

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 17 June 1998

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**Chairman:**

The Hon. G.M. Gunn

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson
 Mr M.L.J. Hamilton-Smith
 Mr T. Koutsantonis
 Mrs E.M. Penfold
 Mr J.J. Snelling
 Mr I.H. Venning

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Department for Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts,
 \$299 832 000
 Minister for Transport and Urban Planning, Minister for
 the Arts and Minister for the Status of Women—
 Other Items, \$4 440 000

Witness:

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

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Payze, Chief Executive, Department of Transport,
 Urban Planning and the Arts.
 Mr T. Argent, Executive Director, Transport SA.
 Mr R. Frisby, Registrar of Motor Vehicles.
 Mr A. Francis, Accountant, Strategic Reporting,
 Transport SA.
 Mr B. Atwell, Manager, Corporate Development,
 Transport SA.

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

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, Mr Chairman, I will
 provide an opening statement. As agreed with Opposition
 members, debate on the Transport, Urban Planning and Arts
 portfolio estimates and other financial information will be
 undertaken on an agency by agency basis in the following
 order: Transport SA, Passenger Transport Board,
 TransAdelaide, Planning SA, Arts SA and the Office for the
 Status of Women. I propose to give a short statement and do
 likewise at the start of each agency hearing.

Following the State election in October 1997 the Govern-
 ment restructured the public sector in order to further improve
 the way the Government delivers its products and services.
 The Department of Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts
 was established with the amalgamation of the following: the
 Department for Arts and Cultural Development, Department
 of Transport, the Passenger Transport Board, the Planning
 Division of the Department of Housing and Urban Develop-
 ment and the Office for the Status of Women.

The creation of the new department enhances the Govern-
 ment's ability to develop an integrated, efficient transport
 network that will meet the State's economic and social
 development objectives. The departmental structure also
 provides a unique opportunity to extend the State's cultural
 and artistic strengths to our physical environment and the
 structure will enable women to make a more positive
 contribution to planning decisions that influence our quality
 of life.

The total operating revenue for the department in 1998-99
 is estimated at \$7.279 million, of which \$245.886 million is
 from Government appropriations. Outputs to be purchased in
 the forthcoming financial year are estimated at
 \$660.020 million—an increase of \$31.4 million from
 1997-98. These increases are predominantly in the areas of
 maintenance and operation of the transport system. In terms
 of overviews of our budget, arts funding has been maintained
 at current levels.

For the first time this year the budget papers are presented
 in a full accrual and output class format. The presentation
 clearly highlights future Government obligations and
 ownership of assets and will lead to improved decision
 making. The presentation, however, does not make it easy to
 compare this year's budget with last year's budget estimates
 and performance targets. The 1998-99 year also presents the
 first full year of operations for the department. Over the past
 eight months many individuals within the department and
 beyond have invested considerable time and effort to ensure
 a smooth transition and I am confident that their good work
 will now be reflected through improved delivery of services
 and performances to our customers and the community at
 large.

In terms of Transport SA specifically, the 1998-99 budget
 in accrual terms amounts to \$515.6 million. It comprises cash
 items of \$414.9 million and accrued items, such as depreci-
 ation of assets, superannuation and long service leave
 liabilities, of \$100.7 million. It includes Federal Government
 highways funds, black spot funding and untied funds for
 arterial roadworks amounting to \$130.82 million.

In June 1994, Transport SA engaged approximately 2 150
 employees. The impact of the strategic review that com-
 menced in July 1994 has seen the work force numbers
 reduced to 1 330 at June 1998. Employee numbers are
 expected to be maintained at this level during the forthcoming
 financial year. By pursuing contestability and competition
 policies and practices, the agency has maintained high levels
 of service consistent with community expectations, but at a
 reduced cost to taxpayers. The net financial savings of the
 strategic review are estimated to be \$4.3 million in 1998-99,
 reflecting the reduced costs in areas such as line marking,
 sign manufacture, asphalt supply, routine road maintenance,
 supply of road plant and ferry services.

A new 'Transport 2000 and Beyond' initiative builds on
 the strategic review. It is designed to ensure that Transport
 SA effectively delivers on two key emerging roles for the
 Department as a whole, namely, leadership in the develop-
 ment of the State's transport policy, and leadership in the
 development of integrated transport system planning. This
 initiative will ensure that these new roles are adopted across
 all transport modes—marine, rail, road and air. It also
 emphasises an improved match of services to the agency's
 broad range of customers.

The benefits of road expenditure are well documented,
 with every \$1 million of road construction and maintenance
 spent generating approximately 60 jobs. The Government's

ongoing commitment to these activities reflects our recognition of the wide ranging benefits of transport infrastructure to the economic and social development of South Australia—and jobs. Road users will enjoy the benefits of the following road investments to be initiated or completed in 1998-99: the start of work on Stage 2 of the Southern Expressway; widening of Torrens Road from Churchill Road to Fitzroy Terrace; Tapleys Hill Road deviation for the Airport Runway extension; upgrade treatments on Anzac Highway from Marion Road towards Morphett and Brighton Roads.

