, I think, most Liberals have always considered very important reforms in that people's working lives must take account also of their family lives and those responsibilities. The department has engaged some consultants to work with the work force generally. Mr Payze may want to add more to this because he has championed these initiatives. They identified what the work force needed to support them in their work with the department.

One of the first initiatives was a user pays vacation care program established in a separate building at the Walkerville head office. There is a large waiting list. A total of 28 kids can be involved in the child care program whilst the parents continue to see the children during those holiday periods, and it works extremely well. There are also after school programs in the DotCom Cafe which is held in underutilised parts of the ground floor of the Walkerville head office. Many kids are coming in after school, doing their homework and working on computers whilst their parents have peace of mind that they are neither on the streets nor at home without supervision.

In addition, the department has a referral service for dependent family issues, a counselling service to assist families, and a program under enterprise bargaining to provide more flexible work practices. This year the department proposes to undertake a work from home program. Recently, the Human Resource Manager for the Department of Transport, Ms Jan Ferguson, was awarded the Telstra Business Woman of the Year in the public sector category, a category specifically supported by Yellow Pages. Mr Payze may have something more that he would like to add so we all know how enthusiastic the two of you are about this project.

Mr Payze: It came out of an employee survey which recognised that we have a changing work force, both in terms of the number of women in the work force and the number of single parents in the work force and the number of families that have both male and female working, and vacation care (as well as sick care) was about bringing the children to the work force rather than the parent having to take time off from work. So it is an interesting twist to the traditional ways of looking at employment and family relationships.

The next phase is actually to have a look at the function of work and family and to see whether people actually do have to come to a central place to work or whether they could do their function in a different way. It is just looking at the different ways in which organisations structure work and how that relates to the families—very positive initiatives.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But there will be no initiative for us to reduce the workload on the CEO or the Director. I am too demanding for that, I think.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question relates to Program Estimates, Government Service Obligations, page 339. There have been reports about the number of unregistered motor vehicles on the road. Can the Minister advise what action the Government has taken to alert motorists to the need to register their vehicles?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is an important issue and one we addressed in policy by referring these matters to the Economic and Finance Committee or the Social Development Committee as part of the investigation of compulsory third party property insurance. In policy we also addressed the issue of three monthly registrations, which we referred to earlier and generally people wanting a much bigger number to identify when their vehicle registration expired. That was easier for the police as well and now the Registrar has taken the initiative to ensure that reminder notes are sent to people about their registration, and that is important. I will get the Registrar to comment further, but I understand that a recent survey of cars in car parks indicated a much smaller number of unregistered vehicles compared to a similar survey undertaken about five years ago. Further, and I think this is important, Adelaide City Council has recently come to the Registrar saying that its traffic officers walking the streets issuing traffic fines may be able to extend their responsibilities to look at unregistered vehicles on behalf of the police, the Registrar and the Department of Transport. There are negotiations on that and it would require legislation. There are discussions on that at the moment.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to Program Payments, Transport Accessibility, page 335. Following the Government's decision to involve the Department of Transport in the sealing and/or upgrade of roads in major tourism locations, what progress has been made to seal the South Coast Road on Kangaroo Island and to upgrade roads in the Flinders Ranges? When will both projects be completed and at what cost?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This project has been undertaken by the department following the Government's decision to cease operations of the *Island Seaway* service, which had been costing the department about \$5.4 million in subsidy a year. We are now investing a lot of that money still in transport to seal roads on Kangaroo Island. Last year 17 kilometres of the South Coast Road was undertaken and a further nine kilometres was partially completed. It is anticipated that this coming financial year there will be a further sealing of approximately 15 kilometres. Our budget has been set at \$12 million but, overall for the project, \$3 million will be funded this coming financial year and there will be other associated works on the road to Cape Jervis. Mr Argent will now add something.

Mr Argent: Part of the package involved improvements on the road between Myponga/Yankalilla to Cape Jervis which forms that connection and also on the island connecting Penneshaw with Kingscote. The total package was around \$15 million.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is an issue at the moment because we have set aside \$12 million and the package, when all the surveying and design work has been undertaken, has been costed at \$15 million. There are two principal reasons for this. One is that there is such care, and for good reason, for the environment. The road is not just a straight road and appropriate planning has saved many trees and has had regard

for creeks and so on. Secondly, we are doing it in smaller parcels so that the department can engage the local work force through the council rather than bringing in a work force from the mainland. By doing it in these small parcels it does cost more. Now we are just going to have to work out the \$3 million shortfall.

Mr Argent: Just to put those figures into perspective, the original \$12 million estimated for sealing of the South Coast Road resulted from a consultant's study several years ago. It was a fairly macro cost level and time has also escalated that. That was a more accurate figure in 1991 when the estimate was put together.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not the precise amount proposed for the Flinders Ranges road, but Mr Argent thinks it is about \$1.5 million for that project. The Wilpena to Brachina Road is where the principal effort will be taken this year. It is \$1.8 million this year and \$8 million overall on tourism roads in the Flinders Ranges. This is a big change from the way the department has worked before because we have religiously stuck to arterial roads but we have realised that we can make a contribution in prime sites. However, I would not want every member to think they have a prime tourism area and will get a whole lot of funds from State sources for local roads, because it is not going to happen, not while I am here, anyway.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 337 of the Program Estimates under Transport Safety. In relation to breathalysers in hotels, figures released by the South Australian Police show that alcohol was one of the main contributing factors to last year's road toll of 181 deaths. I understand that a trial is to begin shortly that will see breathalyser machines placed in hotels for patrons to monitor their alcohol levels. If the trials prove successful, does the Minister intend to legislate to make the installation of breathalyser machines compulsory in hotels and clubs? If not, what is the objective of the trial?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I answered a similar question from the shadow Minister for Transport, when the Legislative Council had to meet in the Old Parliament House Chamber, in terms of legislating for the compulsory installation of such machines. I have never favoured such an approach and it is not envisaged at this stage. We are looking for support for the installation of such machines and that has come with generous sponsorship from the Australian Hotels Association, the Licensed Clubs Association and the liquor industry which has also been very supportive. So, while this trial is going on and evaluation is being undertaken by the National Road Accident Research Unit, headed by Dr Jack McLean, then the use of these machines is \$1, not \$2. The study will also assess people who do not use them and ask them why.

The South Australian Road Consultative Council has been working on this with Department of Transport officers and the other sponsors for some time because we all recognise that people must become better educated about their tolerance level, and this is a practical way of doing so without meeting the police and having your first test in that way. I am hopeful that many young people will see the wisdom of using these machines so that they can enjoy themselves but not be at risk in terms of being over the PCA limit when they choose to drive.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 333 of the Program Estimates and to the Ports Corporation. The Ports Corporation is keen to see a third crossing over Port River at Port Adelaide (as am I as local member) which would provide major transport savings and significant efficiencies for cargo movements. I understand that it may be another five years

before the crossing is built. Will funding be made available to build a third crossing; if so, what form will that crossing be—whether high span, low-level opening bridge or underwater tunnel; how much is it likely to cost and when is construction likely to begin?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think every person at the table is as enthusiastic as the honourable member in seeking a start on this bridge. A value management study in which the member for Hart was involved was conducted. That is now being evaluated in terms of all nine options identified at that value management study. A consultancy is working with the department on the evaluation of those options. I understand that in September I will receive the report which will look at whether it should be a high-span bridge or low-span causeway, whether or not it has rail—although I think the rail option must be looked at seriously—and also funding options. I can say with enthusiasm that we are all keen to see progress on this initiative to get the heavy vehicles out of Port Adelaide township. Both the road transport and rail industries are also looking forward to it because there will be big efficiencies generated in terms of transport logistics arising from such an investment.

Mr Payze: Clearly, to have the whole thing packaged and to get the efficiencies that the Minister referred to, the connection to the South Road connector and South Road, which is a project we referred to over the years as the Gillman Highway, would be an integral part of that proposal. It can be regarded as more than just a third crossing of the Port River. It is a fairly significant transport investment.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand that a private company, Australian Highway Plant Services Pty Ltd, has been purchasing Department of Transport vehicles and repainting them in its own livery but retaining State Government number plates. Is this permissible and, if so, for how long?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Certainly, the company has purchased the vehicles. I will have to take the latter part of the question on notice and bring back a reply.

The CHAIRMAN: I have a question which refers back to the question asked by the member for Price on the blood alcohol testing machines which will be in hotels. I understand that the blood alcohol level continues to rise for about 40 minutes. What is the legal liability on a hotel that puts in a machine, a person has a test, thinks they are under the limit, drives, and 30 minutes later is picked up and finds they are over the limit. Is there any legal liability on the hotel or has that been covered in the setting up of the program?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: In 1991, I introduced private member's legislation in this place which limited that liability and the Government of the day accepted that legislation which passed through both Houses. That legislation in fact removed the liability from hotels and licensed clubs in such an instance. That is why I have been keen to see hotels and licensed clubs take up such an initiative; it has taken a very long time for them to show the responsibility which they are now exercising. The machines also identify very clearly that if you have just had a drink, there is no point in breathing into the machine because the maximum effect, in terms of PCA limits, is 20 minutes, not 40 minutes, after the drink.

Mr ATKINSON: I put on notice the following questions to the Minister:

1. Regarding the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line, what studies has the South Australian Government undertaken on the viability of the Darwin to Alice Springs link to support its case for funding, and can a copy of these be

supplied to the Opposition to assist it in its support for the project?

2. What is the limit of State funding that the South Australian Government is willing to apply to the project?

3. In relation to the Southern Expressway, taking into consideration that the southern suburbs are among some of the fastest growing parts of metropolitan Adelaide and that stage 2 of the expressway is about to begin which will further increase traffic numbers, does the Minister stand by her comment of last year that the expressway will not worsen the Darlington bottleneck?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will take those questions on notice and bring back replies by 4 July.

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

Passenger Transport Board, \$145 858 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr J. Damin, Chief Executive, Passenger Transport Board.

Mr G. Fenn, Director, Finance and Economics.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to pages 53 and 215 to 217 of the Estimates of Receipts of Payments and pages 341 to 352 in the Program Estimates. Does the Minister wish to make a statement?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Established in July 1994 with a clear objective to improve overall standards of service delivery and patronage, the Passenger Transport Board (PTB) now enters its third year of operations with many runs on the board.

For the first time the Passenger Transport Board is predicting that there will be no decline in patronage in the coming financial year. This forecast represents a stunning reversal of form for public transport which, until now, has recorded a depressing decline in patronage every year since 1975, except in 1989-90, when Labor introduced free transport for school students—a move which was quickly abandoned. In that context this result is outstanding.

That is a fantastic achievement for our public transport operators—not only the companies but also the men and women who are out on the road or in our trains. The PTB patronage forecast is 44.6 million journeys, the same as the estimated outcome for this year. However, the forecast is conservative and the result for the first 11 months of the current year is already well ahead of target. I am very optimistic for the future in terms of patronage on public transport.

Many metropolitan public transport services have experienced patronage increases when placed under contract. Patronage has improved since that time for all bus, train and tram services which have been operating under contract. For March (compared to the previous March) patronage increased by 5.4 per cent; in April it rose again, this time by 3.5 per cent (compared to the previous April); and there is a sign of better things to come.

In terms of contracting, during the financial year the Passenger Transport Board awarded another three competitively tendered metropolitan bus service contracts. Trans-Adelaide won the outer north-east area of Adelaide and the

TL3, TL10 and 560 package of routes; Serco won the contract for the inner north.

In January 1997 negotiated contracts commenced with TransAdelaide for the operation of the remaining metropolitan bus route areas and route parcels, and service agreements were reached with metropolitan trams and trains. The negotiation of these contracts sped up the delivery of improved services to customers, brought forward savings and achieved significant industrial reform.

The contracting process has been a major success for passengers and taxpayers. Under Treasury's 'no policy change' methodology, a net annual saving of \$14.9 million has been achieved in the cost of providing public transport, and the total cumulative savings since 1993-94 are approximately \$58.9 million. That is stunning, and I say, 'Well done.' But the changes have not just been about cost savings, and this is a point I want to emphasise: the savings have been reinvested in improved services. We have new buses and trains, and TransAdelaide now operates in a commercially competitive environment. For example, it now has to pay registration fees, sales tax and so on. Also, buses, depots and the O-Bahn are managed commercially by the Department of Transport to ensure competitive neutrality between contractors, and the debt associated with public transport has been reduced by over \$50 million. So, there has been an investment in reform, in assets and in new services, including the transport subsidy scheme and the City Loop and Bee-Line.

South Australia continues to lead the nation as a provider of accessible passenger transport services. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Miss Elizabeth Hastings, has congratulated the State on being a trendsetter when it comes to providing accessible transport and helping to develop accessibility standards for passenger transport across the nation.

The PTB has embarked on a five year strategy to more than double the size of the accessible taxi fleet and improve its booking service. The strategy will also help bring the taxi industry into line with Commonwealth disability discrimination laws. Fifteen new general taxi licences with special accessible conditions have been issued this year, and the accessible taxi booking service will be put out to tender.

A further 120 new accessible buses will be introduced into service during the next financial year. Adelaide now has four bus routes serviced exclusively by these specially designed low-fall buses, and that is more than any other city in Australia.

Taxi driver and customer safety has been made a priority by the taxi industry and the PTB this year. I should say that it has been a priority for me, too. A public education campaign has been undertaken to improve taxi driver safety, and a major study into safety measures has been completed. A trial of video surveillance cameras has taken place, and a 1 per cent increase in taxi fares was granted to help taxi operators improve safety measures for their drivers.

In addition, the PTB, through the Passenger Transport Research and Development Fund, funded the purchase of new style anchors and bolts so that South Australian taxis can carry the latest design of baby capsules and children's safety seats. Through its accreditation system the Passenger Transport Board continues to ensure that drivers and operators of passenger transport vehicles are fit and proper people for their dealings with the public.

Centralised booking services for taxis in the metropolitan area have also been accredited this year. The move is helping to ensure high standards of service for customers travelling

by taxi. Regulations drawing a clearer distinction between the activities of smaller passenger vehicles and taxis were also introduced.

In addition, seven new officers joined the PTB as inspectors to improve monitoring of the two industries. In other initiatives to maintain taxi driver and operator standards, the PTB became a major sponsor of the Taxi Driver of the Year Award, and the Mystery Shopper Program continued to highlight areas of concern and areas of outstanding service.

As to passenger transport information, the PTB has continued to improve information for the general public. This has been achieved—

Mr ATKINSON: Hear, hear!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Will you come with me to see the Lord Mayor?

Mr ATKINSON: Yes.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Good. Ask me a dorothy dixer on this, will you—because I am ready to say plenty. Actually I do not even need you. But would you come with me?

Mr ATKINSON: Yes.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That would be great. This is being achieved by big bus stop information units at key bus stops and interchanges and the refurbishment of the Passenger Transport Information Centre at King William Street. The sum of \$340 000 will be spent (notwithstanding what the Lord Mayor says) in the coming financial year on 50 new information units for bus stops, especially at interchanges, including Modbury, Paradise, Klemzig, Marion, West Lakes, Flinders Medical Centre, Noarlunga, Arndale, Elizabeth and Salisbury. Does not the member for Spence have one in his electorate?

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No? West Croydon station is also Mr Fenn's station. We are doing a bit of negotiating on the spot. Even if the Lord Mayor does not want them, others do.

Mr ATKINSON: Arndale?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, that is proposed. And we have some proposed for Adelaide which, as I say, will go ahead by some means.

As to regional transport services, in regional South Australia the Passenger Transport Board has helped to develop community passenger networks in the Barossa, the Torrens Valley and the Victor Harbor-Goolwa areas. Community transport assets are being coordinated to provide increased access to passenger transport for people living in regional areas. The Willunga Basin, the Riverland and the South-East are the latest regions to benefit from funding to help establish their network; there is nothing in Goyder yet. Discussions are under way for a new network in the Eyre Peninsula.

Mr Meier interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, the honourable member has to get his councils going. Much has been achieved by the Passenger Transport Board in the last year, and work will continue so that we can inject innovation and vitality into the provision of passenger transport services across South Australia in the coming year.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to pages 344 and 348 of the Program Estimates, and my question relates to Hills Transit. The boundaries of the metropolitan Adelaide integrated transport system have not been altered since they were established in 1975. The pattern of development in Adelaide has changed a great deal since then. For example, Mount Barker bus commuters pay more than twice what Gawler

commuters pay to commute to Adelaide, when Mount Barker is closer to Adelaide than Gawler, but you have consistently refused to bring in the same fare. How much has this refusal saved the Government? And is it not the case that your refusal to grant transport equity for Hills residents is based on their living in the safe Liberal seat of Heysen and, therefore, allowing you to feel that you can ignore their complaints?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not more ignored their complaints than have Governments since day one, and Governments since day one have not had to cope with some of the issues with which this Government has had to— inherited debt and the like, and escalating subsidies within the public transport system during the time of the old STA. So, what this Government has concentrated on is doing what it does well in the areas for which it is already directly responsible. I have indicated to all operators and the PTB that we should do what we do well before we contemplate any changes of the nature that the honourable member is proposing—and I suspect that it may well be others in the Labor Party. However, I wish that—

Mr ATKINSON: Don't forget, Heysen is a real possibility.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, that's great stuff. I will alert the local member to expect a big campaign for him to retain his seat and to work hard.

In terms of the metropolitan public transport area, there is certainly historical fact that it is considerably tighter and confined in terms of its boundary than the metropolitan planning area boundary. However, it should be noted that the metropolitan planning area boundary extends to Gawler and well into the Willunga Basin, but it still does not go further than Aldgate, in terms of the east. I believe that this metropolitan planning area boundary was first designed by the former Labor Government. It has been slightly modified in the southern areas by this Government, but neither Government changed the eastern boundary.

So, it means that, in public transport terms, the focus is still north-south and not further to the east. I do not deny that this is causing some problems for people in the Mount Barker area: it is certainly causing some problems for Hills Transit in the operation of its service, and it would like to see some change. However, we are not prepared, or able, at this stage to provide subsidised public transport to Mount Barker, but I am not closing it off for all time.

It then becomes a bigger issue, in that if you go to Mount Barker what do you do about the rest of the Hills Transit system, which is Strathalbyn, Lobethal, and all through the Hills areas. I do not believe anyone is suggesting that you start providing fully subsidised fares, because of our flat fare system, that would extend to those sorts of locations. So, there will always be an anomaly in the Hills Transit area of operation. And I cannot tell you how much we are saving because it has never been contemplated that it would be spent.

Mr ATKINSON: Moving to page 349 of the Program Estimates, I have a question on the Glenelg to city tramline. I understand that the Adelaide City Council has tried for more than three years to get the State Government to make a decision on the extension of the tramline to North Adelaide, even offering to pay 50 per cent of the cost of a feasibility study. It appears to the Opposition that the Government is dragging its feet on this matter. Is it not a fact that the real reason the extension of the tramline is being held up is the Government's decision to cease bus through routing when

Serco was awarded the inner north contract, therefore vastly increasing the numbers of buses using Adelaide streets, particularly King William Street, therefore making it extremely difficult for a two track tramline to operate?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: For the honourable member's benefit, there is no relationship at all with Serco winning the inner north contract and the future possibilities for an extension of the Glenelg tramline. This Government has never contemplated extending the line into North Adelaide. We have certainly—and I have just consulted with Mr Damin—never heard of any offer from the Adelaide City Council in terms of part funding such a study. The work that this Government is doing through the PTB, representing the Department of Transport and TransAdelaide, is for an extension of the line to join in west of the railway station into the existing track past City West campus so that we join up with what I believe is going to be a very big population—and growing bigger with EDS and other student populations in the not too distant future—which is not adequately being served by public transport at the present time; and this could easily help justify, in my view, expenditure on the extension of the line. This is not just my view alone; it is being carefully studied at present by the working group. That is the only area of expansion that we are looking at.

Mr ATKINSON: What is the approximate cost of extending the tramline up King William Street and left along North Terrace to the City West Campus?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This matter was introduced for debate when Professor Pete Fielding was commissioned by the former Government. It is my recollection that the then Minister for Transport (Hon. Frank Blevins) commissioned the Transport Policy Unit to undertake a study. He took costing options, and at the end of the day he favoured the proposal that we are now looking at. I will see what we can find in terms of costings to North Adelaide, but I do not think that work has ever been done. Costings have been done for extending the tramline to North Terrace and then turning left to join in with the train line.

Mr ANDREW: I am pleased to note from the Minister's opening remarks the outstanding increase in patronage since the Government came to power. Will the Minister explain to the Committee how she, the Government and the board plan to maintain, improve and increase patronage, and will she also make reference to how the promotion of public transport may be used to further increase patronage?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Anyone who has worked with me would agree that patronage is an obsession of mine. I have always argued that none of us would have a reason for being in our job—whether it be as a member of Parliament (particularly a Minister) or with the PTB—if we were still presiding over a system that had falling numbers and increasing costs. I will not accept that. This has been our focus. I am thrilled to think that we can come before this Committee and say at this time that we have stopped the rot. A conservative estimate of the number of passengers for the coming financial year is 44.6 million. Over the past two months of March and April alone compared with the previous year there has been an increase of 5.4 million and 3.5 million passengers respectively. These figures should be viewed against those of western countries generally which are experiencing a 2 per cent decline in urban public transport use. We have had our decline. The rest of the world is continuing to decline in terms of use, and we have stopped and are turning it around.

Without question, competition and contracting have been the key to breaking the monopoly of the old STA as well as the incorporation in new contracts of incentives for performance. That performance is measured not only in terms of distance travelled by the fleet but in terms of the minimum standard of service that we want as well as passenger numbers. They are rewarded financially for each passenger. That is a positive initiative because it has promoted greater concentration by operators on delivering clean, safe and efficient services. Serco and TransAdelaide are seeking to meet customer expectations. They are looking at new service issues and they are publicising their services.

I would like to tell the Committee about one of the finest days in public transport. During that stinking hot February period I received a telephone call from Mr Benger, the General Manager of TransAdelaide. He said that he wanted me to know that on the trains and on some buses TransAdelaide had organised the serving of spring water from the Hills as a corporate initiative. He wanted to let me know this because he knew that I would think it was important that they were thinking of their customers first. I was absolutely thrilled, because a few years ago they would not have bothered much about their customers: they did not really care as long as they were paid. That situation has changed.

Half an hour later, the General Manager of Serco—so the information came right from the top in both instances—rang me to say that they were not only serving water but cordial and water to outdo TransAdelaide. I thought this was brilliant. The General Managers of both organisations and their staff knew that this was important. The message had got through to them, and they then sought to speak to me. I think this was a special day in terms of public transport customer service. It demonstrated a big change in attitude in the delivery of services.

Mr ANDREW: I understand that the shadow Minister for Transport recently claimed that the fare increase has slashed the discount on multitrip tickets and that this would increase the price of a multitrip ticket by 20¢ which would indicate an increase of 2¢ a journey. Will the Minister clarify this information and put it into perspective?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The comments of the shadow Minister are probably not worth a comment by me, but as the honourable member has asked the question I will answer it. This was nothing more than an ill-informed comment or a beat-up to get a cheap headline. There will be an average increase from 6 July of 1.1 per cent. A multitrip ticket will increase from \$16.80 to \$17 (a 20¢ increase or 2¢ per journey). That will mean that you will be able to go from Gawler to Noarlunga for 2¢ more than you will be able to on 5 July. Many people will probably buy their ticket before 6 July for \$16.80 and travel on that ticket for some time.

There has been no feedback to the Passenger Information Centre denoting resistance or alarm. I am advised that there has been very little customer feedback about this issue. This is part of a three year strategy. We have been making modest changes to the price of the multitrip ticket. A generous discount is offered for the purchase of 10 tickets. A passenger can buy 10 tickets at a multitrip price. So, there is a discount in excess of 30 per cent. When we reduce the discount it will still be the most generous in Australia. We are providing a better service, and most people who travel on public transport would recognise that that comes at a cost.

The concession into peak multi-trip will increase by 10 cents, which is simply 1 cent per journey. It is also important to recognise that this Government over the past three years

has not changed at all the price of the single trip ticket—it has stayed at \$2.70, regular all times or \$1.30 concession all times. We have done that because it was excessively high in our view and probably still is high for the short journey single trip, although probably reasonable if you are going a long distance single trip. Because of our no distance fare policy it remains that price across the system.

I am reminded that there has been a rise in single trip tickets mainly because we have been encouraging more people to use public transport and to take single trip fares rather than invest \$16.80 or \$17 in future. We have found many people returning to use it again, but you would hardly do so buying a multi-trip ticket for the first time for these new customers. We have frozen the fare for that reason. Generally it has been a good policy. The companies operating the system also have advance knowledge of how we will price it so that they can plan accordingly.

Mr ANDREW: I refer to the passenger transport research and development fund, page 347 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister advise what projects have been approved for funding through the fund in the 1996-97 year and what is the status of that fund at the moment?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: In terms of the bus industry, the bus industry advisory panel was the applicant for a tour charter and services review, phase 2, \$30 250. The PTB, with Ian Weston as applicant, funded a review of the advocacy of South Australian tour and charter services, \$35 550. For a review of the adequacy of these tour and charter services, there is a further \$60 000, that application coming from the bus industry advisory panel. Those projects have been approved, but we do not yet have reports. Further funding included: community transport passenger networks—the Gawler passenger transport service, \$67 808; Murray Mallee community transport scheme, \$10 000; Mid-North region community passenger network, \$45 000; outer southern region passenger transport coordination feasibility study, \$50 000; South-East community passenger network, \$40 000; and the Riverland community transport network, \$120 000. The southern region of councils did not go quite as well. For a transport coordinator it received \$27 569. There is also a community transport officer at \$27 569. The last item is to help with the funding officer who will be located within PTB to coordinate a much stronger focus in regional areas generally for more community passenger network initiatives. I can talk more about the community passenger network.

With general applications, one applicant was Richard Brecknock. I am not sure if members are familiar with his work, but he is fantastic in terms of public art and communications and consultations. I am pleased to see that he is doing more work with the Passenger Transport Board as well as the Department of Transport. The sum of \$5 000 is granted for attendance at a symposium—Art and Public Transport—in Barcelona last year. Further funding included: women in public transport sector, \$5 890; development of tendering framework in provincial cities, \$10 000; and demand responsive passenger transport feeder services, \$18 200. That amount was a study by the Transport Systems Centre at the University of South Australia. The Barossa Regional Economic Development Authority, for a stage 1 consultancy to examine provision of regular rail passengers to that region, received \$20 000. I am keen to see that project go forward.

In terms of the taxi industry, a total of \$235 824 was spent on the following: an Access Cab business plan, \$10 000; driver of the year sponsorship, \$12 500; Access Cab—driver viability, \$8 500; the ‘Don’t Drink and Drive’ campaign,

\$67 928; taxi driver safety initiatives, video surveillance equipment, \$20 000; taxi driver safety initiatives/driver safety, \$50 000; a consultancy in relation to taxi driver safety, \$16 896; baby passenger safety through the Red Cross, \$5 000; and a taxi industry advisory panel promotional campaign, stage 1, \$45 000.

In the taxi industry, funds in the past came from the purchase of licences. It has applied for further funds for quite a number of promotional projects related to special activities, just as it did in the Adelaide Festival. Further funds come to the taxi industry for a number of applications it has made. The board has considered them and they are before me for approval shortly. The balance in this fund as at 30 June 1996 was \$4.429 million.

Ms STEVENS: I refer to pages 332 and 335 under ‘Transport accessibility’, which relates to Serco. Has Serco met its commitment on disability accessibility and has it been able to attract greater numbers of passengers with disabilities onto its services?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I can certainly answer ‘Yes’ to the second question. With regard to the first question, it can only meet them when they are in line for new buses, which is part of agreed contract arrangements with the PTB. It would not be because Serco did not wish to. It would be subject to the contractual arrangements with the PTB.

Mr Damin: There is a contractual requirement for Serco to implement the new accessible vehicles in both its contract areas, the outer north and inner north, and the majority of the new vehicles currently coming on stream are going into those two areas. They meet it in the provision of vehicles but I do not have information with me on the total number of disabled passengers Serco is carrying.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But we will get that information for the honourable member. I will make sure that we provide as much of the information that we can ascertain.

Ms STEVENS: Has Serco met all its minimum service vehicle and principal contract conditions? If not, which ones have not been met?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have been told they have met almost all, and I will only say that because possibly some caution should be required. Almost all, if not all. Again, we do not have the contract manager with us today, but I can obtain that information and provide it to the honourable member. I am told that all the conditions of substance have been met—what a perfect Public Service answer! We will aim to provide all the details for the honourable member.

Mr De LAINE: I refer to page 349 of the Program Estimates. In relation to fare increases and passenger numbers, the Department of Transport would have conducted an impact statement on the recent fare increases to passenger numbers. How many passenger journeys did the statement forecast would be lost as a result of the fare increases?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Public Transport Board suggested there would be an annual patronage fall of some 100 000 journeys as a result of any fare change from 6 July; but that will still not spoil my figures in terms of increased patronage over all. We will just have to work a bit harder. The estimate of 44.6 million for the coming financial year in terms of patronage does take into account this estimated decline of 100 000 journeys as a result of the fare rise. The 100 000 journeys represents 2 per cent of journeys.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to page 349 of Program Estimates under ‘Community Amenities’. Will the Minister provide further information on the Government’s action to

improve passenger transport services to people living in rural Australia?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member would be aware through rural consultations undertaken by the Women's Advisory Council, and also through her own work in Eyre Peninsula, how transport—particularly for health, education and family—is the chief issue facing women in that area. Therefore, we are looking to develop this community transport network with the Red Cross to see how we could deliver a community service which does not exist now. I mentioned that the Riverland has recently become involved in this process, and so has the South-East. In the meantime, the route services are an issue for us.

I can indicate further that the PTB is investigating innovative ways to provide passenger transport services to people in rural areas. I have mentioned already the Barossa and Fleurieu Peninsula studies which have been used as the basis for further initiatives and which are funded not only through the Passenger Transport Board but are important Home and Community Care initiatives. We use some of their funding resources for this purpose. They are flexible networks so they can be tailored to meet local regional needs.

It has always been a source of frustration to me that we probably have many facilities in country areas—whether it be the school buses that are not fully utilised, other smaller buses or a whole range of support services—which are not coordinated to be used for the community's benefit. It is a bit like not using our schools nearly well enough for the community's benefit. We overcapitalise in these areas and do not make sure that we get the best value from them. I think we can invest in networking of transport to help a community. It may also require the purchase of additional bus services from time to time.

The Murray-Mallee trial commenced in December 1996. We have the Mid North, as I mentioned earlier, the South-East and Riverland regions just about to commence if they have not done so very recently. In the meantime, it is this issue of the route service buses which is a worry to me because of declining rural populations. It is very difficult for a number of these bus services to maintain their regular runs. Some have had to be cancelled in more recent times. Some have amalgamated and made adjustments to their services, but it is important that we help maintain the viability of these route services because some years ago, under a former Labor Government, we lost all the rail passenger services throughout the country areas. We have to make sure that we have a backbone of bus services. It is also particularly important in terms of the tourism and backpacker industries as well that we have this network of services. So, this will be a bit of a challenge to the Government and the PTB over the next short period.

The Transport Subsidy Review being undertaken at the present time is reviewing the seven rural areas where there are 100 per cent subsidy services for people in wheelchairs in country areas. There are seven such areas operating and we are looking at how we can improve that arrangement in future and possibly further extend it.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question relates to Program Estimates, Passenger Transport Standards, page 351. In the light of the known dangers to taxi drivers being assaulted, what action is being taken to improve taxi driver safety?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A whole range of actions is being taken and discussed at various levels within the PBT, the taxi industry and my office. Compulsory alarm systems connected to various taxi company dispatch systems have

been introduced progressively across the taxi industry. Compulsory training, including a driver safety module, was implemented earlier. There is no doubt, highlighted by the murder of a taxi driver in September 1996, that the whole issue of taxi driver safety has gained a much higher profile and the PBT, on behalf of the taxi industry, found funds through the Passenger Transport Research Development Fund in October to explore a number of taxi driver safety issues. That work is being undertaken by the Transport Systems Centre at the University of South Australia and through Symonds Travers Morgan and other parties.

A final report was received on 27 March and is currently with the industry for comment. In the meantime a provision is being made for the taxi industry to meet the cost of any equipment changes it may wish to make, with 1 per cent of the recent taxi fare increase being targeted specifically for initiatives, whether it be screens or gutter lights, the big lights on the top of taxis—like floodlights—so that they can see much more easily into premises. Also, there has been a big advertising campaign to light up the porch by people who have ordered the taxi. They should leave the front light on so that the taxi driver knows it is the right place, that they expected and they do not have to approach with alarm if they have to knock on the door.

In more recent discussions with representatives of the taxi industry earlier this week, taxi drivers asked me to consider legislation allowing for the optional wearing of seat belts. An example was given to me of a taxi driver who would otherwise be dead. A passenger drew a knife but he was able to get away easily because he was not in his seat belt, but more and more taxi drivers are concerned about passengers in the back of the taxi pulling on the back of a seat belt and keeping them in position, drawing a knife, taking money and then running away. It is something that we in this Parliament will have to look at in terms of encouraging more people to believe that we consider the work of taxi drivers, particularly at night, as a valued service. We need to work with them to look at a whole range of initiatives.

Certainly, taxi drivers are looking for a premium fare after midnight, encompassing a three tier tariff of fares, as an initiative to work, because it is becoming more and more difficult to get good taxi drivers to stay in the industry. Many family members, wives and kids, just do not want their loved ones driving taxis at night. In all these areas where taxi drivers want support, it is incumbent on us to look at how we can work with them and we are doing it actively through the PTB. Also, video surveillance cameras have been trialled since October as part of this report which is out for taxi industry assessment and which is looking at those issues, whether we should be fitting surveillance cameras within taxis.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to page 350 of the Program Estimates, relating to passenger information. Minister, the Lord Mayor and Adelaide City Council have described the three passenger information units installed along King William Street as deplorable. What has been the response of the public to these units?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The public response has been absolutely terrific. I would like to provide detailed information to the Committee because these new information units have been installed on a trial basis at three sites along King William Street. Independent research has been undertaken as part of these trials and I would like to report that over half of all people interviewed—both users and non-users—agreed that these units and their displays would encourage wider use

of public transport. It would also encourage more first time use of public transport. The degree of satisfaction with the units was very high, with eight people in 10 finding them satisfactory, and this includes close to half who found the units very satisfactory. The facilities offered by the units were already widely used by the people catching public transport at the trial spots, with 97 per cent of the respondents spontaneously recalling using the units. The timetables were a dominant feature used by people at the stops. Interestingly, 64 per cent of passengers who never use public transport were aware of the unit and its features and considered the unit to be positive. It is these findings that I am very keen to take to the Lord Mayor and her council, along with the member for Spence and whoever else wants to come, because we should recognise that for the first time in decades critical information for people to make choices is now being provided for public transport users.