In the country the Government will invest \$4.6 million on sealing the State's unsealed arterial roads, in line with our target to seal all unsealed arterial roads in incorporated areas by 2004. Some \$1 million dollars will be spent on Port Road in Kadina in association with the Wallaroo-Kadina Road project, and a further \$1 million on the Mount Gambier-Glenburnie Road, commonly referred in the South-East as the Casterton Road. Improved accessibility for tourists will be provided with the continued sealing of the South Coast Road on Kangaroo Island and the upgrade to an all weather standard of important tourist routes in the Flinders Ranges. Construction will begin on the bridge to Hindmarsh Island, with \$3.75 million allocated for 1998-99. In the forthcoming year, the Commonwealth Government will invest \$50 million in the major tunnel project for the Mount Barker Road. Other major works include passing lanes on the Sturt Highway between Greenock and Truro, completion of the Blanchetown Bridge and completion of overtaking lanes on the Dukes Highway.

I will now outline highlights from each class of 'output' to be delivered by Transport SA in the coming year. In the area of policy development, advice and ministerial support, the agency will focus on the leadership roles mentioned earlier; a road network strategy for metropolitan Adelaide; and the development of asset management strategies, including the rail land assets which were transferred to the State following the sale of Australian National last year. In the area of regulatory services, Transport SA will implement the National Exchange of Vehicle Driver Information System (NEVDIS). We will prepare major packages of legislation as part of the Australian Transport Council's goal for national consistency and uniformity. Also, a competency based training and assessment scheme will be introduced for the boating industry and training providers.

In terms of maintenance issues, road maintenance contract specifications will be refined to improve prices and services; further recreational jetties will be upgraded and divested to local government; and refitted ferries formerly operating at Berri will be relocated to meet strategic needs.

I highlight that, given the increasingly complex operation of the transport system, in 1998-99 Transport SA will undertake more work on the potential for intelligent transportation systems to specifically improve the operation of the transport system and the use of taxpayer funds. We will be hosting the Australian Intelligent Transportation Systems Conference in April 1999. The route numbering system introduced in metropolitan Adelaide this year will be extended to the rural arterial road network; a community road safety program will be instigated; and a self-funded rail safety inspection scheme for operators and service providers will be introduced.

'Bike Ed' and 'Share the Road' campaigns for cyclists will be expanded and investment increased in the Travel Blending initiative. In terms of the last output, Library and Information Services, Transport SA will increase public

awareness of safe recreational boating practices and generally improve community and public access to the agency's services, activities and policies. I welcome questions.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Atkinson, do you wish to make an opening statement?

Mr ATKINSON: Parliamentary scrutiny of the Government's finances has been hindered by the Government's changes to the budget papers. Estimates Committees this year will be like comparing apples with oranges, thanks to the changeover to accrual accounting. When the Opposition was briefed by Treasury on changes to accrual accounting we were assured that the changes would encourage and not frustrate transparency of the budget process.

Alas, the opposite is true. Whereas previous budget papers have referred to particular programs and estimates of expenditure, we now have ill-defined output classes. Where we were once able to identify exactly how much was allocated to transport safety, we now have vague output classes. For instance, in transport last year there were clearly identifiable program areas, including transport accessibility, transport efficiency, transport safety, transport environment and Government service obligations.

Supplementary information was provided which explained the broad objectives/goals of the program and we had that yesterday in the Attorney-General's portfolio, but I believe it is the last portfolio to have that kind of information. We now have 10 line items referred to as output classes for the entire portfolio. There is nothing in this year's budget papers which is comparable to the information available in the 1997-98 budget papers.

Of particular concern is the scrutiny of TransAdelaide. No readily available information exists to enable any meaningful scrutiny of TransAdelaide. While there may be rational accounting reasons for this, it means that the Opposition and the public are deprived of useful information. Numbers on pages have also become a thing of the past, although one assumes that this is owing to incompetence rather than any desire to frustrate the Opposition.

The result is that confusion reigns, as members are left wondering and guessing which programs fits where. The situation is further aggravated by the creation of super departments which, in this portfolio area, has seen the regrouping of Arts SA with Transport. Although this is the Government's prerogative, it does mean that we are comparing apples with oranges. The bottom line is that accountability and transparency have been sacrificed; year to year comparisons are difficult; tracing Government programs is almost impossible; and the Estimates Committee is in danger of becoming a farce.

Despite this, the Opposition is committed to working with other members of the Estimates Committee today in obtaining answers to important questions. In doing so, I hope the Chair will acknowledge the added difficulties associated with Estimates this year. I hope the Chair appreciates the difficulty in linking questions to budget lines, although I note that the Chair was indulgent on that matter yesterday.

The CHAIRMAN: There was not one problem yesterday, as you would have noted.

Mr ATKINSON: Yes, quite so, and we did note it, Sir. However, this is an opportunity for important questions to be raised about funding for road safety, including important preventive maintenance work desperately needed on rural roads. Questions will be asked about the impact of the 7 per cent fare hikes for users of public transport. On the one hand, the Government claims that it wants to improve patronage of

public transport but, on the other hand, it makes public transport more expensive and increases the price of fares well beyond the consumer price index.

Taxicab owners have also been particularly badly hit by the budget, and Mr Koutsantonis, himself a former cabbie, will be asking questions on this topic. Given that information on these issues will be difficult to obtain owing to the format of the budget, I would like to ask my first question on the topic. Will the Minister table estimates of expenditure by program, including all those programs shown in various parts of last year's Estimates documents that have now been amalgamated under the Minister's control?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure that I understood the question. What do you want me to do?

Mr ATKINSON: Will you provide us with estimates of expenditure by program, as you have done last year and all previous years within living memory?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Do you want me to recast the whole budget?

Mr ATKINSON: Just provide us with the information. You were able to get it in previous years; why not this year?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will make some inquiries, but we have recast the whole budget with a different format, and you want us to go back to the former way of accounting. I am not being difficult; I am just trying to be reasonable.

Mr ATKINSON: Your Government recast the budget to comply with accrual accounting, and that is why the budget papers are now in their current form.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Do you want me to go back to using the old cash system of accounting?

Mr ATKINSON: Can you show us your budget in terms of the things you do? Can you provide Program Estimates as you have done in previous years? It seems to me that you have that information and you know it, but you are just not disclosing it in the budget papers, because it is not part of accrual accounting. You have used the change to accrual accounting as a chance not to tell us about your programs.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is an unacceptable and incorrect statement, because across Government we have all moved to accrual accounting. When presenting the budget, the Treasurer noted that it was a two year process. In my opening statement, I acknowledged that it does not make it easy to compare one year with the next. I readily acknowledge that, given my own efforts to work through the budget and to keep Mr Payze and the rest of them accountable, because ultimately I have the responsibility, and I accept that.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I accept your statement. It has been done not to hinder the process but, as I indicated in my opening statement, to make sure that it is more transparent so that we know all our costs. Decision making will be better in future because we will know all the costs involved in the delivery of transport services. Next year, it will be easier for all of us—including me and probably the public sector and the departmental officers—because we will be able to make comparisons. The Government has taken on a lot in terms of restructuring the departments and introducing accrual accounting, then going for these outputs and identifying what we want in terms of taxpayers' investment in these programs. I will see what I can do to accommodate the honourable member. I will explore this matter further with him later rather than taking up time now. However, we have moved on from the old cash-style system of accounting.

Mr ATKINSON: Just to follow that up, if you look in the Attorney-General's portfolio of yesterday's Committee, you

will see just a list of the programs. Yesterday we knew what the Attorney-General's Department did, but we do not know what you do anymore in transport.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is there; it is just a matter of working through the papers to find it. As a lawyer, you would know that Attorneys-General can be quite conservative. In practice, they are probably behind in getting together with what Treasury and the Government have asked overall. The frustrations that the honourable member is experiencing today in transport will also be experienced next year in relation to the Attorney-General's portfolio, so I just put him on notice.

Mr SNELLING: I refer to road safety issues, and last year I would have referred you to the transport safety program in the budget line. However, it is not as transparent this year. Is the operation of the transport system the new output class for road safety?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, it is—part of it.

Mr SNELLING: How much funding did Transport SA allocate to road safety initiatives and programs in the 1997-98 financial year, and what is the estimate for the 1998-99 financial year?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will bring back a reply with the details that the honourable member seeks. The budget includes an extra \$1.23 million which was allocated a couple of years ago for road safety. That includes sponsorship money from the Motor Accident Commission. In terms of the maintenance of road programs, a lot is invested in road safety issues. We conduct safety initiatives for cyclists and pedestrians. It is a complex set of practices across the portfolio, but we will bring those together in terms of the specific budgets for the Office of Road Safety. An additional sum of \$100 000 has been allocated this year for community road safety programs.

Mr VENNING: My question refers to Portfolio Statements Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 (page 6.4). I refer to the following portfolio outcome:

An efficient and effective transport system that supports industry and community development.

One of the specific strategies is to:

Improve all weather access in rural and remote communities.

I also note the successful completion of the Morgan to Burra Road, which has been a fantastic success.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think the Chairman is pleased about that road.

The CHAIRMAN: I am particularly impressed with it.

Mr VENNING: And so are our constituents and, I believe, the whole State. Will the Minister confirm the amount of money spent during 1997-98 to progress the sealing of rural arterial roads? What funds are to be allocated this year, and what is the total length of roads included in the strategy?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Morgan to Burra Road has been an enormous success. Yesterday, I spoke with the Victorian Transport Minister who had been recently holidaying in Adelaide and farther north in the Flinders Ranges. He described the road as 'magic'. I am particularly pleased with the success of the sealing of the Morgan to Burra Road.

Since 1994-95 when the Government initiated this 10 year program to seal rural arterial roads, a total of \$34 million has been spent. The cost of the overall program is estimated to be \$74 million. So, we are almost half way there in terms of the budget for this program. A total of 157 kilometres of country roads have been sealed under this program.

Sealing work is to be undertaken this year on the following roads: Hawker to Orreroo, \$1.1 million—I think that is in your electorate, Mr Chairman; Brinkworth to Blyth, \$400 000; Snowtown to Magpie Corner, \$700 000; Kimba to Cleve, \$1.7 million—I think the member for Flinders is pleased about that initiative; and Elliston to Lock, \$700 000. So, \$4.6 million has been allocated for the coming financial year.

As the member for MacKillop has shown an interest in the Lucindale to Mount Burr Road, which will be completed by the year 2004, I should add that other roads under this program include: Mannum to Bow Hill; Bow Hill to Walker Flat; Booleroo Centre to Jamestown (that is in the Chairman's electorate and it is still on the list for funding); and Morgan to Blanchetown. There are roads that are not even in the Chairman's electorate: he is not getting all the funds.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, he does represent the biggest area in the State, so it is not surprising.

The CHAIRMAN: It's still nearly 50 per cent.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It's still 50 per cent, so you are probably getting 50 per cent of the funding out of this road program, Sir.