I am not sure whether members appreciate that when we got into government I was appalled to find that only 2 per cent of our bus stops and train stations in Adelaide were provided with any information to inform people when they could catch the next bus or train, and we had no information generally about where that journey would go. If I have been obsessed in my term as Minister for Transport about patronage, I have been equally committed to ensuring that we at least provided to our passengers and visitors to this city information about when the next bus would arrive. For instance, you might arrive at a bus stop today (or any day of the week) and you would not have a clue where the bus was going or whether it was arriving in five minutes or half an hour. Instead of waiting half an hour or taking another option, you could do something else and come back to use the service because at least you have some information.

I think the Lord Mayor and the like would do better looking at car parking and some of the features of the car parking stations in the city which many people find very unattractive. Also, if she is concerned about the clutter of public transport information timetables, she should look at the sandwich boards, not only because they could be unsightly but also because of their safety aspects. Officers and councillors of Adelaide City Council were consulted about the colour that has been used, and we have deliberately designed these information units to match in with the blue which the council itself determined for the bus shelters. It was an excellent initiative undertaken by the Adelaide City Council to install these shelters, which won national acclaim for their design.

Perhaps, because the Lord Mayor lives in the city, she does not use public transport and that is why she is not interested. I can only say, on behalf of visitors to this State and the people who have been using and want to use public transport, that the shelters and information boards are critical new initiatives which have been most welcomed. We want to see more of them and a total of \$340 000 will be invested through the PTB in the coming financial year. I mentioned in my opening remarks that they will be established at a number of stations and interchanges. We also have plans for the city, and I am very keen to see those plans implemented.

Ms STEVENS: My question relates to concession and community accessibility to passenger transport on pages 344 and 347. Under the heading, 'Broad objective(s)/goal(s)', the program states:

To provide concessional travel on both metropolitan and country passenger transport services for pensioners, students and the unemployed (metropolitan only).

Considering unemployed country people have far greater distances to travel in their search for work and in the interest of fairness, will the Minister extend the unemployed travel concession scheme to country areas served by licensed bus operators? Minister, when you refused to allow unemployed country people travel concessions, how much were you advised it would cost the Government?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not refused anyone any such concession if they are unemployed and wish to travel to and from country areas. A number of issues are associated with this question. I ask the honourable member to look at 'performance indicators' and the line, 'Reimbursements made to country and provincial cities service providers for concessional travel'. The sum of \$2.311 million was estimated for 1996-97 and there is a jump of over \$1 million for estimated expenditure in 1997-98. This is the area where we would be looking at the number of people and the best value that we can give in terms of that expenditure—whether or not it is unemployed people. I know that many tertiary students who are not eligible for any concessions are living in Adelaide and want to return, and there has been a lot of lobbying in that area. With research being undertaken by the PTB and, generally, from members of Parliament, I am trying to look at the best way to address this issue, knowing that whatever one offers it must be effective and ongoing.

I also point out to the honourable member that funding for travel is available for people who are unemployed and seeking work through Commonwealth Employment Service programs. So, I am relaxed that these people, when genuinely seeking work, are eligible for funding or concessional arrangements through the CES. Because of the ongoing nature of any commitment that we make, we must be clear that it is targeted and meeting the needs of people. So, it certainly has not been ruled out.

Ms STEVENS: The next question relates to integrated information and ticketing services and the automatic fare collection system, pages 344 and 350. Page 38 of the 1997-98 capital works program states that the Crouzet ticketing system is approaching the end of its economic life and that a feasibility study costing \$450 000 will look at the use of 'smart' cards to replace it. The sum of \$450 000 was allocated last financial year but nothing was spent. Why is the program behind schedule? How much is the Smart Card automatic fare collection system likely to cost? When is it likely to begin? Will it be available for all train, bus and tram services, including Serco and Hills Transit?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I can give a very firm commitment that the integrated system that we have operating with the one ticketing format for bus, train and tram, and within the train sector the number of operators, will continue under any future arrangement. That is one of the stipulations that has been made in terms of work being undertaken by PTB with various parties concerning the investigations relating to Smart Card.

The forward estimate for the new ticketing system to the year 2000 is \$13.5 million, but there has been no commitment to spend that, and at this stage there has been no commitment to any form of new ticketing system. Crouzet is in its tenth year of service and a number of measures are in place to ensure that it continues to operate effectively.

In terms of spare parts and other matters, we are looking at an expenditure of \$257 000 in the next financial year to ensure that it operates in the public interest. We believe that the present ticketing system, while ageing, can be expected

to continue to operate at a satisfactory level of effectiveness for some years.

We believe that we can either integrate the Smart Card technologies with the present Crouzet system—and that would be relevant during the changeover time but not satisfactory in the longer term because, as I have indicated, we want a one ticketing system arrangement across all operators and modes—or it can be part of a whole new replacement system. I anticipate that we will have answers to these questions by the end of this year.

Ms STEVENS: My next question concerns transport accessibility and it relates to interstate concessions. South Australian pensioners travelling in Queensland and New South Wales have been refused a concession fare even though they were carrying their pensioner concession cards. In contrast, South Australia has a policy of recognising all Department of Social Security pensioner concession cards issued in other States. What action has the Minister taken since we asked her last year to obtain reciprocal concession rights for South Australian pensioners travelling interstate? How much longer will South Australians have to wait before an arrangement is reached, or is the Minister waiting until an election is called before making an announcement?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Neither assertion has any substance because it has nothing to do with me. If the other States will not participate because they do not want to pay, there is nothing I can do about it. I can keep lobbying, as can the Department of Transport. Officers did so recently when the inter-government Standing Committee on Transport (SCOT) met. Informally I have done so on at least the last two occasions, and it has mainly been New South Wales that does not want to cooperate. Victoria will do so in some areas but certainly not New South Wales. If they will not fund it, South Australian pensioners will not benefit. This Government supports this initiative, as did the former Government. If New South Wales will not budge it will not happen.

Mr MEIER: My question refers to page 351 of Program Estimates and concerns the use of taxis versus hire cars. A friend of mine who does some taxi work indicated that he can earn between \$35 and \$50 clear per night on quiet nights, such as Monday, Tuesday and possibly Wednesday, and that on Friday and Saturday nights it can be \$120 to \$160 per night. If one looks at those rates of about \$3 to \$4, and up to \$10 per hour, one will see that they are considerably less than solicitors' fees. I acknowledge that the taxi industry is a vital industry and that it has peak periods and quiet periods. Can the Minister highlight what concern there is from the taxi industry about unfair competition from hire cars? To what extent is it an issue? Has she given consideration to addressing it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I acknowledge the concern which the honourable member has expressed about earning rates, and that is a very real concern. Last year the PTB commissioned a baseline study by Dr Ian Radbone into the difficulties encountered by the taxi industry, and I would be pleased to provide this research to members of the Committee. There is no doubt from my discussions with the taxi industry earlier this week that it is finding that the cream of its business is diminishing because of the active competition of hire cars. The taxi industry does not see this as fair competition, mainly because it feels that hire cars get cheap rates for licences and a whole lot of other costs so that they can undermine taxis at every turn.

Since the deregulation of the hire car industry by the Hon. Frank Blevins in about 1992, there has been an extraordinary

increase in the number of hire cars in this State—I believe from about 60 to 600. I am not sure whether the customer base has increased that much over that time. I have spoken to representatives of the taxi industry at length about the possibility of carrying out more tendering work with the public transport sector so that more buses can be used in the areas where we know there is a need, thereby freeing up services where smaller vehicles could be used at a cheaper cost at other times of the day or night and doing much more business within a contract area by looking at where your costs are and where your patronage levels are.

I believe that there would be a lot of business, if the taxi industry wants to look forward to new ways of working. However, at the moment, they want some immediate issues addressed, which we will be doing through the regulations—introduced in October, I believe—which have been effective in distinguishing the hire car and taxi business. We have more inspectors now. We are also actively looking at the standards of vehicles for hire cars. I believe some of the standards that we are demanding at the present time are less than satisfactory, and we will raise those. From the baseline study (I will provide more information) the average revenue per hour is \$15.30 and the driver would take about \$7 of that. So, it is not a great return at the moment.

The CHAIRMAN: Unless the Committee wishes to undertake another course of action, I invite members who have additional questions and who have not had the opportunity to get up on this line to ask them of the Minister and get them recorded in *Hansard*. The Minister has intimated that she will reply by the set time.

Mr ATKINSON: In many overseas cities, travel by bicycle in conjunction with public transport is an integral part of the public transport system. Adelaide's flat terrain and dry climate make it an ideal city for cycling. In the interests of encouraging bikes as a form of cheap, quick safe and reliable transport, has the Government examined a proposal to allow bikes on trains gratis? How many bikes are currently carried on trains and how much revenue is collected?

Page 37 of the 1997-98 Capital Works Program states:

The Passenger Transport Board will improve the availability of fully accessible taxi services by overhauling the centralised booking service.

Could the Minister inform us what is meant by this statement? Why is it taking so long for agreements foreshadowed by section 29 of the Motor Vehicles Act between the Passenger Transport Board and operators to come into effect? When will they come into effect? Why are there centralised booking services representatives on the Passenger Transport Advisory Panel, when they represent as yet unaccredited sections of the industry? Will the Minister explain why the large number of central booking services presently operating in Adelaide providing hire car or blue plate services have not received accreditation under section 29 of the Act?

In January this year, Serco was awarded the inner north contract. Before the inner north routes were outsourced to Serco, TransAdelaide buses simply continued through the City of Adelaide to other suburbs. They now terminate in the city. How many passengers have been affected by the changes? What are the current levels of passenger numbers for the inner north routes, compared with the pre-Serco levels?

Last month, the board of Access Cabs indicated that it would no longer meet of terms of its negotiated contract with the State Government. I understand that the PTB has called for expressions of interest for the operation of the booking

service. Will the Minister explain to the Committee what steps the PTB has taken to ensure that there is no disruption of services while the tender process is being completed? When does the tender process close? When is a decision on the preferred bid expected to be made?

Has the Passenger Transport Board carried out any market research on concessions for families for weekends and special events? If so, could copies be made available to the Opposition? Finally, under the heading '1997-98 Objectives', the following appears: 'Refocus and promote City Loop and Beeline services'. Will the Minister explain what is meant by 'refocus'? Will these services be maintained at current levels?

Mr De LAINE: There has been speculation in the media recently that a southern O-Bahn is being planned. Have there been any studies commissioned on the viability or otherwise of a southern O-Bahn? If so, how much would such a proposal cost, what route would it take and is it likely to be built in the near future?

My second question relates to page 137 of the Program Estimates and concerns student transport concessions. Over the last few months there has been a growing trend in the number of reported cases where students have been issued with transit infringement notices for using concession tickets whilst not being in possession of a valid concession card which proves their entitlement to the concession rate. Will the Minister modify existing Passenger Transport Board policy to allow students who are not carrying their student ID the opportunity to produce the required identification within 48 hours before being required to pay a transit infringement notice? Will TransAdelaide in the future publicise crackdowns on fare cheats in a similar way as the police currently do for drink-driving blitzes? As Government trainees are on a minimal wage and spend two days a week in training institutions, will the Minister consider extending travel concessions to them?

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

TransAdelaide, \$6 168 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr K. Bengler, General Manager, TransAdelaide.
Mr S. Warren, Group Manager, Finance and Information.
Mrs S. Perkins, Corporate Accountant.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination. I refer members to pages 78 and 218 to 219 of the Estimates of Receipts and Payments and pages 353 to 360 in the Program Estimates and Information. I invite the Minister to make an opening statement, followed by the lead speaker for the Opposition.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: TransAdelaide has successfully met the challenge of becoming a publicly owned transport provider which can successfully tender for services in a competitive environment. It has achieved its goal to be a major provider of public transport services for the people of Adelaide. TransAdelaide will meet its financial targets for 1996-97, and this reflects well on the effects of three years of excruciatingly hard work undertaken by all employees.

I will now refer to TransAdelaide's achievements. A number of new services based on employee and customer suggestions have been introduced in the previously awarded outer south contract area. The southern circuit loop linking residents to local shopping, community centres, sporting complexes and medical facilities operates with wheelchair accessible vehicles and has recorded in excess of 25 000 boardings since December 1996. TransAdelaide was the successful tenderer for the outer north-east and the Transit Link service contract based on employees' determination to succeed and a willingness to implement significant work place reform. At the St Agnes depot and the Womma Road satellite depot, forecast patronage levels have been exceeded and a genuine commitment to improved services, particularly in the Golden Grove area and generally along the Adelaide O-Bahn, is reflected in positive customer feedback.

In January 1997, negotiated contracts were entered into for the remainder of the contract areas. These contracts enabled agreed workplace reform to be introduced as well as facilitating the early achievement of the Government's savings targets for 1996-97. Plans are being prepared for the introduction of service initiatives in each of these contract areas. TransAdelaide is working with groups representing people with disabilities to provide services that meet their needs. TransAdelaide now operates fully accessible bus routes on the Le Fevre Peninsula, the city loop, Marion access, the southern circuit and, in the near future, the Beeline services. All these services have enjoyed increased patronage.

TransAdelaide's Nightmoves service coordinates bus and taxi services to provide late night transport for a flat fare. Last month, Nightmoves doubled the size of its service coverage with the introduction of two additional routes to the Adelaide Hills and Blackwood areas. These services supplement the existing routes in the north-eastern and southern suburbs. Hills Transit, which combined the services of the Mount Barker Passenger Service and TransAdelaide's Aldgate depot in 1996, has continued to report favourable patronage figures. This year, new customer service initiatives such as after hours taxi services and improved services to Flinders University have been introduced, and more are planned based on specific customer surveys and focus group discussions.

Additional Sunday rail services, representing the first increase in Sunday services since 1992, were trialled during the summer period and resulted in additional patronage on all rail lines. TransAdelaide's subsidiary corporation, Austrics, has joined forces with CGEA and is generating sales of its transport software both interstate and overseas. Over the past year, TransAdelaide's head office overheads have been reduced even further. There has been a 10.9 per cent reduction of corporate employees so far this year bringing the total reduction of head office overheads since 1993 to about 52 per cent. Clearly, all Transadelaide employees have embraced the cost-effective competitive spirit needed to support the initiatives taken by operating employees. The reduction in TransAdelaide's patronage, as outlined in the 1996-97 Program Estimates, is primarily due to contracts in the northern suburbs and the inner north being awarded to an alternative provider. Over the remainder of the network for which TransAdelaide is responsible, patronage has improved. I point that out, because the figures can be misleading, but TransAdelaide has excelled in the areas for which it is responsible.

I now turn to future initiatives. Recent patronage figures highlight that the long history of patronage loss has been reversed. There is now a positive approach to service and to

building on service changes that have been made to date. Whilst patronage is strongly affected by external factors, the principal challenge for TransAdelaide is to respond appropriately to regional trends by increasing the flexibility of its services to meet the diverse transport needs of both users and potential users. In the meantime, in an extremely challenging year of great change with a mix of success and disappointment with the tender outcomes, it is pleasing to report that TransAdelaide has achieved its budget targets. The total savings now represent a reduction in TransAdelaide's operating costs per vehicle hour of 20 per cent since 1993-94, and this is a very fine achievement considering the fact that there has been no cut in services to meet budget targets as was the practice during the term of the former Government. So, it has been done by looking at overheads.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand from my own observations that more women than men use our buses and trains. Research and anecdotal evidence shows that many women feel unsafe on trains, particularly at night. I congratulate the Minister on introducing the position of passenger service assistant on trains. Has there been any change to the number of passenger service assistants on TransAdelaide trains from 1995-96 to 1996-97, and what is the anticipated reduction in the number of passenger service assistants to the end of 1997-98?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is tied in with recent changes to workplace practice and certified agreements which the work force itself recently voted overwhelmingly to support as part of the rail reform approach generally.

Mr Bengger: As the Minister said, as part of this work site agreement there has been a change to include senior PSAs in the system. Senior PSAs will be accredited so that they can issue transit infringement notices. So, there has been a change in the mix of passenger service assistants for the coming year.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There are currently 44 passenger service assistants. There should be 48, so there are four vacancies at the moment, but they are not longstanding. The proposal is to have 48 for next year (eight senior, 12 level 2 and 28 level 1). The eight senior PSAs will also have the role of a field supervisor. We are developing a career structure within PSAs. That field has always been level with, in a sense, nowhere to go. When PSAs were first introduced, the honourable member advocated publicly that they should have a fare protection role. Senior PSAs will have such a role. Applications for those positions have been called. What the honourable member and I wanted, but what we could not get the unions and others to agree to because this position was seen as being in conflict with the position of field supervisors, has now been realised. We have got what we initially wanted plus a career structure.

Mr ATKINSON: By way of supplementary question, that means that all passenger service assistants can now run a passenger's ticket through their little machine to check whether it is valid, but only eight of the 48 would now have the authority to issue a transit infringement notice.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Only the eight can run the ticket through; the rest can only do a visual inspection.