Mrs PENFOLD: With reference to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, I refer to the portfolio outcome which states:

An efficient and effective transport system that supports industry and commercial development.

The Government's decision to provide for a trial of the A-double access between Port Augusta and Lochiel in December 1994 generated substantial benefits to the operators of these vehicles generally and, in particular, to producers and customers in my electorate of Eyre Peninsula. I recognise that the Government has assessed the trial to be a success and from 1 March permitted road train access to operate to the northern metropolitan area. What are the estimated cost savings to the transport industry from the Government's decision to extend A-double access south of Port Augusta, and what conditions have been imposed upon operators as part of this increased access?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Maunsell undertook a study last year to assess the benefits of A-double access from Port Augusta to Lochiel. The report was excellent in terms of the cost benefits to the transport industry. It also assessed that if we took the initiative further and south to the northern areas of Adelaide there would be a \$33 million benefit to the transport industry in this State and, therefore, benefits to customers and producers. We all are concerned about jobs and productivity in the State generally and, because of our distance from markets in the eastern States and overseas, we must be very efficient in the way in which we get product to market. The benefits of A-train access are huge. In the past week, one operator has told me, in terms of his business with only six A-doubles, that he has saved \$80 000 per year and he estimates that coming through from Lochiel to the northern Adelaide area there will be a further \$120 saving per trailer. Road wear and environmental issues are positive because there is one prime mover with two semi trailers, which means you have less prime movers on the roads.

I am pleased to report that since December 1994 when we introduced the A-train access south from Port Augusta no road accidents have been attributed to A-doubles at any time. Road wear is an issue: it is better for the roads on which they are allowed to have access and that saves money in maintenance costs which is important.

On all counts I think it has been a success. I also highlight that I am conscious of not only the benefits for the transport industry, the environment, road wear and the like but also that the community accepts these initiatives. One of the very important measures in allowing road trains to come into northern Adelaide was being able to convince local communities in that area that we were demanding the highest standard of performance from operators. We have required accreditation for A-train access to Adelaide under the Truck Safe Program. Only accredited vehicles are now allowed from Lochiel to Adelaide; from 1 July only accredited vehicles will be allowed south of Port Augusta to Adelaide, and from 1 September only drivers who have had health checks will be allowed to operate such vehicles. This is a bit of a revolution in the heavy vehicle industry.

No other State requires that there be health checks of drivers as part of performance standards and access, but we have said that if you are going to go through the expense of getting accredited we will provide you benefits in terms of improved access. So it is a reward for effort system, and it is working well to date.

Mrs PENFOLD: Is the Minister aware of potential dangers associated with the B-doubles causing passing problems on the Princes Highway between Meningie and Kingston along the Coorong? Are there any plans to install passing lanes?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have been asked this question in the past and again at the SELGA (South-East Local Government Association) meeting last Friday that I attended. I know that the local members are particularly concerned that we look at the installation of passing lanes.

Mr Argent: That issue on the Princes Highway, whether it be B-doubles and other heavy vehicles or, for that matter, recreational vehicles—boats and caravans—has been a longstanding issue. With more B-doubles accessing the South-East it has now brought the situation to the point where we need to look at how we deal with it. Some time ago a strategy was developed for the upgrading of the Princes Highway; that was a long-term strategy and it does include the provision of passing lanes in strategic locations. As funding becomes available we will proceed to install them.

The CHAIRMAN: While you are responding to that, could you also respond to the possibility of using the highways as landing strips for the Flying Doctor?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is not a dorothy dix question: I should put that on the record.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, it's just that I hadn't anticipated that there would be any questions from the Chairman. Mr Chairman, you will be pleased that there will be legislation when this Parliament returns to deal with the legal issues associated with aeroplanes landing on the highway. I am going to Glendambo in the very near future and I hope that you will be present with the Royal—

The CHAIRMAN: It's not my electorate.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But you should be there anyway, I think, as a guest. The Royal Flying Doctor Service will find that this is an invaluable measure that can be undertaken on the Stuart Highway and the Eyre Highway, in particular. I am contemplating at this moment whether the legal issues should be addressed by a separate Bill to Parliament or by amendments to the Road Traffic (Miscellaneous) Bill which is currently before the Legislative Council. Mr Chairman, legislation will be before Parliament within two or three weeks at which time—if you are not

present when I am at Glendambo—you can speak to those measures. The reason why we have the legislation is to give the police the power to close the road when there are emergencies so that no traffic can come either way when the plane lands on the road.

Mr SNELLING: Returning to road safety issues, for accounting and funding purposes how do you define what is a road safety program or initiative and how much as a percentage of revenue collected from anti-speeding devices, such as speed cameras, laser guns and fines in general, has been reallocated to funding road safety initiatives and programs?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Road safety funding is not hypothecated from any collection of funds from motorists, whether that be from drivers' licences, registration fees or fines. The fines for offences collected through the police and the courts all go into general revenue and much of our budget in terms of road safety would not come from that purpose. It does, however, come through the Highways Fund—which is registration fees and drivers licences. I will get specific details. Mr Argent may have further information on funding for particular programs.