Mr ATKINSON: I am not sure how that is an improvement because from my travels on the train I have seen passenger service assistants running tickets through their little machine for a long time now.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But they cannot issue the TIN notices.

Mr ATKINSON: That is the point I was making. So, all of them can run the ticket through the little machine to see

whether it is valid, but only eight have authority to act on an invalid ticket and issue a transit infringement notice?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is my understanding.

Mr ATKINSON: But that is eight up on what was the case.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is right, plus the field supervisors.

Mr ATKINSON: How many of them are there?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Thirty-two.

Mr ATKINSON: Staying with the same line, what criteria does TransAdelaide use when allocating PSAs among the various services, times of day and lines?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will get more information on that operational issue. I do not think we would tell you publicly or on the record. People and parents want to know if a police officer or Transit Police will be on the train when their daughter is on the train. I cannot tell them. If we started a policy of which train the police are on we could get a call deliberately designed to find out where the police were not. What trouble we could have on that train! If we started telling everybody the policy and the specific services, our effectiveness in fare protection, vandalism and graffiti, with its random nature, would drop. I would prefer more officers not to be in uniform—Transit Police and TransAdelaide employees.

Mr ATKINSON: So some are not in uniform now?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Some Transit Police are not in uniform. All TA officers are in uniform.

Mr Bengger: To clarify, from time to time some of the field supervisors do not wear their uniform.

Mr ATKINSON: What about Transit Police?

Mr Bengger: Transit Police also often travel the system without uniform.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But not enough.

Mr ATKINSON: What was the number of Transit Police on the system for the 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 financial years? Can the Minister make any additional remarks about what TransAdelaide is doing to make passengers, particularly female passengers, feel safe?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will take the first part of the question on notice because the number and allocation of duties in operational tasks is a police matter. Many of those officers used to be engaged by TransAdelaide but were all transferred, when we came to Government, to the police. They went through extensive training and are now fully qualified police officers rather than transit officials. They have much stronger powers that they can use if they need to. It is a much more effective system, but we are not responsible for operating it. We work effectively with the Transit Police.

In terms of security at railway stations, we have covert cameras and surveillance cameras on trains and buses. We have much better lighting at all interchanges and that has been critical. We are culling a lot of vegetation in carparks because, with all the best intentions, a lot of bushy vegetation went into the carparks and at stations many years ago. The bushiness is a bit scary. We are going for vegetation that is more upright so that people can see through it. TransAdelaide buses have mobile phones and after hours services. Night-Moves has done that. Some of our carpark patrols have been introduced at almost all interchange carparks. Chubb Security has been engaged to help between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at various stations. We also have TransAdelaide's own security services. We are producing a women's safety project report, which specifically will address some of the issues that the honourable member has raised, and for good reason.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to the Program Estimates, public transport services, page 359. Will the Minister outline what initiatives TransAdelaide has taken to increase awareness of pedestrian safety issues along the rail corridor, especially since the death of the student Bernadette Turner in 1995?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Following the Coroner's recommendations arising from the inquest into the death of a student, Bernadette Turner, at a metropolitan level crossing on 11 April 1995, a joint rail education unit was formed by TransAdelaide and the South Australian Police Department, and officers from both organisations are members of the unit. The rail education unit formed a safe track program. It is being used as a school education program, but can be used in the wider community. The safe track program is to be trialled in four primary schools—Gawler, Seacliff, Goodwood and Taperoo. The trial at the Gawler Primary School commenced in late April 1997. The Seacliff Primary School program commenced on 3 June. We have not finalised the dates yet for the other two schools. All the trials will be evaluated by DECS for content and delivery. DECS will also be providing assistance in terms of 'adopt, adapt and share'—a lesson component for schools.

In terms of community-based activities, the Neighbourhood Watch State conference was used to raise further awareness of rail safety issues. More work is being done through 'adopt a station' groups and the like. It is an important issue for us and we are working diligently with school children in particular.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to the Program Estimates, public transport services, page 359. TransAdelaide was established in 1994 from the State Transport Authority, to function as the public sector operator of public transport services in the Adelaide metropolitan area, subject to its capacity to operate at best practice standards. Will the Minister reflect on the changes in the cost of TransAdelaide's operations since it was established in 1994?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Prior to 1994 the State Transport Authority was both public transport provider and regulator. With the passage of the Passenger Transport Act, TransAdelaide was transformed to what it is today and the Passenger Transport Board was also established. TransAdelaide's expenditure for providing public transport services in the financial year ending June 1994 was \$222.2 million, which is approximately \$245 million in 1997-98 dollars. For the financial year ended June 1998, this cost will be \$186.9 million, reflecting a real decrease in costs in the order of \$58.1 million.

This reduction has been achieved in the following areas: downsizing of head office staffing, with a 52 per cent reduction since November 1993; debt rationalisation—and that is a very big issue for us—with some \$62 million cut from the public transport debt. No provision had been made to achieve that cut. The debt had just been building up in the past. We are attacking debt and we have cut it by \$62 million. Other contributing factors include reduced interest payments, improved utilisation of land and buildings, outsourcing of non-core functions, closure of unproductive facilities and the transfer of contracts to an alternate provider.

Offsetting these reductions are the large capital purchases of new buses and trains. Since 1994, TransAdelaide has taken delivery of 100 CMG buses and 40 low-floor wheelchair accessible buses at a value of approximately \$40 million. These buses replace the ageing Volvo B59 buses and are returning many positive comments about their comfort and quality. Also, TransAdelaide has taken delivery of 36 railcars

since 1994 at a total cost of almost \$60 million and, again, customer acceptance has been terrific.

The Government itself has imposed costs on TransAdelaide. Because it has to compete for the right to do business today, it must also face the costs that the private sector must face. Therefore we have a Government tax equivalent regime and we are also providing dividends to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

During 1997-98, TransAdelaide anticipates making payments totalling \$5.75 million to the Department of Treasury and Finance in relation to these taxes and dividends. Consequently, the real reduction in TransAdelaide's costs since 1994 is almost \$64 million when the required returns to the Department of Treasury and Finance are excluded as a cost of operation. This real reduction has occurred without compromising service delivery, reducing employees' take-home pay or reducing the capital purchases for new business. So, we have done a hell of a lot more than was done for some decades, and we have done it for less. We have not cut services and it is an enormous credit to Mr Bengert, TransAdelaide staff, the PTB and other operators that this result has been achieved.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to page 359 of the Program Estimates, under 'Public Transport Services'. In relation to TransAdelaide's competitive cost structure compared to other operators, the Minister confirmed in answer to my last question that all areas of TransAdelaide have been or would be subject to best practice analysis and reform. Would the Minister please confirm that there is no substance to the claims of some operators that TransAdelaide's competitive status has largely been a result of employees' wages being cut?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is a big issue and I want to confirm that, while some conditions of employment have been changed, no changes have been made in terms of the basic take-home pay of operators. In fact, in all instances, operators have had the opportunity to earn more. Whether they have chosen to exercise those opportunities is a matter for those operators. I refer specifically to the Lonsdale depot where an agreement voted on by operators and passed by a majority—in excess of 80 per cent of operators who were entitled to vote—determined a variation of conditions without varying the take-home pay.

Examples of conditions that they determined they were prepared to change included broadening of employees' daily hours, more flexible start and finish times, consolidation of allowances into one annual payment and the introduction of voluntary overtime. This employment agreement has also allowed bus operators the opportunity to gain share in any additional profits earned by the business over and above the budgeted profits. These additional profits include income from charter operations as well as income from the generation of additional patronage on the routes operated by the Lonsdale depot.

Some bus operators at the Lonsdale depot were paid an incentive payment to realign their wage rates. I understand that many operators have used this wisely to assist them in paying off their mortgages and car loans, and even purchasing additional assets, which has meant that their take-home pay has increased because they have not had the interest outlays. I believe it was the restructuring as well as the service initiatives that enabled TransAdelaide Lonsdale to win the outer south contract over three bidders including major international bidders.

I should advise members that all bus operators at the Lonsdale depot are now receiving a take-home pay in excess of that which they were receiving at Lonsdale depot prior to competitive tendering. This has been achieved by bus operators working smarter, harder and in some cases voluntarily—and I stress ‘voluntarily’—working longer hours in order to earn a higher income. As has been the custom and practice for a number of years, bus operators still have the opportunity to work only those hours that they wish. They can elect to work longer shifts, shorter shifts, weekends and the like.

These employment agreements have also been developed by bus operators at Mile End, Port Adelaide, St Agnes and Morphettville depots. At these four depots, and in each case, in excess of 50 per cent of the bus operators entitled to vote agreed to the employment agreements, and in each agreement the take-home pay of the bus drivers has been enhanced. In each instance, as with Lonsdale, the agreement has been endorsed by the Public Transport Union. I should note that in TransAdelaide’s agreements with the bus operators and its subsequent submission of tender bids, the PTB allowed for wage rises totalling 12 per cent over the next four years.

Ms STEVENS: My question relates to Public Transport Services, pages 356 and 359, and to women bus drivers. I note that Serco has recently run its first female only bus operator training course at the Elizabeth depot. I understand that of the 263 bus operators currently employed by Serco only 10 are women. How many women drivers does TransAdelaide have? What steps, if any, has TransAdelaide taken to increase its number of women bus operators?

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

Ms STEVENS: Is the Minister satisfied with the current level of women operators, and will consideration be given to give preference to those women who have been long-term unemployed?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Serco undertook such an arrangement. At TransAdelaide we have not needed new bus operators for some time because of the loss of some contracts. Not all the bus operators within TransAdelaide sought TVSPs and there has been some redeployment issues, so we have been able to absorb some bus operators, many of them long serving in the old STA and therefore men, because the old STA was worse than TransAdelaide is today in terms of women’s employment as bus operators.

Ms STEVENS: I again refer to pages 356 and 359 concerning Blackwood bus services. In January several interpeak services from Blackwood direct to the city, 729F, were cut because of low patronage. Due to public demand, TransAdelaide’s Morphettville depot recently has had to reinstate some of these bus services for a trial period. Has the trial period been successful? Have passenger numbers for the Blackwood service risen and will the service continue to operate?

Mr Bengier: Those services will continue to operate at Blackwood. There was quite a deal of customer feedback when the changes were made, and following that consultation services were reinstated. I will have to get information on the numbers.

Ms STEVENS: My question relates to passenger numbers. I recall the Minister mentioning some of this in an earlier statement in relation to the number of passengers using TransAdelaide falling from 48.3 million in 1993-94 to 43.7 million in 1995-96. The Minister mentioned the reduced level of patronage contributing in part to the transfer of some

bus services to Serco. Taking the transfer of services to Serco out of the equation, can the Minister give this year’s patronage numbers for those areas still under the operation of TransAdelaide compared with the pre-Serco figures?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have quite a lot of information on this issue, and I can advise that in May this year across the system TransAdelaide improved its services. In May’s result bus patronage showed an 8.6 per cent increase which was widespread across all contract areas except the outer south, which experienced a decline. Patronage trends in the outer south appear to be affected by a number of aspects, including the Westfield Marion redevelopment, but that is not going to be a long-term issue for the outer south in that respect.

Also in May, total boardings on trains were up by 10.3 per cent on a year-by-year comparison with last year from 835 000 to 920 000. Tram patronage showed a 9.6 per cent increase when compared to the previous year, rising from 144 000 to 158 000 total boardings, and I have more information on the southern circuit, City Loop services operated by TransAdelaide. It is the City Loop and others that would be free but are services that make up an important part of our business. However, they are not counted in the same way. It is important that I give more detail, but I appreciate that we are running out of time. I will provide more information.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to Program Estimates, Public Transport Services, page 359. This year TransAdelaide reviewed its rail operations to achieve best practice. What was the outcome?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You can put the questions on notice.

Mrs PENFOLD: I will do that. It has been claimed that the bulk of TransAdelaide’s capital works budget for the railway station upgrades has been allocated in recent years to the Belair line. Is this so? In addition, will the Minister outline TransAdelaide’s objectives for railway station upgrades in the future, including the construction of the icon stations?

Also, in regard to patronage, the Program Estimate figures for patronage on TransAdelaide services notes a decline of patronage from 46.3 million in 1993-94 to 36.9 million in the next financial year. As I know the Minister has made patronage a priority issue for public transport, will she explain the reason for the difference and the current status of patronage on TransAdelaide services? Also, I would like to know to what extent fare evasion and fraud are undermining the recording of patronage.

In relation to more frequent rail services, what was the outcome of the trial of additional Sunday train services from December 1996? I believe a new service, the Customer Demand Response Service, is being trialled. What was the outcome of this service?

In February, TransAdelaide’s subsidiary corporation Austrics combined forces with CGEA, a French multinational company. What benefits are anticipated to flow to South Australia from this partnership?

Mr De LAINE: My questions relate to page 359. Page 57 of the capital works program under the heading ‘Bus Replacement Program’ states that the Department of Transport has assumed the responsibility for managing the purchase of the remaining buses under the contract for 307 MAN buses from TransAdelaide. I understand that only three air-conditioned bus are currently stationed at the Lonsdale depot. Where are the other 160 buses that are fully air-conditioned operating?

Secondly, what criteria are used when deciding to which depot the new airconditioned buses will go? Thirdly, in relation to compressed natural gas buses, I understand that TransAdelaide's compressed natural gas bus fleet is housed at TransAdelaide's Morphettville depot, as is the refuelling system. How many compressed natural gas buses are currently operated by TransAdelaide? How many more are expected to come on line? On what routes do they operate? How much do they cost to buy? What are their fixed and per kilometre costs to run compared to diesel buses, and will they eventually replace all the diesel buses?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will answer part of that last question. We have 110 compressed natural gas buses at the moment and early next week we are ordering another 53, which is the sixth and last batch of the 307 order for MAN buses—an order which started during the life of the previous Government. Those new buses will be assigned, principally, to Mile End. Sagasco will build the gas facilities. A number of Mile End buses will then be relocated and distributed to work with services in the south, so that some services in the south will get more modern buses, and that is something which Lonsdale wants in that area. It will not necessarily be a direct benefit to the Lonsdale depot immediately, but there will be benefit from these new buses to Lonsdale as well. Officers of TransAdelaide and I are very anxious to help lift patronage and opportunity for the work force in that area.

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

Minister for Transport—Other Payments, \$3 180 000—
Examination declared completed.

Department for the Arts and Cultural Development,
\$70 813 000

Membership:

Ms Greig substituted for Mr Andrew.
The Hon. M.D. Rann substituted for Mr Atkinson.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. O'Loughlin, Chief Executive Officer.
Ms D. Contala, Director, Planning and Resources.
Ms C. Treloar, Director, Arts and Industry Development.
Mr G. Kling, Manager, Financial Services.
Mr J. Bettcher, Manager, Program Services.

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

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Thank you, Sir. In terms of an overview, new opportunities for artistic development and business growth in the arts are provided for in this year's budget. However, the budget not only provides substantially increased assistance to the arts but also sets a performance based framework which will enable the State to firmly entrench itself as Australia's leading arts State and to make a major contribution to economic recovery.

Overall recurrent expenditure in the arts is expected to grow from \$69.7 million in 1996-97 to \$70.2 million in 1997-98. This represents a growth of almost 1 per cent and

includes a new \$650 000 package of project grants and incentives. Specifically, grants for the arts will actually increase by \$1.38 million, or 15.5 per cent. As detailed later, these initiatives are not undertaken at the expense of existing programs. On the capital side, the outlays will increase from \$6.5 million to \$18.2 million, due largely to commencement of the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery. The overriding principle in Government support for the arts is the provision of opportunities for the realisation of artistic excellence.

In relation to increased project funding and emerging artists, the Government recognises that our artists and our art companies are keen to explore new approaches across art forms and that the role of Government is to stimulate the development of the potential that exists throughout the community. It is well recognised that artists must have support at the critical stages of their development so that they can build lifelong and independent careers.

This budget therefore introduces two major new initiatives: first, an Emerging Artists Fund of \$200 000 to be administered through the grants system. This is being established to reward and encourage the most committed and talented of our emerging artists. The second initiative is an increase in project funds of \$200 000 (in addition to that which I have just outlined for the emerging artists) and a change in the focus of the grants process to increase the emphasis on development.

This year's budget initiates the next major step forward in the development and implementation of funding for performance. One important aspect of this process will be the introduction of an incentives program—a funding package of \$250 000—to strengthen the management and economic viability of South Australia's arts organisations. The scheme recognises the importance of the arts to South Australia's economy and its potential to make an even greater contribution.

This will be addressed through two schemes: a fund of \$100 000 for flagship organisations and \$50 000 for smaller companies. These funds will be available for organisations which achieve superior financial performance and build new sources of revenue. This will be assessed on performance in, first, increasing self-reliance through their own income generating activities; secondly, in establishing new sources of revenue; and, thirdly, the level of contribution of each of these companies or organisations to the State's economic development, principally through cultural tourism and the export of cultural products and services.

A further fund of \$100 000 has been created for flagship and other organisations to purchase advice from private sector consultants in the areas of financial management, marketing of entertainment products, and cultural tourism and export.

In relation to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Commonwealth Government has concurrently proposed to corporatise all ABC orchestras. As a result, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra will be corporatised on 1 July this year. The South Australian Government has agreed to provide \$1.5 million over the next three years to allow for the significant augmentation of the orchestra—up to 12 additional players—to enable the orchestra to expand its activities (into country areas, too) and generate more of its own income.