Mr Argent: The first part of the question related to how we define road safety projects specifically. A lot of what we do in terms of roadworks, and it applies to the other modes as well, has multiple outcomes, and safety in roadworks is only one. All of the standards used for the design of roads and bridges are very much related to safety outcomes. However, in setting up a program the primary outcome is the driver. If the primary outcome for a particular initiative or investment is safety, that forms part of our safety program. There will be some areas of grey because there is a set of mixed outcomes for most of the initiatives.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I refer to the Capital Funding Statement on page 6.32 and, specifically, the federally funded Black Spot Program, which provided South Australia with \$3 million in 1998-99. Will the Minister list black spot areas that will receive priority funding under the Federal Government's Black Spot Program for 1998-99?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I do not have that information at hand, but will provide it by the deadline date for insertion into *Hansard*.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: How does the State Government determine which black spots receive priority?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A committee is chaired by a Federal member and I have a representative, as does local government and the RAA. The committee includes my representative the Hon. Caroline Schaefer; Lachlan McKinna, of the South Australian Road Transport Association and Chairperson of the Commercial Transport Advisory Committee; Mayor Jan Cass, representing the Local Government Association; Mr Flett Steele, representing Transport SA and cycling groups; Chris Thomson from the RAA; Paul Turner from the Motor Accident Commission; and Senator Alan Ferguson, who chairs the panel representing the Federal Minister.

There are clear guidelines for the allocation of those funds and submissions are called essentially from the local community through councils. The Federal Government guidelines would not support national highway projects for funding, nor do they wish to see road projects we would have on our forward plan of work paid for under the black spot program or simply supplementing projects that we have not funded but seen as necessary in road safety terms. Further, 50

per cent of each State's funding must be allocated for rural roads.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: In 1997-98 the Federal Government also provided \$3 million for black spots. Was all the funding for 1997-98 spent and, if not, was there any carry-over?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We were provided with \$3.068 million in 1997-98. The panel recommended 27 projects, totalling \$3.31 million. The Federal Minister had some discretion between the \$3.3 million we nominated and the amount he subsequently approved. Sixty-one nominations from council areas were forwarded to the committee, totalling \$9.287 million. All would have been eligible, so it is a matter of that committee dispassionately looking at what should be funded. I highlight that nominations closed on 21 March 1998 for the next round of funding in the coming financial year and the panel will meet on 8 July to examine and comment on all nominations received. Do you see your Bakewell Bridge as a black spot?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, I do.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Did you put in your funding application by 21 March?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I do not know—I will have to look back at my notes.

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: What are you saying, Ivan? Why don't you go outside and say it?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I make it clear: this Committee has operated very well to date. Any nonsense and I will name any member who misbehaves. I will not put up with the sort of nonsense that has gone on elsewhere. I am endeavouring to conduct this in a low-key fashion and to give everyone a fair go. If there is any nonsense I will name the member because I do not want to be here any longer than necessary.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Perhaps the bridge does not need black spot funding, if the member has not put the application forward because the Government itself is funding upgrades to the bridge with design work already undertaken and construction work from next month.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I am fortunate to have the Adelaide to Crafers Highway running through my district. It has got me interested in the Highways Fund and the Highways Act. It has been a matter of discussion for some time that both the fund and the Act arrangements need reviewing. What progress is being made to bring the Act into line with current best practice and when will legislation be introduced?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Federal Minister will be particularly pleased with the honourable member's comments about the Mount Barker Road. It is an engineering masterpiece. The Federal funds generally for highways includes \$50 million for that project in the coming financial year. It is true that the Highways Act has been seen to be outmoded and for about 10 years the old Public Accounts Committee highlighted that fact, and I suspect that the new Economic and Finance Committee will soon be addressing it as well if we do not get a new Act before Parliament quite soon. That is certainly our goal. We are looking at what is commonly called an exposure Bill or a draft Bill, plus discussion papers, being issued for public comment in a few months time—September or October—for introduction of new legislation next calendar year.

It is important that we not only upgrade the Act in terms of national road transport reforms, national road uniformity and national road safety initiatives but we must also take account of the fact that since the High Court decision last

year we do not have that capacity in the Highways Fund to gain the fuel franchise fees. We still in the Highways Fund gain all the registration and drivers' licence fees dedicated to road purposes. The old Highways Fund and its definition that all those funds should simply go to roads is outmoded today.

Given the way we are conducting the portfolio and looking at transport as a whole and the way in which we are seeking to integrate public transport and road transport more effectively for the community benefit, we should be looking at the wider use of funds collected from motorists for the community benefit. In that regard we would be considering establishing a hypothecated transport fund, not just a highways fund. I would still like to see the hypothecation of funds so that motorists' licence and registration fees are put to transport purposes and not necessarily just to highways purposes.

It is also important that we look at the delegations of the Commissioner of Highways. There is definitely some conflict and confusion between the Minister's and the Commissioner's responsibilities in terms of modern practices. That is really important in the acquisition of land and a whole range of other issues, and we must deal with this as well.

Mr VENNING: I seek clarification on your ruling in relation to supplementary questions, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair has been very flexible and will allow the Committee to flow reasonably. I endeavour to keep it at a low key. The process of asking supplementary questions is really a nonsense. It just means that the member wants to ask four questions rather than three. You have been called, Mr Venning; please proceed to ask your question.