Last year at this time I announced two important writing initiatives: the establishment of the Chair in Creative Writing and the Virtual Writer in Residence project. To build on the establishment of the Chair in Creative Writing and the Virtual Writer in Residence project this year's budget sees the

establishment of two \$4 000 literature/creative writing scholarships to enable young writers to be exposed to the world's best mentors and teachers.

With regard to funding for budget initiatives, the emphasis on development is not promoted—I stress is not promoted—at the expense of other budget programs. The overall increase of \$2.05 million is being paid for by a combination of non-repetition of elements in the 1996-97 budget (and non-repetition means that we have not cut an ongoing program; they were one-off), and a significant increase provided by the Government for funds for the arts.

Specifically there is \$100 000 for consultancies which will be paid out of Arts SA's operating budget. Additional funds for the incentives programs have been found from the \$200 000 that is currently set aside for distribution by the Cultural Industries Business Council. This council has done a sound job but the need for it has been reduced significantly by the measures that I have just announced. Accordingly, the council will be disbanded and the remaining funds in its budget will be set aside for specific projects in the cultural tourism and export areas.

The remaining development initiatives of \$550 000 are being paid for out of the Grants for the Arts line. That line also includes \$1 million of special purchase funds for the Adelaide Festival and \$500 000 for the augmentation of Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. The non-repeating items for 1996-97 are the one-off \$250 000 grant for the Australian Festival for Young People, a \$350 000 carry-over from 1995-96 and \$900 000 for the South Australian Film Corporation.

The balance of the \$2.05 million is an increase of \$1.45 million that the Government is applying to Funds for the Arts, less a \$85 000 adjustment for some minor items. The net effect is that the grants for the arts will increase from \$8.87 million in 1996-97 to \$10.25 million in 1997-98, an increase of \$1.38 million or 15.5 per cent. The special purpose grant of \$1 million for the Adelaide Festival is the first part of a total of \$1.5 million for the 1998 and year 2000 festivals.

Regarding capital expenditure, the maintenance and development of our infrastructure is also a key element of our approach to development. The 1997-98 budget is one which sees two major new initiatives on North Terrace—the State's cultural precinct. In March the Premier announced the Government's grant of \$500 000 to the Library Foundation Appeal with the Government matching the public contributions dollar for dollar until the appeal has reached \$1.18 million.

I know that you, Mr Chairman, are a cricketing fan, and we are looking to you and other members of Parliament with regard to the public appeal for funds for the Bradman collection which was launched today. I thought I would ask you now because you have been in such a good mood.

The budget also includes \$7.6 million for detailed planning design and commencement of construction of the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery at the South Australian Museum. The Government has now firmly committed \$10 million for this important development. In addition, \$3 million will be provided next year to continue to fund the upgrade of the Adelaide Festival Centre in accordance with the master plan that was recently developed.

I am confident that with the measures introduced in this budget—including new funds for project grants and emerging artists, the incentives program and a streamlined department, together with a sustained capital works program—South

Australian artists and companies will be able to ensure this State's preeminent position in the arts and secure its reputation for innovation and excellence. I also acknowledge the excellent efforts of Mr Tim O'Loughlin, the new CEO of Arts SA and the excellent service that the arts community receives from the officers who are with me today and others within the department.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Leader wish to make a statement?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Just by way of preamble to a question. In terms of financial paper number two, Estimates of Receipts and Payments, page 221, I believe the Minister would be aware that there is some concern in the arts industry on the abolition of art form peer group assessment—and we read about that this morning in Tim Lloyd's article in the *Advertiser*. I understand that there has been no consultation with the arts industry on this change, whereby the seven art form committees—music, theatre, dance, literature, visual arts, arts and crafts, community arts and Aboriginal arts—are to be replaced by three committees which cover the three areas stated to be Government policy objectives, which I understand are, first, arts leadership, professional development and emerging artists; secondly, cultural tourism and export; and, thirdly, new commissions, events and festivals. There is some concern that these three areas listed are not designed to encourage new art forms or hybrid art forms (as mentioned in the *Advertiser* article).

How many peers will there be on each assessment committee? Will all art forms be represented at least on the first-named committee, which deals with emerging artists, professional development and arts leadership and on the third committee, which deals with events and new commissions and festivals?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This has been a matter that has been discussed informally for a long time in art circles and with me. It has been a matter that has arisen also from various representations from the Arts Industry Council about the new way in which we should be looking at support for the arts in this State. It certainly represents best practice. It also represents a growth in maturity of our arts community in this State, where our artists are bringing in submissions even today and talking with arts department personnel about what the honourable member referred to as hybrid arts: a whole lot of people working in collaboration. For instance, the production *Quiver* has the Leigh Warren Dancers, music by Graham Koehne and the Adelaide String Quartet. And there are others. Doppio Teatro just does not fit into the usual art form any more. It is doing extraordinary things in multimedia and with young people and it has been challenging the rigid art form guidelines that have been established for many years. They have served the State well, but people have been challenging the guidelines and they have challenged us to come up with a more modern practice in the way in which we look at the distribution of grant funds.

The fact that we have emerging artists, incentive funds and a number of other initiatives that I have outlined here also demands that we have a different way of supporting artists. I can reassure the honourable member and the arts community generally that this whole new funding package and the peer assessment measures that I have outlined are based on strong consultation with arts industry people. I meet with an informal group regularly and they are terrific representatives of the arts in this State and of the art form. They have served on various art form committees, both federally and in the State, and they argue that it is time for

change. That is why we have responded to what the arts community wants in that respect.

I can assure the honourable member also—because I would not have encouraged this change and supported the recommendations through the department—that of course there will be strong representation from all the art forms on these new umbrella groups which will be assessing grant applications in the future. The three principal groups are: professional development and leadership and training; cultural tourism and export; and festivals, events and new commissions. I believe that there is also a basis for looking at other people who are extraordinarily supportive of what our artists and smaller companies are seeking to do in this State to gain their expertise to help our artists in terms of professional development and leadership. However, they would by no means outnumber artists on the peer assessment groups in the future. The number has not been determined; it may change from year to year. Appointment terms and so on are still to be worked out. This new form of arts assessment for grants will be resolved over the next few months, in consultation with a whole range of people in terms of the detail, including a number of experts—certainly artists.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: By way of a supplementary question, which committees will be assessing the existing annually funded companies? You also mentioned dance projects as being assessed for cultural, tourism or export. Who will be the peers? You mentioned that there will be a majority of artists, but are we talking about the cultural tourism or export area getting someone in such as a member of the tourism committee? Who will judge the quality of the dance project?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Representatives of dance and other people—much the same as is done today. Today there would be three people on the dance committee but this would have at least one representative. Also, artists generally have knowledge of art forms. Adelaide is not so huge, for instance, in dance, that one does not know what is happening—and I believe that the honourable member would relate to that comment; he would know that it was so. I believe it is more of a worry when you go interstate, in terms of the Australia Council, and how you ensure that the representatives there have a knowledge of what is happening in South Australia and elsewhere. But in South Australia in the arts there is a pretty good knowledge across art forms and a specific knowledge of what is going on. And these people are always able to work with arts department people, who are well aware and make inquiries themselves.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: One of the concerns has been because of the new scheme of changing from art forms assessment to policy objectives assessment in Victoria under the Kennett Government. According to what we read in the arts press in Victoria, that has been somewhat of a dismal failure. That is probably why there are some concerns here. How will this change affect the project officer staff in Arts SA? There are rumours that these highly skilled expert and dedicated staff will have to reapply for jobs and there are some concerns that they may be replaced by generalists and have to reapply for their own positions.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is to be a restructure and refocus within Arts SA and that arises from these changes in funding, but also I suppose from the arts task force undertaken some years ago during the term of this Government, and arts policy generally—that there is a need to refocus arts activity away from art form and specific projects to development of the art form and development of the artists.

So, that is the emphasis—we will have development officers not project officers in the future. They will not be specifically art form oriented. This matter was raised with staff earlier today. There will be two new positions of directors of industry development and arts agencies. All staff and officers within Arts SA will be invited to express an interest in the positions that are available within the department. We will not bring in a whole lot of generalists. As the Leader has highlighted, people with skills will be encouraged to express interest in these positions. The arts community generally and certainly the Government value their continued contribution but with a new emphasis. Mr O'Loughlin may wish to elaborate further on some of the changes within the department of which he advised staff today.

Mr O'Loughlin: I have advised the staff of the reorganisation and the invitation to express interest in positions in the new organisation. There are a number of positions of development officer in the new organisation. Several of those positions are associated with the new grant categories. However, it is expected that project officers will still maintain a body of knowledge of what is going on in contemporary art and art forms, but perhaps that body of knowledge will be a bit broader and less deep as a result.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The arts line shows an increase of \$1.1 million between the estimate for 1996-97 and 1997-98. The Minister announced that there will be an extra allocation of \$500 000 for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and a new allocation of \$200 000 for an emerging artists program. Presumably, these two grants come from the arts line and account for \$700 000 of the increase. This leaves an amount of \$400 000 for all other programs funded from this line. Is that \$400 000 increase the one which is referred to in Tim Lloyd's article today in the *Advertiser* for cutting edge creative endeavour? Where will that extra \$400 000 be spent?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The \$400 000 announced today consists of \$200 000 for the emerging artists fund and \$200 000 in top-up funds for project grants.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Has this \$400 000 been earmarked for other new projects and programs or can it be used to provide relief for some of the smaller and medium-sized companies which have suffered considerably since the last election and received no increases not even for inflation or have even had their grants reduced? I am thinking of groups such as Doppio Teatro, the Junction Theatre, the Leigh Warren Dancers, Vital Statistics and my old favourite, Community Radio.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Inflation has been allowed for this year. An amount of \$220 000 has been included so that all arts companies (big and small) have the benefit of inflation factored into their budgeted allocations. Of that \$400 000 that I mentioned, the \$200 000 for the top-up grants is for smaller annually funded organisations not the 17 'flagship' organisations that generally receive triennial funding. So, the second tier of theatre companies that the honourable member has mentioned are eligible to apply for and benefit from the \$200 000 grant.

For smaller companies there is a \$50 000 incentive fund. When they reach certain agreed performance targets in financial management and other matters, this \$50 000 incentive fund can be used as a reward to top up their funds. What has concerned me for a long time is that many companies perform exceedingly well, meet their budget and build up their audiences, and there has not been a general reward or recognition for that effort.

We spend a lot of time in the arts dealing with crises in funding. That is not necessarily the best way to invest our time or for companies to manage themselves. There will still be problems from time to time, but we will try to make sure that we have less problems by using that fund for consultancies and incentives to make sure that there is a stronger management base for our arts companies, because only then can they engage more artists, develop stronger programs and see that effort go interstate and overseas for the benefit of this State when they return in touring terms. All the festival money will go to South Australian companies in terms of the \$500 000 for commissions. So, all that has been invested in South Australian companies.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: One thing that is confusing me is that it appears that the revised figure for 1996-97 is less than the estimate of \$260 000. Given the enormous financial straits of so many companies (small and medium) whose funds come from this line, why was this line underspent by over \$250 000? Was it a deliberate underspending so that more money would be in this an election year?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We do not operate the arts budget on such cynical lines. For instance, a sum for the arts which was allocated to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra last year was not spent because agreement was not reached with the ABC on the corporate structure. As I indicated, that will be agreed from 1 July, and we can then spend the money that was unspent together with the new funds that we have assigned for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. The bulk of the funding that was underspent was allocated to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. It was not that other projects were denied. We thought that we would be able to get this going, but because of company law and a whole range of other things it was not possible to get the papers registered and an agreement reached with the ABC's new Symphony Australia Corporation. It is not a whiteboard exercise for the election or a deliberate depriving of other organisations; it is a genuine attempt to support the orchestra which we were not able to realise this year. It is a timing issue.

Ms GREIG: I refer to page 369 of the Program Estimates. Does the Government appreciate the difficulties under which the State Library staff and customers are working and, if so, what does the Government intend to do to redevelop and upgrade the State Library?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The State Government is committed to the redevelopment of the North Terrace precinct as a whole. We have indicated in our arts policy that we want the major organisations along North Terrace—the Art Gallery, Library and Museum—to be upgraded and redeveloped over a 10-year period to the year 2004. The Art Gallery has been through that exercise and as a result the facility is fantastic. This budget has \$7 million, making up \$10 million in all, for the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery. We are working through those issues with the Museum.

In terms of the Library, the area of our next focus, for the next year I have approved funds of \$200 000 to commence a feasibility study on the State Library redevelopment. These funds are to be spent on the salary of a project officer to complete the works of a four-week overseas trip for the director and an officer to examine international library trends and architectural and other costs for the redevelopment trends of a project definition report. That project definition report has now been received by the Government. It is extensive and raises many fundamental issues about the way we should be planning and developing libraries in future, the use of

technologies, the allocation of spaces, and their retrieval practises in terms of work.

We have engaged a consultant, Mr Ken Baxter, who has extensive experience in public sector management generally, to work with them, in particular in the development of major public cultural works. He will work with a number of South Australian agencies across Government and work closely with the Library to develop this project definition further so that we know exactly what we are working with. We have thought very clearly about all the forward demands for the Library over many years to come.

We looked carefully at the issue of new technologies because, as members would appreciate, in so many fields vast investments are made in new technologies, which are changing quickly. You have to be sure what you want to do, why you want to do it and what are your markets. We are looking at digitisation of collections and so on. They are big investments and are being looked at closely. With the project definition report, the consultant is not to thwart the project but to advance it. I am pleased with the work that has been done on that.

In the meantime, this budget also includes \$1.2 million for redevelopment of the Institute Building owned by the State Library, which is critical, so that many of these central office staff of the Library can be reallocated on site to this redeveloped area within the Institute Building. We can then start the redevelopment of those areas of the Library as it will have to continue to be a functioning building while the redevelopment goes on. The staff will be moved back and forward. The Institute Building on site is the perfect place to relocate services and staff from time to time. That is needed before we undertake a full-scale redevelopment.

The Women's Information Switchboard is moving out of the Institute Building, as is the History Trust and CISSSA (Community Information Support Service of South Australia). The Library will have access to the whole of the building, other than the area occupied by the Royal Society for the Arts. They will have that access certainly by the end of this calendar year.

With regard to the Bradman collection, I have already asked the Chairman for some money. I know that the Leader of the Opposition will give generously to the Bradman collection. Do I hear a 'Yes', Leader?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am always prepared to back a good cause, particularly with a cricketing reputation like my own!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We have two more donors tonight for the Bradman collection. The Government is giving \$500 000 to it and is matching public funds raised up to \$1.18 million. That is another investment by this Government and Arts SA in the Library and the future of facilities.

Ms GREIG: Having a family history in cricket, that was of particular interest to me.

[Sitting suspended from 5.56 to 7.30 p.m.]

Ms GREIG: I refer to page 368 of the Program Estimates. In what ways is Arts SA assisting arts organisations to develop new and younger audiences?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The department is undertaking a number of initiatives in this area. Essentially it will be the future of arts and particularly theatre visual arts in this State. It is critical in terms of increasing earned income and having a strong base for the future that we must always seed our base by focusing on young people. I indicated in my opening

remarks that an even greater focus is to be given to two key areas in the future: marketing and business development.

I outlined the initiatives in terms of the \$150 000 for performances from large and smaller arts companies in South Australia, and the \$100 000 for the purchase of the consultancies to help those companies develop and strengthen their base. I see all those efforts being directed in large part to audience development and an outreach focus. That means younger people.

I was particularly pleased yesterday to go down to the State Theatre Company and be associated with an audience development initiative. Members may not appreciate that across Australia theatre has really been suffering in terms of audience participation, and State Theatre has not been removed from that trend. State Theatre is now the focus of national attention because it has recognised the issue and has gone out and sought sponsorship. Clipsal is the sponsor of 200 young people, and it is paying for the subscription series for the current season. There is a whole range of activities where the 200 young people then meet the cast and the director and get involved.

Yesterday I met a whole lot of the young people who have been selected for this audience development activity, and they were just bowled over by theatre. Those men and women, all of whom are younger than 26, told me yesterday, having experienced *Magpie 2*, a new young adult theatre company in South Australia (again the first in Australia in terms of having the courage to focus on young adults and not just young people), that they have these wonderful theatre experiences while at school, but when they leave school there is no follow-up effort. There are all these other distractions as they go to universities, job markets and discotheques, but this effort is following them through in terms of theatre.

Their two experiences under this young development program so far had rekindled the sparkle of theatre and live performance for them. It was absolutely wonderful to see their shared enthusiasm for this. Mr Gerard from Clipsal informed me that he had reached an agreement with the Chair, Ms Janet Grieve, that if 100 (or half) of the young people in this young audience development initiative continued on as subscribers next year he would continue on the program for another five years, and that is a \$25 000 investment each year by Clipsal in developing young audiences for our theatre base. It is a fantastic gesture.

We all have to make sure that at least 100 take up the subscriptions next year and we get a further \$100 000 investment back to the arts by a South Australian company that is committed to the arts. Mr Gerard is a bit worried about me. He thought I was making him 'arty'. I should also indicate that we have committed \$40 000 to market research study on young audiences for performing arts by Killy Willy Punchsen, and that effort is being coordinated through arts around Adelaide and the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust.