Mr VENNING: I refer to intrastate rail. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.4 refers to the portfolio outcome of an efficient and effective transport system that supports industry and community development. Australia Southern Railroad, in conjunction with Transfield and Clyde, was the successful purchaser of Australian National's intrastate rail business in South Australia. ASR commenced operating the rail service on 8 November 1997, amid high expectations that it would grow the business that had been neglected when in the hands of Australian National. How has ASR performed during its first six months of operation; and what are ASR's plans in relation to the standardisation of the Pinnaroo to Tailem Bend line and the future of the Wolseley to Mount Gambier line?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am very pleased to provide such positive advice to the Committee, because it was an unsettling, traumatic time, certainly for rail workers but also for the grain industry and all the other important customers of rail as we worked through the sale of Australian National. The South Australian Government was very keen to advise the Federal Government of whom we thought were the preferred bidders. The Federal Government was not particularly pleased to receive such advice, because it was its asset and it wanted to secure the best price. However, we were particularly keen to secure for the State the maximum number of jobs and a buyer that wanted to grow the business. Over the past six months since ASR purchased the business, we have developed a very satisfactory, positive working relationship with Australia Southern Railroad.

I meet regularly with the representative of the company, Mr Charles Chabot. Because the results were so outstanding, following our last meeting I asked him to write to me and put them in a form that I could put before Parliament. On 11 June he wrote:

Our financial results have exceeded our expectations, our relationship with the State owned railroads is excellent and our

customers, although demanding, are supportive of our efforts. . . . The most striking measure of our success is that our financial results have been very satisfactory. Through May we have made over \$1.58 million after tax profit. While that is not enough to support our capital requirements over the long term, it is an excellent start considering our start up costs and the cost basis we inherited from Australian National.

It is an outstanding result, considering the way Australian National operated on a very heavy subsidy prior to ASR's taking over. The letter continues:

Contributing to that profit is the fact that we took over control of our . . . trains on 1 February—

by that they mean they took over the control of traffic access to the train—

with the concurrence of and considerable assistance from Track Access. I know that this move saves us a substantial amount and it also reduces Track Access's costs. This is a good example of two bodies, one private and one publicly owned, working together to improve the efficiency of the transport network.

From our start on 8 November 1997, locomotive reliability has been our biggest problem. The fleet that we acquired from AN averages over 27 years old (compared to an average of under eight years old for the locomotives nominated by National Rail).

Mr Chairman, you would appreciate that, when the former Federal Government established National Rail (which was one of the reasons why we saw the demise of Australian National, but I will not get into the politics of that), the Federal Government also allowed National Rail to nominate whatever assets it wanted from Australian National without any understanding of how that might affect the business of Australian National. That could include freight depots, lines such as the Pasmenco line from Broken Hill to Port Pirie, locomotives or wagons. It is interesting to see that National Rail was able to nominate from Australian National locomotives of an average age of eight years but, when the Australian National business was sold, the average age of the locomotives was 27 years, and that is what the private sector company, ASR, has purchased. The letter continues:

We have undertaken a program to rebuild our fleet and the first rebuilt unit was delivered to us two weeks ago in Port Augusta. Our drivers tell me that it is working well. We hope to have six units rebuilt by the end of the year.

I highlight that those locomotives cost about \$500 000 to \$750 000 each to rebuild. Australia Southern Railroad has developed a program for Port Augusta workshops to rebuild six to eight locomotives over each of the next 10 years. Given that, irrespective of their political persuasions, I know that all members of Parliament have been concerned about the skills and jobs of metal workers in Port Augusta and elsewhere, it is fantastic to see this up front commitment from ASR for the refurbishment of those locomotives and all the work involving rebuilding six to eight locomotives each year over the next 10 years at Port Augusta. So, there is that guaranteed business. The letter continues:

Also in the locomotive area, we are replacing faulty microprocessors in 24 of our mainline units. We have completed the upgrade of 10 units to date and we will have all 24 completed by early July. This will have a significant impact on the reliability of the fleet. We have leased out portions of the Islington workshops to Bluebird and to Transfield.

Bluebird is refurbishing its rail carriages here, and the member for Schubert would be very pleased about the Barossa Bluebird train service.

Mr Venning: It is a great privatisation success.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, it is. It is good to see the resurgence of rail in this State. At Islington Bluebird is refurbishing not only their own rail cars but others, and this

was a business that it had formerly performed in Victoria. The letter continues:

Transfield is also using the space to support their Track Access maintenance contract. We also have two additional potential customers for lease space. All of these industries generate rail business for us and employment for South Australians.

Mr Chabot continues:

An additional source of revenue that we have developed is locomotive storage for National Rail and for Australian National. It is storing 10 locomotives from each of those companies.

That is the residue from Australian National. The letter continues:

If we cannot purchase or lease the units from them—
and that would be ASR's wish—

at least we can make money storing them. It does seem a shame that these Government-owned assets are sitting idle (actually costing taxpayers money in storage charges) when they could be productively making Australian industry more competitive in the world market place. ASR has joined a consortium to investigate and bid on the Alice Springs to Darwin line. We are pleased that our group is one of three on the short list.

He goes on to say that they are particularly pleased to have made the decision to invest in rail in South Australia. I also refer to recent advice from the Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Development, who confirms that with the standardisation of the Pinnaroo to Tailem Bend line work will begin next month on that major project. There is a price ceiling of \$5.46 million in Federal investment when the line is finished and that should be in October, before the grain season commences. From our State budget sources, South Australia will be paying to the Federal Government one-third of the cost of the standardisation project or \$2 million, whichever is the lesser. I highlight that Transfield will be undertaking that work.

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Chairman, that answer went for 10 minutes and was entirely read. It was a prepared question from the Government. I am asking you whether this is a proper use of Estimates Committees.

The CHAIRMAN: I have sat through Estimates Committees for a long time and is a practice which has not just started with this Government. The information conveyed to the committee, in the Chair's view, was most interesting and relevant to the people of South Australia. It passed through my mind that the Minister was somewhat generous in the length of time taken, and I did speak to Minister Evans last night and said that I knew he was trying to be particularly helpful and informative to the Committee but sometimes he was just taking a little longer than necessary. The Minister is endeavouring to be most helpful and cooperative with the Committee by providing this information, but perhaps we could just shorten it slightly.

Mr SNELLING: I refer to the Minister's school speed zones initiative which was introduced in 1997. What was the total cost to Transport SA for school speed zones in 1997-98 and what is the estimated cost for 1998-99?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I already informed the Parliament, when we introduced the most recent legislative change, about the cost of the new signs, with the very bright orange reflective background and the advice that when children are present the speed should be 25 km/h; the total cost of manufacture and installation and the 30 metre zig zag line that precedes a motorist's coming to the sign is \$850 000, of which \$200 000 is the public relations campaign component. With regard to speed zones, you will see that from this Sunday there will be television advertisements for one month

leading up to the new approach to motorists slowing down to 25 km/h. That will apply from 22 July, the start of the third school term.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Peake has had a fair go.

Mr SNELLING: What is the Government's estimate of the financial cost to be borne by local government for the changes of school speed zoning signage?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Local government is involved in the installation of the signs but I understand that we are meeting that cost.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Chairman. You have been very generous. I do not know why your colleagues criticise you, Sir! I refer to page 6.41 and the advice on ministerial support of 'output class'. Earlier this year the Chief Executive of the Great Southern Railway, Mr John Finnin, stated that the future of the *Overland* was under review. He said:

Given my other products and their potential to make greater money, I might just decide to kill it.

He said that in March 1998. At the time the Opposition raised great concerns about Mr Finnin's comments. However, the Minister gave certain assurances to the Parliament about the *Overland*, as follows:

Great Southern Railways has absolutely no intention of backing away from its commitment to maintain the services on the *Overland* in March 1998.

When I asked about the penalties if the Great Southern Railway did default, the Minister replied:

I said the contractual obligations in terms of minimum services are five services: Melbourne-Adelaide, Adelaide-Melbourne, and there are penalties provided in the agreement in the contracts.

Does the Minister stand by her assurance?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, of course I do. The assurance was given in the context that GSR was going to kill the *Overland*. I indicated that it has contractual commitments to the Government in terms of a minimum of five services. I am on the parliamentary record on 26 March as saying that the minimum service is five services Adelaide-Melbourne and return.

Mr ATKINSON: Will you resign if they do not happen?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have been given no reason to believe that it will not happen. Certainly, there has never been any discussion with GSR that I have had—

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The buck stops with you.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am looking for a little maturity here.

The CHAIRMAN: I warn the member for Peake.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am looking for a little maturity here. This is a new business to South Australia following the Federal Government's decision to sell AN. Contractual agreements have been entered into between the Federal Government and GSR and there are lease agreements with the State. Those agreements with the State require a minimum of five services. GSR has never suggested other than it would meet those minimum conditions.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I signed the agreement. If GSR does not meet the minimum agreement, it is not an issue of my resigning. That is pathetic. Penalty provisions apply, as I have already said in the Parliament on 26 March, and I refer the member to my statement at that time. To get it into perspective, GSR has bought into the business and actually

wants to make a profit. It wants the train to work, wants to build the business and is committing over \$1 million to the refurbishment of the *Overland* rail cars. I am not sure when the member for Spence last went on the *Overland*.

Mr ATKINSON: It's a mess.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know, and that is why you would be as pleased as I am and the State is generally because, unlike the former owner, GSR is investing over \$1 million to do up the rail cars, and in the meantime the Federal Government, out of the \$250 million that it provided for infrastructure in this budget as part of a three year program involving \$250 million, in the coming financial year will be doing up the track from the South Australian border into Melbourne because it is a disgrace that the Victorian Government has allowed that to run down dreadfully. GSR can go only 40 kilometres an hour in 15 places; it is just appalling. The Federal and Victorian Governments are finally putting money towards the upgrade of the track, with GSR investing in the upgrade of the railcars. With GSR wishing to bring the Ghan through Adelaide to Melbourne, with a focus on Adelaide, we will be well served in passenger rail.

Mr ATKINSON: What are the penalties?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I do not have them at hand.