Ms GREIG: Again referring to page 368 of the Program Estimates, under 'Contemporary Music', what initiatives have been developed by the Minister's contemporary music consultant to promote the development of opportunities for South Australian musicians, singers and songwriters?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: An enormous amount of new activity and initiatives have been developed with the South Australian Music Industry Association and Mr Warwick Cheatele as contemporary music consultant to me as Minister for the Arts. Members may recall that this Government established this affirmative action consultancy in terms of contemporary music, and Mr John Schumann was the first

consultant for a two year period, a position now held by Mr Warwick Cheatele.

It is worth recognising some of the initiatives. I will not elaborate at length, but we could go on for ages. Live to the Internet performances is an investment by Arts SA in contemporary music, again a first in Australia. This is cutting edge stuff.

Music Business Adelaide was just phenomenal around the time of WOMAD this year because we actually got the Australian Record Industry Association for the first time ever to have a board meeting out of Sydney. It had never been to Melbourne or Brisbane. It had always met in Sydney, but they came to Adelaide in March this year and were agog with what was going on here with respect to the strength of contemporary music. They had never realised it, because South Australians, when they have some money, one by one go to Sydney or Melbourne and try to make the contacts and get some recordings, if they are lucky, and then promote themselves through live performance and air play. It is just fairly tough doing it that way.

A total of 60 representatives came to Adelaide from interstate. They came west rather than our young people having to go east. There are young people in bands where intense negotiations are looking good at the moment for recording contracts and air play, and we are also pushing the live music scene. The Sky Show concert for the first time ever had a South Australian live performance. Travelling On Cassette is an initiative funded by Arts SA. The cassette is available at a very reasonable price. It is South Australian music to the backpackers market.

The music index of South Australia has been developed with \$4 000 from Arts SA, with a lot of support from DB magazine. We have also just launched with Tourism South Australia songwriting about South Australia. The ABC and others, including I think the RAA, are all involved in supporting people to write songs about South Australia for tourism promotion. We will be supporting not only our State and local activity but also our writers, musicians and singers. I think that collaboration is excellent.

There is a lot going on to the extent that nationally it is recognised that, with Government help here and a strong industry base, more is happening in contemporary music in this State than anywhere in the country, and that is good.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I would like to take the liberty of the Committee to assist its deliberations by putting some questions on notice as one question. They deal with one issue and are fairly specific. I would not expect the Minister to have the material right here and now. As to the Noarlunga TAFE Theatre, which, as a former Minister of TAFE, I know is important to the people in the south, in May 1995 the then Minister for Employment and TAFE, Dr Such, promised that the southern community would have increased access to professional theatre performances under the new commercial management, which I understand is with Bob Lott. My questions on notice are:

1. What professional theatre performances have taken place at Noarlunga Theatre between July 1996 and June 1997? I am excluding church, school and community group hirers of the venue and talking in terms of the arts and theatre in the south.

2. Does this number represent an increase in professional performances accessible to the southern community since the venue has been managed by Adelaide Commercial Theatres or by Bob Lott?

3. Does the Government have a lease with Adelaide Commercial Theatres for Noarlunga Theatre?

4. Has the lease been signed?

5. What is the tenure of Noarlunga Theatre extended to Commercial Theatres?

6. Does the lease agreement ensure that the fixtures, fittings and fabric of the \$6 million public asset will be maintained to an agreed standard? That is a very important issue in the south.

7. Does the lease require the commercial managers to refurbish the venue to an agreed standard at some point in the tenancy?

8. If not, is the Government prepared to refurbish the venue as required to ensure that it remains fit and viable for public performance?

9. Flying systems, such as those in the Festival Theatre and Noarlunga Theatre, are complex and subject to wear. How often is the fly system checked and confirmed by an appropriately qualified independent body as safe for public use?

10. Does the lease require an annual certificate of safety to be provided by the lessees?

11. Can the Government guarantee that appropriate safety procedures are in place for the use of the fly system at Noarlunga Theatre?

12. In the case of an accident using the fly system, who bears any liability? Is it the Minister, Adelaide Commercial Theatres or what have you?

There is a great deal of disappointment from my visits to the south about the fact that the theatre is not really being used as much as is expected or announced as a venue for artistic or theatrical performances.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I cannot give the answers off the top of my head, and there is no line reference to this matter in the budget estimates. However, I will take the questions and have them referred to the Minister for Employment and Further Education with regard to the TAFE questions because I was not involved in the drawing up of those leases and no-one in the arts would have those details. I understand the sentiment behind the questions and I am therefore more than ready to accept them.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: As to the State Library, I listened carefully to what the Minister said about the library redevelopment. Obviously, there was a great deal of public as well as political interest in it. The budget papers indicate that \$500 000 this year has been allocated for the development of a proposal for the redevelopment of the State Library, and the papers indicate the estimated total cost of the redevelopment is not available, although I understand that the proposal put up by the State Library to Cabinet some months ago—I think in February—was in the order of \$58 million. We also understand that because the Government has dragged its feet on this issue in terms of those Cabinet deliberations Jeff Kennett has managed to entice Fran Awcock to Victoria, so we are losing the person reputed to be the best State Librarian in Australia because of the impasse over the library development.

I remind the Minister that the previous Government had prepared the North Terrace Cultural Precinct Study, which said redevelopment of the State Library should come after the redevelopment of the Art Gallery. What funding is the Government committing to the redevelopment? When will Fran Awcock be replaced and is the Minister concerned at all by her loss?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have the highest professional and personal regard for Fran Awcock and she is aware of that. I see her loss to South Australia as that—a loss to South Australia—but when you are given the terms offered to her by Mr Kennett I suspect that you and I might take them, too. It was an offer too good to be refused. In terms of \$160 million, which is what that Government proposes to spend on the State Library in that State, it would be at least \$100 million more than we would be thinking of as our maximum figure for the State Library development in this State.

Various readings of interstate press reports suggest that Kennett talks big but in terms of delivery, particularly on budget and a whole range of other things, some of the projects in which he gets involved are as controversial as he. I think Ms Awcock will have a few challenges there. I most sincerely wish her well. She has served the State Library and the State brilliantly for six years and, like all our Directors of the Art Gallery and Museum, they are prized individuals. No-one wants to see them go. Ron Radford, for instance, everyone was seeking for a whole range of appointments interstate, including the National Gallery, and he stayed. I know from time to time there have been offers for Chris Anderson as well, and he is still here. We are just so blessed with able people. We cannot always keep them within our borders: some will move on and others will come.

The library redevelopment will not stop because Ms Awcock is going interstate. We will have an ally there and a great supporter for our efforts here. I outlined earlier—and I will not take up the Committee's time going through it again—and can reinforce that both in funding terms and commitment the library is to be redeveloped and it will be part of our commitment to North Terrace over 10 years to the year 2004 and, if I have my way, it will be well before that. I do not always get my way in everything but I try hard.

This year the allocation for the State Library Institute Building is \$500 000 towards the Bradman program; the feasibility study, as the member noted, is also \$500 000, and there is also asbestos removal and fire safety at about \$800 000. So, there is about \$1.9 million for capital works at the State Library. Those works are all critical first steps towards a big redevelopment.

The member is correct in saying that \$59 million was the first bid, but I am sure that if he had seen the project definition study he, too, would not have seen it as a base for Cabinet approval of the project, and that is why I have not taken it formally to Cabinet. Nevertheless, we have engaged Mr Ken Baxter to work through, with goodwill but an open mind, some of the parameters that have been developed.

I could take it to Cabinet in its present form which is a range of options. I am sure that even you as a former Minister would not have accepted it in that form to deliver. Those options are being tested and so they should be. On 14 June it was advertised.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In relation to the Festival Centre, the capital payments on page 223 of financial paper No.2 show an increase in the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust from \$1.7 million to \$3 million for 1997-98. I presume that this is for the upgrade of the Festival Centre as recommended in the report prepared by Hassells for the AFCT board. The report which was prepared in 1993 for the previous Government indicated that \$10 million was required for the upgrade and the then Government immediately provided \$1 million to make a start. Since then, this Government has provided \$2.7 million over three years for capital improvement and the

capital works budget indicates a further \$10 million is still required for the upgrade. However, there are no forward commitments for the Festival Centre upgrade and it is not mentioned in the \$145 million of priority projects detailed in the budget papers for the next three years. Is there any forward commitment for continuing to provide the sums necessary for the upgrade; how many years will it take to complete (which is very important); and will the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust now release the Hassell report publicly so that we can all make positive contributions, provide input and ideas, and get community discussion?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Certainly, it is the Festival Centre Trust's intention and mine that it be publicly released and it will be shortly. In addition, I can advise that by the end of next year about \$9 million will have been spent on the Adelaide Festival Centre which is in keeping with the funding commitment and study that your Government had undertaken. I have not gone to lobby, nor has Arts SA, for further capital works until we got this master plan study to understand what would be required for the longer term to celebrate 25 years of the centre, 30 years of the Festival and the *Ring* cycle, all of which occur next year.

We want it to be in peak condition and some of the ideas that have come from this team working with Hassells are quite thrilling and it will be good for the community to embrace them. Refurbishment is certainly proposed and most of us who have used the Backstage Bar and Grill (the old bistro) would like it bombed. That area is scheduled for redevelopment, and new seating for the State Theatre and a riverside walk along the northern edge of the complex with improved landscaping and cafes are proposed. I know that there have been discussions with the presiding officers of this place to see whether it is possible to use the plaza much more effectively in terms of the relationship with Parliament, possibly a parliamentary cafe (that sort of thing) using our kitchens much more effectively and to make money for this place which we may be able to do using what has already been invested in capital equipment.

There are quite a number of ideas, but certainly we must do something about the plaza which is very isolating and drab. We want to cut away some of the plaza to provide more light into the Festival Centre because, when you look at it from the road, it is cut off in the middle by the plaza and you do not see that it is, in fact, two stories and more. It looks top heavy. There is a range of things which even Hassells, the original architects, are working on and are pleased to admit could be improved. You will find capital commitments because there just must be, but I have not listed them because I did not have the report.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Concurring with that, I think we are all concerned that in summer it is seen as being too inadmissible to the public because it is so glary and in winter it is so bleak. Priority is given to traffic which means it dissects the architectural integrity of the project. The internal area of the centre is looking particularly tatty and I think all of us have heard many complaints about insufficient women's toilets and so on. There is a real problem with the centre. One of the things that is constantly raised in terms of its architectural integrity is the fact that massive, sometimes fairly grotesque, advertising hoardings along the front would not be allowed on the Sydney Opera House or on other major buildings. Adelaide Festival Centre is a unique icon of Adelaide so something could be done about fixing that up.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question relates to page 373 of Program Estimates—assistance for the development of

historic museums. Around Australia attendances at theatres and museums fell in the past year. What are the attendance trends at museums operated under the umbrella of the History Trust, Maritime Museum, Migration Museum, and the National Motor Museum at Birdwood?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is fantastic news in terms of those initiatives. A total of 130 000 was forecast to attend the Migration Museum yet 150 000 is anticipated by 30 June; 85 000 was the target at the Maritime Museum—up considerably on the previous year—yet 90 000, at least, is the 30 June target; 83 000 was forecast for the Motor Museum yet they expect 84 000. I think it is quite remarkable when you consider the down trend in museums across Australia in recent years—not the South Australian Museum but the regional and smaller museums. This has not been the case with the museums operated by the History Trust and I commend not only the board but also the directors and staff of those museums. These are museums that charge, unlike the North Terrace Museum. The National Motor Museum and the Maritime Museum do charge and they have had outstanding results in this climate and with that background. The member for Price is a fantastic supporter of the Maritime Museum and I know that the staff value his active support and attendance on many occasions.

Mrs PENFOLD: In relation to Program Estimates—development of the arts—page 368, will the Minister outline the future direction of the State Theatre Company and what plans are in place to secure its long-term viability?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I did outline a little earlier the young audience program which will be the future of State Theatre, but it is important to note that in the 12 months ending 30 June 1997 it was anticipated on trends that the box office income would reflect a deficit of \$489 000 which was a bit of a fright for everybody at State Theatre and for the Government. The Government has been working very closely with the board and with the understanding of staff and subscribers and others to try to turn this around. The company has the Government's support as regards the efforts it will have to take to turn around its fortunes, and some of those efforts will need to be quite big because it will not be bailed out.

Members will know that Chris Westwood, the Executive Producer, left the company in April as a result of a mutual understanding with the board. Mr Ken Lloyd, the Director of the South Australian Country Arts Trust, has been seconded to the STC to assist the board of governors to review its structure and funding arrangements. In relation to the company's management structure, we have decided to return to what should have been the case and as is stipulated by the Act—the engagement of an artistic director and a general manager.

The board has advertised nationally and members may be aware that Mr Rodney Fisher was the outstanding appointment. He is a bit like Geoffrey Rush and a number of other characters—so committed to State Theatre and South Australia because of their early training here. He has a big passion and view, but on a neat budget, of what can be done in terms of State Theatre in the future. Mr Fisher's appointment will ensure that programming decisions will be more in tune with the company's artistic and financial needs.

Infrastructure costs will be reduced by \$250 000 per annum and total costs by \$400 000 per annum. In total, the company is proposing to reduce its work force by 20 per cent and also its reliance on temporary appointments and outside contractors. Savings will be achieved through more prudent

programming and the presentation of challenging but more generally popular plays. I say that on the basis that I think the quality of performances could not be faulted during the Australian Playhouse season but they did not win the hearts and minds of the subscriber base. The subscriber base has continued to fall away rather appallingly and we have not attracted single attendances either. Mr Fisher and the board have worked through this and I think the CEO has talked through some of the issues. Anyway, there is mutual agreement about all those directions.

A joint World/State Theatre Company subscription series is proposed for 1998 and this will save costs for the State Theatre on subscription launches, advertising and other promotional expenses. Through the sharing of resources and a focus on a single season I am most confident that both the State Theatre Company and the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust have much to gain from this exercise. They have been through a rough experience. However, they have maintained very high professional standards in staff generally. Some changes have been made, but they are buoyant in spirit and will come through it.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to page 368 of the Program Estimates. Will the Minister give further details on the new business and funding arrangements for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, including the reasons why the Government is investing \$1.5 million in the orchestra over the next three years?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I indicated in my opening statement that from 1 July the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra will become a subsidiary of the ABC. There will be a new board of 12 members and, with the agreements that we have just signed off with the ABC, there will be three South Australian nominations amongst the 12 member board. In discussions in more recent times we have mutually agreed on all the appointments to the board, and they will be announced just before the end of this financial year. It will comprise the General Manager of the ASO and a musicians' representative.

The South Australian Government has agreed to provide \$1.5 million over three years, and this additional funding will employ 12 more players, taking it from about 68 to 80. Ms Treloar is more versed in some of these matters and she might like to talk about some of the things that the ASO thinks it will be able to achieve in building up to 80 members.

Ms Treloar: The ASO has some very exciting plans through the expansion of its orchestra. It will allow it to divide into smaller ensembles to tour more in regional areas, to undertake new kinds of musical performances and to do more of the things that it has done so well recently such as tours with Split Enz, Shirley Bassey and Enzo. It will allow it to be much more versatile and generate more earned revenue. So there is great potential from what one might think of as a mere 12 extra players.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I understand that Edmund Wright House has lost the travelling exhibitions from the National Museum and that the banking chamber will now be empty most of the time. In part this has happened because of the complete lack of climate control in the building—no air-conditioning or heating—which is necessary for any responsible museum to mount delicate exhibitions. What will now happen to the banking chamber? How will the rent from the National Museum to the History Trust be made up in the future? How much will the History Trust lose when the National Museum pulls out? Why is there no increase in the grant to the History Trust to make up for this lost rent? Is this

equivalent to a cut in the History Trust's budget for the third time under this Government?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is no need to make up any funds because the National Museum is committed to pay up until the end of the financial year 1998, so we do not have to make any adjustments. The chamber is airconditioned but is not climate controlled. There have been some problems with the noise level associated with the air-conditioning. There have been some frustrations for the History Trust, National Museum, Arts SA and Services SA. Because of the heritage nature of the building it has been difficult to get things done as quickly as we would like, and it has been frustrating.

I do not think it has been an issue of money. The money has been there to do it; it concerns the technical issues related to this building. We have already spent \$1 million on the building to accommodate exhibitions and move in staff later this year. It is not a money issue; the technical difficulty issues have been a big disappointment to everybody. Currently discussions are being held with the Adelaide City Council about a number of possibilities for that site, but I am not at liberty to elaborate further on those at this stage.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: What about the banking chamber?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We want to have the site for the History Trust, and if I can fit in history societies as a base there as a history house I would like to do that. That is the goal. We are definitely keeping it as Government property and for the arts as long as we can.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: All of us are aware that Tandanya suffers greatly in terms of its ability to mount significant exhibitions because of the lack of climate control. I think that has been a major detriment to Tandanya from the start in terms of its limitations in what it can receive from other parts of Australia and in several cases from indigenous exhibitions overseas and what it can display.

The Minister has previously stated that the Government cannot supply capital funds to Tandanya as the building is not Government owned, being the property of the Aboriginal Lands Trust. Having been the Minister previously responsible for the Aboriginal Lands Trust, I found this to be a complete nonsense. It is like the Wanilla forest arrangements, which the Minister would be well aware of, when that was transferred to the Aboriginal Lands Trust by the Government.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, I am not familiar with it. You were Minister for Aboriginal affairs at one stage.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: That is right. What I am saying is that we all know that the Aboriginal Lands Trust is totally funded by the Government. So, it seems that it becomes a circular argument if you say that you cannot give the money to allow Tandanya to do its job in terms of airconditioning because it is not owned by the Government, even though it is totally funded by the Government, because of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, which is simply the land-holding body. I also point out that the Aboriginal Lands Trust is totally dependent on capital funds coming from the Government in order to make developments apart from the occasional sale of some assets.

So, I ask the Minister: why is there no provision in the budget for airconditioning and heating for Tandanya? Following the experience with the National Museum announcing its intention to pull out of Edmund Wright House, does the Minister agree that for Tandanya to realise its potential as a national cultural institute with enormous tourism potential, given the important icon status as well as

commercial pulling power of Aboriginal art—and that has been identified in every recent national tourism and South Australian cultural tourism study—it needs some assistance for climate control? When will the Government bite the bullet and help Tandanya do the job we all want it to do?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I certainly have shared the vision for Tandanya, and still do: it is most noble. There have been discussions with DOSAA (Department of State Aboriginal Affairs) and also with ATSIC to determine, as Aboriginal organisations, what their commitment is in relation to what Tandanya wishes to call itself, namely, National Aboriginal Cultural Institute. My understanding is that there is no interest by DOSAA or ATSIC in undertaking this initiative which Tandanya sees as being at the top of its list. I am very aware that, when the building was first established by the former Government, airconditioning was part of the project. But it was not funded then. I am not sure if you are aware of that.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: A huge amount of money was put into the project, but it was obviously something that had to happen—and we all agreed on that.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: In the papers that I have looked at I have not read anywhere that it was agreed to. It certainly was not recorded that it was agreed to. I took a great interest in going back through Cabinet papers and other documents to see just what commitment Labor had made for the airconditioning, and I never saw the commitment that you have just indicated. Perhaps it is not on file. Perhaps it is more recent—I do not know. But it is not there in terms of the record. It is not a commitment that this Government has made at this time as we work through other sources of joint funding and partnerships in it.

There are a whole lot of priorities that this Government has in terms of policy commitments that it intends to make good. It is hard enough to get money to do things along North Terrace, and a whole range of things. We just do not have the money for capital works, which means going into debt. If you asked the member for Flinders, she would have \$1.5 million, I believe, spent on providing cultural facilities at Port Lincoln, an area which has been long deprived of arts investment and arts activity—and that is a noble objective too. The Government cannot do that this year, either. There are many things that are most worthy. I would love to be able to do them and the Government is interested but we just do not have the resources to do everything to meet everybody's expectation at this time. So, it is not off the list but I can only assure you that our primary investment focus is going to be for properties which we already own and which we must maintain and upgrade. The honourable member has identified some of them already: Adelaide Festival Trust and North Terrace institutions. I do not have the money to invest in other people's property before we have our own in order.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Two years ago when the Minister closed Old Parliament House as a museum, which of course generated some controversy, with it went Speaker's Corner. The Minister was adamant at the time that Speaker's Corner would continue and would be relocated. Minister, I know that you have repeated this promise several times since then, but nothing appears to have happened. There have been recent announcements about redeveloping the Institute Building, and we know that the History Trust Directorate and other organisations are shortly to leave the Institute Building. None of these announcements have mentioned reinstating Speaker's Corner, and I notice that there is no mention of Speaker's Corner in the objectives for the History Trust for

1997-98. I ask the Minister: when will we see Speaker's Corner? Is there still a commitment to Speaker's Corner?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, there is still a commitment. I made that undertaking and I feel most responsible in making sure that I re-establish this centre. I think it could be in the Institute Building, and I have always thought that Edmund Wright House—either of those places—would be absolutely ideal for this purpose.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The main room, the banking room, could be ideal.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Too big as I understand it, but perhaps one of the side rooms, and under the History Trust it is proposed that they continue to be public offices, and by that I mean open to the public and not taken up by offices, with the doors closed and full of filing cabinets. While we are speaking with the Adelaide City Council about the chamber issues, I can indicate that I think Speaker's Corner is ideal for some form of sponsorship. However, it would have to be some brave sponsor because of some of the subjects and associated organisations. Speaker's Corner can be pretty lively. I certainly took objection to the National Front some years ago. So some sponsorship may not be possible, for a range of reasons. But we have to find the money and at the moment I do not have it. But the commitment is there.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It was offered to the public as 'Don't worry, we are going to close it and pass it over to the Parliament but we will guarantee you Speaker's Corner.' There is a bit of cynicism about it.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Your comment is fair.

Mr MEIER: Minister, what progress is being made with ticket sales and sponsorship for the *Ring* cycle to be staged in Adelaide in late 1998?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I actually used to think that the CEO of the Department for the Arts had no other interest in life but State Opera and the *Ring* cycle, but he is proving that he has broader interests! But he was instrumental with Bill Gillespie and others in bringing this fantastic coup to South Australia, in terms of the *Ring* cycle. Some 4 565 (83 per cent) of the 5 500 available tickets have been sold. There are fewer than 1 000 seats left. It is estimated that the season will be sold out by the end of September 1997, one year before it is conducted.

In March 1996, the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies was commissioned by Arts SA to estimate the economic impact of the *Ring* cycle. With the creation of between 170 and 270 jobs, plus all these musicians that we will have with the new and livelier Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, although most of those jobs will be over a three month period, the estimated economic gain to South Australia is between \$9.1 million and \$13.7 million. We will not see State Opera performing other than in the *Ring* cycle. The money that we have committed to the State Opera season will be committed to this production. There is a guarantee of \$1.5 million from Australian Major Events. At this stage, it looks as though less than \$1 million of that will be required, because the sponsorship all over Australia and internationally has been outstanding. People are excited at the thought of coming to Adelaide.

I am advised that, to date, we have confirmed sponsorship for the *Ring* cycle of \$637 000, which represents 67 per cent of our target of \$960 000. The main sponsors are: Santos, Faulding, Clipsal and Mercedes (\$50 000 each), Qantas, and P&O Ned-Lloyd in kind and quantra. Other sponsorships have come in through State operas and the Council of Benefactors (\$10 000 each), the Pratt Foundation and private

donations. Recently, we attended a lunch in Melbourne to promote the *Ring* cycle. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Eric Neal, is the patron of the *Ring* cycle. Two Melbourne people wrote out cheques worth \$25 000 each at the table during lunch. It was amazing to see that sort of money and support. It was interesting to see a different way of doing things over lunch. I think it is outstanding that we will have this amount of \$637 000 almost 15 months before the event. It will be one of the first activities undertaken in South Australia (sporting or arts) that has not needed all its guarantees and actually been able to return money for other events in this State.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am pleased to hear that things are back on track regarding the State Theatre Company. As the Minister knows, I have caused an upset over the past two years because I felt that things were not quite right with the State Theatre Company. As someone who is a strong supporter of a locally based theatre company, I was concerned by the dressing of the house with 11 000 free tickets. I thought that was a scandal, and I said so. I know that that caused an upset, but I think that sometimes it is necessary to bell the cat on these things, and I certainly tried to do so. I look forward to a return to a vibrant State Theatre Company, one with energy which employs local people and attracts a subscriber base and a public following rather than just handing out tickets to make sure that the house is dressed to impress the Minister and I, because we knew everyone who was there.

The select committee of the Legislative Council on the outsourcing of information technology has been told that as a result of the Government's contract with EDS all agencies are now being charged a recurrent sum for information technology that is greater than their previous costs. What is the amount in terms of compensation provided to Arts SA and on which budget line is it included? I do not see it there, and it should be because information technology is a cost to the department.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is \$153 000 this year across all the arts programs.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: With respect to the State Theatre Company and the Jam Factory, I note that one of the objectives for 1997-98 is to 'work in partnership with State Theatre and the Jam Factory to refine operations.' Will the Minister clarify what is meant by 'refine operations' in respect of both the Jam Factory and the State Theatre Company? I do not want it to be some sort of 'Hackerish' declaration such as 'Yes, Minister. "Refine" means scale down', and we are told in two years' time, 'Can't you remember that we told you we were going to refine operations?'

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have already gone through the issues in terms of the State Theatre Company. In terms of the Jam Factory, I wrote to the Chairman and the board in mid-1986 advising them that I would seek some changes in direction. This arose from the fact that the Jam Factory and its observers over many years have been trying to work out whether it is training, promotions, wholesale or retail. I wish they would get over all those sorts of things and get on with promoting craft in South Australia. The Jam Factory is fantastic, but it provides a missed opportunity. In my view, it does not excel as it should for the money it gets and in the environment that exists in this State for arts and crafts. It should shine on a national stage much more than it does. I am keen to see it in that sort of a positive framework.

I have asked the board to look at developing stronger linkages with the marketplace, especially with the Crafts

Council. There have been many representations individually and collectively from the Crafts Council to achieve a closer association with the Jam Factory which it resents in part because it gets all this money. Those two organisations share a building but they do not know what is going on. The Crafts Council gets a pittance, but until recently it has been doing the bulk of the promotion work for crafts. The calendar that it released was stunning. The Crafts Council does a lot of work to promote South Australian craft and production with wineries and restaurants, but it is funded on a pittance compared with the Jam Factory.

I know it is a little controversial, but we have to question the funding, when for postgraduate students all around Australia today and in every other training institution there is some contribution from those students. We should be looking to see whether all the students who train at the Jam Factory should be fully funded through the Arts budget. I have not indicated any preference but have asked them to look at it and see whether it is the best way for us to spend our money or whether we should be doing other fantastic things for South Australian craftsmen and craftswomen that would be more powerful and effective than all the money going into fully funded training. Maybe its being three-quarter funded with some effort from outside to support those traineeships would be the way to go.

I have asked them to question and challenge some of the things that they have been doing since it was started back in Don Dunstan's day, probably 25 years ago. It has continued with many of the same ways, and it is time it questioned them, without direction from me. It has a new CEO, and he is enthusiastic as he learns to question these things and build bridges with the Crafts Council. The Crafts Council is particularly pleased with the relationship that he is developing with it. We will see good things.

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

Minister for the Arts and Minister for the Status of Women—Other Payments, \$1 531 000.

Departmental Adviser:

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

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to pages 19 and 225 in the Estimates of Receipts and Payments. I invite the Minister to make a brief opening remark, if she so desires, after which I will call on the lead speaker for the Opposition to do the same.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The budget for the Office for the Status of Women is \$1.271 million, an increase of \$386 000. The budget provides for growth in all three areas of funded activity: the Office for the Status of Women, the Women's Advisory Council, and the Women's Information Service. These additional funds, combined with a new focused effort between the Office for the Status of Women, the Women's Advisory Council and the Women's Information Service, will strengthen the contribution women already make in setting the agenda in South Australia.

These new efforts will include a business plan for the status of women program which outlines the new direction

of 'Women Investing in the Future'—their safety, education and training, cultural life, the environment, financial security and independence and family life. This business plan reinforces our commitment and highlights the way we will be working to ensure that women continue to exercise choice and to make a difference. With Government encouragement and enthusiasm, the Women's Advisory Council, the Office for the Status of Women and the Women's Information Service are all working to achieve positive outcomes for all women in South Australia. An additional 1.5 full-time equivalent positions will enable the Women's Advisory Council and Office for the Status of Women to progress their work.

The Women's Information Service will be relocated to a prominent shopfront in the Station Arcade. This is in fact quite a coup in terms of negotiations for the Office of Status of Women. This will enable the Women's Information Service to provide more opportunities for women and offer innovative technology in an accessible location. The Government has made available an additional \$100 000 towards this relocation. The shopfront will enable much needed face-to-face contact with many more women and emphasise best practice in customer service. We will ensure that the service is well staffed to meet women's needs.

The highly successful Internet program, which is offered through the Women's Information Service and enables women to learn basic computer skills and have access to the Internet, will continue to be offered. Staff will be rostered for direct customer service in the shopfront and will be collocated with the Office for the Status of Women for project work and to update their information systems.

The Women's Statement 1997-98 will be tabled in Parliament in October; at least, that is the schedule to which we are working. The statement will give the women of South Australia an account of what each Government department is doing to raise the status of women, both as customers and employees. It will report on departmental programs and projects which will affect women and give an up-to-date analysis of the gender breakdown of Government boards and committees. The statement will continue to be available at <http://www.wis.sa.gov.au> on the World Wide Web.

The Women's Advisory Council will give priority to promoting strategies for women's financial independence, to access superannuation and to contribute to wealth creation. Increased funding of \$100 000 will enable the council to progress this work.

The Office of the Status of Women is working to increase the representation of women on Government boards and committees. The proportion of women on such boards and committees is currently 30.51 per cent, the highest of any State in Australia. This represents an increase of over 4 per cent since 1993. An executive search for high profile women suitable for appointment to category 1 and category 2 Government boards and committees has resulted in a 70 per cent success rate. South Australia is leading the way and the Commonwealth Government has recently announced that it, too, will now pilot an executive search in selected departments as a result of the success of the South Australian initiative.

There has been a 70 per cent increase in the number of women employed at the executive level in the South Australian Public Service since 1993, and women now occupy 20 per cent of all executive positions. The Executive Leadership Program offered in the Public Service has almost 40 per cent participation of women, and this will encourage a further increase in the number of women executives in the public

sector. Through the work of this Government, women are being given opportunities to play a much greater role in decision-making and to influence the future of this State. I look forward to questions from members of the Committee.

Ms STEVENS: The Labor Party is committed to improving the status of women in South Australia. Women comprise over half the South Australian population, contribute enormously to the South Australian economy through both paid and unpaid work, and are often differently affected by Government policies than men. It is therefore extremely important that the Government of the day recognises and evaluates the effects of its policies on women and implements strategies to improve the lot for all South Australian women.

I congratulate the Minister and pass on the congratulations of the shadow Minister for the announcement that the Women's Information Service will be moved to a more accessible venue in Station Arcade, as she mentioned, and that the budget has included extra resources for financing the move and the ongoing rent. This initiative, however, appears to us to be the only strategy that has the potential to assist the majority of women living in this State.

Other initiatives of the Minister appear to us to be only concerned with improving the status of a small group of women, those women who are already reasonably well positioned in the labour market. A few weeks ago the Minister launched the new business plan for women called, 'Women Investing in the Future'. If we talk about using inclusive language as a way for women to participate more fully in society, this title and package raise a few questions. I am not so sure that a single mum who is underemployed and cannot afford her child-care costs will feel that her interests are being considered in this plan of action.

This corporate plan for women in 1997 and 1998 talks about allowing women to make real choices, achieve economic independence, access superannuation and contribute to wealth creation, yet it does not set any specific strategies in order to achieve these goals. The only work that will be done, we fear, is to produce a women's statement, promote economic independence, research women's potential contributions to town planning, and gather details about skilled women—a lot of talk and no action. I must say that I cannot see how the aforementioned single mum or the majority of women will achieve the goals of the Minister's business plan if the only initiatives implemented are those stated previously.

The much awaited Women's Statement was released in November 1996. There were no surprises there, however. Once again the Government has shown where its principles are by not focusing enough attention on the women who require it most.

I agree that it is very important to improve the overall status of women. In this, it is imperative that women are equally represented in the decision-making structures. However, the majority of South Australian women are concerned about jobs, health, welfare, education and everyday costs. The budget, the business plan and the women's statement do very little to allay these concerns and to fulfil the goals of the Liberal Government for women of full participation, recognising and utilising the contribution of women's paid and unpaid work, eliminating discrimination and fairly distributing resources.

My first question relates to page 377 of the Program Estimates and concerns the Women's Advisory Council. There have been recent changes in the membership of the council. Who are the current members of the council and who

is the Chair and Deputy Chair and will the Minister ensure greater publicity of the membership of the council so that women in the community know whom to approach if they wish to channel their views to the Government?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The members for the council for 1997-98 are: Ms Pauline Rooney, Presiding Member, South Australian Business Woman of the Year 1996 and based in the Riverland; Marjorie Schulze, Deputy Presiding Member, also in business and lives in the metropolitan area and has extensive committee/board experience and worked as a pharmacist; Sarah Goulding, Vice President, YWCA; Vicki Jacobs, currently working with the Health Commission and prior to that Director of Yarrow Place, the rape and sexual assault service; Janet Maughan, currently the Manager of the Advice and Community Education Section of the Legal Services Commission; Jean Murray has a background in medical science and is also employed by the South Australian Health Commission in intergovernment relations, and she is President of the Business and Professional Women of South Australia; Elizabeth Nicholls, a broadacre dryland farmer in the Mallee; Kathy Ottens, a rural counsellor in the Mid North Rural Counselling Service and an active partner in mixed farming; Dana Shen represents the interests of Aboriginal and young women as she did very effectively in the Untied Nations Beijing Non-Government Organisation Forum on Women in 1995 and she is very actively involved in youth and health issues in particular; Helen Storer, Convenor of the Older Women's Advisory Committee and former Vice President of the Council on the Ageing South Australia; Tji Srikanthi was the Chairperson of the International Federation of Women Entrepreneurs at the Fifth International Conference and is a periodontist; Judith Worrall currently holds the position of Public Trustee in South Australia; and there is one vacancy.

As to publicity, because a number of those are new members, there will be further publicity because the three-year term of some members has just expired and we will be promoting the new council from 30 June when a number of members take up their term.

Ms STEVENS: What reports has the Women's Advisory Council produced in the past 12 months? Can the Minister please provide the Opposition with copies of any reports that have not been publicly released?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not aware of any reports prepared that have not been publicly released. The reports prepared have been based on consultations with women and both those consultations have been extensive and have been involved with women in rural areas. Two reports published in 1996 were *Consultations with Rural Women in South Australia* and *Women in Small Business in Targeted Rural Regions in South Australia*. If the honourable member does not have copies I will provide them.

Ms STEVENS: What are the 'strategies for women's financial independence' referred to in the Program Estimates as something which the Women's Advisory Council will supposedly promote and how exactly will these strategies be promoted?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is a new direction for the council. The council has had four main areas of responsibility to focus on since it was established: Women in Representation, Women in Domestic Violence, Women in the Economy and Women in Rural and Regional Areas. Women in the Economy has not been an area of considerable focus other than through women in small business in those rural regions, so the council is now taking a greater interest in that area and,

for that reason, the number of appointments to the council reflect that area of more concentrated activity over the current year. I know that Judith Worrall from the Public Trustee is particularly interested in financial and security issues for older women and I know the council as a whole wants to do much more in terms of encouraging women to take from a younger age a much more active interest in securing their future for an older age because there are going to be some very big changes through the Federal Government.

We have seen it throughout the decade in superannuation and a whole range of areas. I am quite confident that the approach taken over the past six or seven years in superannuation has not always had the best interests of women in mind. There are lots of schemes around with little bits of money and not really making the most of that money that women are contributing or have had contributed on their behalf. There must be a better way of ensuring that women are advantaged from these changes. So, there is the awareness of the issue and the actual plans and schemes that take account of the interests of women. That is the focus. With women with busy lives, some things get put aside and often it is their financial security that is left aside and it is extraordinarily important as we live longer than men generally and in older age one's health is not always as good and we are more vulnerable for that reason. This is a big issue for women and it is one that the council will focus on. It is one they have determined that they wish to focus on and they will be working through the ways in which they will attack this issue.

Ms O'Loughlin: There will be information, too, on women's financial security and ways to access proper advice on those things through the Women's Information Service in that it does not matter whether you are rich or poor—women in the past have not taken responsibility for their financial affairs, leaving that to partners and of course we now know that women have to do that themselves and that will certainly be a focus from the council with some advice to the Women's Information Service on how to deliver that information to women.

Ms STEVENS: As to our concern that the strategies reach all women, will these strategies take into account that many women will need people to go out to them, to preschool meetings and community networks and neighbourhoods because often women will not go in search of these things unless they have a fair degree of confidence, and it needs to be done in a way that reaches out to women in communities?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: What you say is absolutely sound and I have just been provided with some information. I can advise that to increase the access of women in rural and remote areas, particularly Aboriginal women and women who would be seen as having some disadvantage because of isolation, funding has been won from the Federal Government to use more technologies in reaching them and also through the Internet. The WIS public access Internet program for women in the metropolitan area has identified that there is a broad range of women with little or no computing skills who are interested in accessing the Internet. The new WISnet outreach program will provide equity of access to all women in not only rural and remote areas but also outer metropolitan areas.

A specifically constructed Internet site will provide unique guided access for women to develop computer and information technology skills. In order to develop this project, WIS will work in partnership with existing women's groups and agencies in four key rural areas. There will also be a mobile access point travelling to more isolated and remote

communities and I would argue, also, the outer metropolitan areas. We must reach women; it is not only the responsibility of women's advisory councils, WIS or the Office for the Status of Women but also a major community issue in how we reach more than half our population in terms of developing understanding and confidence to discuss these issues and how to secure their future in a much better way than women have been able to do, particularly in old age.

There are too many women too vulnerable because of not enough understanding, confidence or training, or even knowing the right questions to ask and we want to help many more women in that regard. We do not always think that women have to be poor; we do not want women to think it is a subject that they cannot talk about. I think it is absolutely relevant to every woman to ensure that we look at some form of greater financial security which will be in different forms because of different circumstances. We must change the culture of discussion and understanding of these issues amongst women and amongst those who provide the services. We are addressing the issue. We are starting. I cannot promise that we will reach everybody instantly and we will see a quick turn around, but we are acknowledging the problems.

Ms GREIG: In relation to page 377—the Women's Information Service—what has happened to the legal service at the Women's Information Service?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The legal service is continuing to operate on Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons staffed by voluntary lawyers on a rostered basis. WIS is also working closely with the Women's Legal Service to ensure that women are given relevant and quality information regarding legal issues. Since we had that service, the Federal Government has funded the Women's Legal Service so our need to do so has changed quite considerably but we are still providing the after-hours service.

Ms GREIG: I have a supplementary question. What has happened to the position within the Women's Information Service specifically designed for an Aboriginal project officer?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: An advisory committee of Aboriginal community women was established to oversee the appointment of an Aboriginal project officer. The position was advertised internally; no suitable applicant was found within the South Australian public sector and approval has been sought to advertise the position and invite applicants from outside the Public Service. We are still keen to fill the position and the position is there to be filled when we find the right person.

Ms GREIG: How has the Women's Information Service used ethnic broadcasting to provide information to women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Links have been formed with 20 community groups providing radio programs in languages other than English on 5EBI FM. WIS provides translated one to two minute information segments for these communities, particularly those who have recently arrived in Australia, including Vietnamese, Croatian, Cambodian, Chinese and Bosnian. WIS also provides information in English to more established communities, such as Greek, Italian and Polish, for broadcasting on their own programs.

Ms GREIG: I wish to put the following questions on notice.

1. How will the new funds to the Office for the Status of Women be allocated and for what benefit?

2. I would also like to follow the member for Elizabeth's comments regarding the Women's Information Service. I am

happy that it has been relocated, but why is the Women's Information Service being relocated and at what cost?

3. Why are the opening hours of the Women's Information Service being changed?

4. The report, 'Boards of Statutory Authorities—recruitment, gender composition, remuneration and performance', has just been released by the Statutory Authorities Review Committee. The report made several recommendations regarding strategies to increase women's representation on Government boards. What does the Minister intend to do about implementing the following recommendations:

Recommendation No. 5: the committee recommends that the Office for the Status of Women publish a portfolio gender profile of Government boards and committees on an annual basis.

Recommendation No. 6: the committee recommends the continued use of the women's register maintained by the Office for the Status of Women as one strategy to increase the representation of women on Government boards.

Recommendation No. 7: the committee recommends the Office for the Status of Women coordinate regular executive search initiatives to identify women potentially suitable for appointment to South Australian Government boards, paying careful attention to the search criteria used.

Recommendation No. 8: the committee recommends that the Department of Premier and Cabinet—Government boards and committees guidelines for agencies and board directors be amended to require early consultation with the Office for the Status of Women in relation to forthcoming Government board appointments.

5. The Office for the Status of Women has engaged a consultant to conduct executive searches for women to serve on category one and two boards. Who undertakes this work, at what cost and what is the outcome?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will bring back replies in due course.

Ms STEVENS: My next question relates to the same page and the topic of domestic violence. What is the current status of the proposed domestic violence council?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A paper concerning the elimination of discrimination against women has been prepared for South Australia to submit to the Federal Government, to then be forwarded to the United Nations because each nation must update that material. I assume the honourable member is talking about the Ministerial Forum for Domestic Violence Prevention which was established in 1996 and which comprises six Ministers and involves representatives from the non-government sector. It was established to encourage the exchange of information, provide guidance, identify issues of concern and reduce duplication. Another issue has been the introduction of the Domestic Violence Act and a whole range of other activities.

Ms O'Loughlin: The ministerial forum also has a working party that meets between meetings to progress the work of the forum.

Ms STEVENS: You stated last year that the Women's Advisory Council would be involved in the assessment of strategies taken by the Government to counter domestic violence. What was the outcome of this work and what recommendations have been proposed?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It has this reference. It has written to me expressing concern about some definitions that are used within Government. The other concern it has is the way in which one must address these matters from a legal perspective that does not reflect the social environment in which domestic violence often occurs. The trouble for us in this field is that the law does not easily take into account broad matters such as psychological abuse and the like. Although we see them as domestic violence matters the law

cannot address them effectively without having actual outcomes that it can focus on and take further. The Women's Advisory Council has done quite a bit of thinking through the issues and has reported to me on this matter. I will get further advice on the other matters.

Ms STEVENS: Those are the legal issues regarding the definition of domestic violence?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, and also the police are not satisfied with some of the legal definitions, and if they are not satisfied they will not always pursue the issue as effectively as the community and women would wish—and the majority of victims are women. It is then an issue of how other agencies take it up if we have not made clear the issues that they are to address. Women fall through service networks because the networks and agencies are not clear about the areas they should be dealing with or do not identify the problem if there is confusion about how it has been defined. It is a critical issue which we must make clear and which both the Federal and State Governments must adopt. That is one area we have explored but I know there are others.

Ms STEVENS: As a supplementary question, has the Women's Advisory Council been involved in the assessment of the VIP project in the northern suburbs in relation to domestic violence? Has it had any input into the report on women and children escaping domestic violence, the recommendations in relation to the closure of some women's shelters and the amalgamation of the migrant women's emergency service?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It has written to me about the latter issue. Regarding the VIP program, it sits on the council that reports to the ministerial forum so it has been involved in that important initiative. There are no women's shelters closing.

Ms O'Loughlin: There will be no fewer beds than there ever have been. The implementation committee has reported to the Minister and there will be no less money spent on domestic violence or women's shelters than there has been in the past.

Ms STEVENS: So the Hope Haven Women's Shelter will remain open?

Ms O'Loughlin: There will be no fewer beds.

Ms STEVENS: I was asking whether the Hope Haven shelter will remain open.

Ms O'Loughlin: You will have to wait to see the recommendations.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will ask Ms O'Loughlin to make a further clarification about the closure of shelters and the reference to Hope Haven because there was uncertainty arising from her answer and I want it cleared up.

Ms O'Loughlin: All the beds will remain open. The Hope Haven shelter and most of the other women's shelters will be refocused, and there will be no fewer beds throughout the metropolitan area.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But you made a statement earlier that no shelter will close.

Ms O'Loughlin: No, none will. The accommodation will remain as it is now. However, there will be some refocusing of staff and managers.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You are saying that the recommendations are that the shelter will stay open; the number of beds will not decrease; and the deployment of staff is the issue.

Ms O'Loughlin: Yes.

Ms STEVENS: The Opposition has been approached by a number of women's groups seeking support for the

increased provision of accommodation for homeless women. This is a particular problem for women released from prison. There is presently no supported accommodation for women leaving prison in South Australia, and this problem is exacerbated for women with children. The proportion of women sentenced to imprisonment has been increasing in recent years and the female prison population is expected to double by the year 2000.

Drug abuse in the female population is also on the increase and it is expected that this will lead to higher levels of homelessness for women. While this problem has been recognised by an inter-departmental task force, responsibility for addressing the problem appears to have fallen between departments. By letter dated 10 May 1997 to the shadow Minister for the Status of Women, the Minister confirmed that she had received a copy of the proposal and that the Department for Family and Community Services and the Department for Correctional Services had previously received copies of the proposal but had not advised her in relation to it. Is that still the situation? Will the Minister ensure that this essential social need—accommodation for homeless women—is given a higher and more urgent priority by the Government?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, I will.

Ms STEVENS: In relation to that, will the Government consider making a specific shelter or accommodation facility available for these women?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I can undertake that it will be considered. I cannot undertake what the outcome will be. I do not have funding resources and this is not my direct area of responsibility, although I have a keen interest in the issues.

Ms STEVENS: I am interested in what the responses have been from the Department for Family and Community Services and the Department for Correctional Services, because they are the two departments—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will provide those responses.

Ms STEVENS: Have they made their responses?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They have done their work. I understand that there has been some initial advice to us. We will get replies to you as part of our responses to this Committee for 4 July.

Mrs PENFOLD: I place the following four questions on the record, and they relate to Program Estimates, page 377:

1. What is the percentage of women on Government boards and committees at the present time, and how does the Government aim to meet its goal of 50 per cent of women on Government boards and committees by the year 2000?

2. The business plan for the women's program has as its theme, 'Women investing in the future'. Is that not a bit elitist?

3. As the Minister has already mentioned, the Women's Advisory Council has undertaken two major consultations with women in rural areas. What has been done to follow up and implement the recommendations?

4. How is information gathered for the Women's Statement?

Ms STEVENS: I would like to raise with the Minister an issue about which the Opposition has been concerned for some time, and today there was another example of this. Today's incident has brought it to a head, in our view. We have been concerned for some time about some remarks that have been made—and the ones that I will mention have all been made in the House of Assembly—by members of the Government to female members of the Opposition. I would like to put on the record three of those examples.

Today the Minister for Infrastructure, the Deputy Premier, referred—I believe at least twice—to the member for Taylor as ‘my dear’ in a really patronising manner as part of his response to questions that she was putting to him. Some time ago I was referred to as ‘babe’ by the Minister for Health. I was referred to as ‘deaf, dumb and stupid’ by the Deputy Premier. The member for Torrens was described as ‘slipping between the sheets with a union official’, who happened to be her husband. This remark was made by the Hon. Dale Baker.

Mr Meier interjecting:

Ms STEVENS: That is correct, an apology was given by the Hon. Dale Baker to the member for Torrens. I would like to hear the Minister’s view on this matter, and I ask her whether she would raise this matter with her Cabinet colleagues, because I believe that those remarks are entirely inappropriate.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure what the honourable member’s experience is through the education system or within her own parliamentary Party but I would have to say that not all my colleagues are perfect on every occasion in heated debate, in the Party room or in the Cabinet. I do not support the references, which in the case of the member for Taylor were found to be offensive in terms of being referred to as ‘my dear’. I have to say that I would not like to be referred to in that manner.

I remember travelling to the District Council of Mount Gambier last year concerning the Casterton road that they had wanted for years and I was called ‘girl’, and a number of things. No Minister had provided that council with what it was seeking: I was there to provide the money. I asked them how they would address the Minister for Health if they were seeking funding for a hospital or how they would address the Premier if they were seeking some other major initiative, whether they would address the Premier or the Minister for Health as ‘boy’. They agreed that they would not, and I said that I did not wish, in those circumstances, to be called ‘girl’ and that I would prefer to be called ‘Diana’, ‘Ms Laidlaw’ or ‘Minister’—that I wanted to be treated no differently than they would treat another Minister in those circumstances.

I believe, without getting too excited about these things, it is an education process that we all go through and, in terms of the Minister for Infrastructure, I must say that he is one of the most supportive of Ministers in terms of me in the Cabinet, of women in Parliament. I am not making excuses for that behaviour but could I just say that he has been most unwell this past week. I am very thrilled that he was here today to contribute to the debate and I suspect he was possibly under par to have made those remarks, because it would not be normal form, in my experience. And I am not going to put on the record what some of the male members of the Labor Party have called me over the years: you just work through some of these issues. Those issues are not always easy.

Ms STEVENS: I agree. I place the following questions on the record:

1. Will the Office for the Status of Women be re-funded by \$50 000 per year now that the Women’s Advisory Council has its own funding of \$100 000 per year? Previously \$50 000 for its work was taken from the Office of the Status of Women’s budget. The select committee of the Legislative Council on outsourcing of information technology has been told that as a result of the Government’s contract with EDS, all agencies are now being charged a recurrent sum for information technology which is greater than their previous

costs, as depreciation and cost of finance are now included in the charges. The select committee was also told that the Treasury would be compensating agencies for this increase by an adjustment to their budgets. Will the Minister inform us what was the compensatory amount provided to the department and on which budget line it is included?

2. Will the 1997-98 Women’s Statement, which intends to outline the Government’s initiatives to enhance the status of women, include mechanisms to encourage commitment and accountability from Government departments? If so, what are they and, if not, why not?

3. What action will the Minister take regarding the South Australian Equal Opportunities Commission’s referral of most sex discrimination complaints to the Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner where most complainants are informed that, due to the fact that the Federal Government is yet to replace Ms Sue Walpole, the complaint must be declined because there is no-one to sign on the dotted line?

4. Will the Minister accept that she has failed in respect of an important Government strategy if the goal of 50 per cent representation of women on Government boards by the year 2000 is not met? Who conducted the executive search for high flying women for Government boards; how much did it cost; is it to be repeated; and, if so, when?

5. What has the Minister done to ensure that women from a non-English speaking or an indigenous background have equal access to services such as the Women’s Information Service? Where will the extra \$18 000 come from to make up the \$68 000 cost of rent for the Women’s Information Service, given that the budget for the Status of Women has increased by \$250 000 and the combined cost of the move of the Women’s Information Service, the ongoing funding of the Women’s Advisory Council and the rent amounts to \$268 000? I understand that when the Women’s Information Service moves to North Terrace computers will be available for members of the public to use. How many of those computers are planned for the space, and has any evaluation been made of the possible demand for their use?

6. How can the Minister possibly achieve her goal of ‘providing women with the opportunity to participate fully and equally in all spheres of our society’ and ‘encouraging women to contribute to the growth of the State’s economy and ensuring that women enjoy the benefits of economic recovery and a safe environment’ following the Federal Government’s decision to dramatically reduce funding for child-care with the unacknowledged purpose of forcing women out of the workplace?

7. Given the unacceptable level of unemployment in South Australia and the increasing numbers of women employed in insecure casual and part-time employment, how will ‘The Women Investing in the Future’ document help to create meaningful employment pathways for women? When ‘The Women Investing in the Future’ document refers to real choices for women, does the Minister take that simply to mean the choice between home and work?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I can answer that question straightaway. The answer is ‘No.’

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.34 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Tuesday 24 June at 11 a.m.