Mr VENNING: What will GSR do about the terminus for interstate rail passengers? Will it be re-established Adelaide?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have also had discussions with GSR about scrapping the Keswick terminal and returning the trains to the Adelaide Railway Station when they enter and leave our city. The Adelaide City Council is also interested in the same proposition, as is the owner of the track, the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). At present, we do not have a standard gauge track from Keswick into the Adelaide Railway Station. I have had a study undertaken, with the support of the Rail Reform Fund. Rust PPK undertook the study, and a quote of \$11.6 million was given because of the length of the platform required, which is three times as long as the platforms now provided at the Adelaide Railway Station for our suburban system. Our suburban rail system works on broad gauge. We need to bring in a whole new standard gauge track, and that requires a whole new system of signalling. All those issues are involved. I am getting those costs looked at again because, as part of the Government's commitment to the Convention Centre, which is over the rail tracks, I would like to see whether we can bring in the train and look at rail track infrastructure at the Adelaide Railway Station at the same time as we are doing work on the Convention Centre. The marriage of tourism, trains, the Convention Centre and the railway station would be fantastic. I find it difficult to accept the current cost to bring in a train three kilometres. So we want to rigorously look at those costs.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to the capital funding statements of Transport SA in Budget Paper No. 4, Vol. 2, and specifically the Federal funding for the major capital works of \$65.1 million. What is the current status of the widening of the Eyre Highway? What funding has been allocated by the Federal Government in the 1998-99 financial year?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This question is asked almost every year by the member for Flinders, because it is such an important issue for her electorate. The Eyre Highway has been widened to an eight metre seal for 290 kilometres of the 450 kilometre length from Ceduna to Lincoln Gap, and that includes a continuous section of 255 kilometres from two kilometres east of Yaninee to Lincoln Gap. The contract for crushing materials for stage 7 Karcultaby to 2 kilometres east

of Yaninee is complete. I should highlight that the Federal Government has set the following schedule for completion of the work to 2001-02: stage 7, Karcultaby to two kilometres east of Yaninee, scheduled for 1998-99; stage 8, four kilometres east of Cungenya to Karcultaby, scheduled for 1999-2000; stage 9, Puntabie to five kilometres west of Wirrulla, scheduled for 2000-01; and stage 10 Ceduna to Puntabie, scheduled for 2001-02. It is then proposed that the highway will be widened from Penong to Ceduna in two stages, 2002-04.

The Federal Government has indicated publicly that \$3.5 million will be provided for this work on the Eyre Highway through the National Highways Fund this coming financial year. I have to acknowledge that there is still quite active discussion with the Federal Government over Federal road funding for the coming year. We do not have sufficient funds from the Federal Government to complete all our national highway contracts in 1998-99. It has been suggested by federal officers that, where contracts have not been let—for instance on the Eyre Highway or other projects such as the meat works road in the South-East—notwithstanding Federal Ministers' announcements of funding for those projects, those funds should now be put towards projects and, with the Federal departmental officers' knowledge, we enter into contracts. That is a totally unacceptable suggestion from those Federal officers and the Department of Transport and Regional Development. I have taken up the issue with the Federal Minister and his officers and will be speaking further to them on Friday. I want to see by 30 June that there is an undertaking that the \$3.5 million the Federal Government has announced for the Eyre Highway upgrade is confirmed, and I know the honourable member would be adamant that that is so. I am sure the Federal member for Grey, Mr Wakelin, feels equally strongly.

Mr ATKINSON: The Opposition has been told the financial penalties on Great Southern Railways for breaching the agreement with the State Government are so small that they do not deter GSR from breaching the agreement. I ask the Minister—on notice if necessary—to detail the financial penalties GSR would incur if it breached the agreement such as by closing down or diminishing the number of services on the *Overland*?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Let us get that back into perspective. It is a new investor. It has just spent tens of millions of dollars buying a business. It does not want to close it down or kill it off; it wants to build the business.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: With regard to Mr Finnin, I expect there has been misquoting.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know the member for Spence made statements about the public prosecutor recently and said he was misquoted. Mr Finnin of GSR also said that he was either misquoted or quoted off the record, I do not know. I read out a statement to the Legislative Council on 26 March, the same day that the article was featured in the *Financial Review*, and Mr Finnin indicated then that GSR had absolutely no intention of backing away from its commitments to maintain services on the *Overland*. GSR's bid was predicated on expanding and not diminishing those services and that it was GSR's intention to expand services out of Adelaide in the short to medium term. I suspect it was a negotiating point with the Victorian Government over access charges, and the Federal and State Labor Parties are not averse to using colourful language for their own purposes when they wish if

it is a negotiating point. That is as I see Mr Finnin's statements. There is no intention of its breaching the contract, because it wants to build its business. I have already stated in answer to an earlier question from the member for Spence that I will provide that information—and of course I will.

Mr SNELLING: I refer to the budget line 'Maintenance of transport system' and the proposed clearway for Grand Junction Road. When previously questioned on this subject, the Minister advised:

... if it is deemed that the clearway will go ahead and that any small business owner will be disadvantaged, the department has undertaken that there will be the provision of parking bays.

Assuming that the Minister still stands by that commitment, has the department undertaken a costings exercise on the provision of parking bays; and, if so, what are those costs?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: My understanding of the clearway proposal is that we are still awaiting feedback from public consultations with the Port Adelaide Enfield council and the Charles Sturt council. We want to hear their views. Costings have possibly been undertaken with Transport SA. I will provide that information to the honourable member.

Mr Argent: The construction of indented parking bays in similar circumstances is not a new concept: it has been done in other locations. In most cases, that has occurred with the cooperation of local government: there has been a joint arrangement. In this case, given the relationship that we have with the council and the cooperation that we have received in respect of a number of matters relating to this issue, we expect the same sort of arrangements to apply, but no costings have been carried out at this stage.

Mr SNELLING: How many small businesses would be affected by the introduction of the clearway at Grand Junction Road?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have not personally counted them, but we have taken into consideration their views in terms of the consultation process. We do not want to see small business suffer. That is why we have looked at these arrangements for indented parking bays and off-street parking. Off-street parking has been identified by council officers who have worked through this issue with Transport SA officers. As I have said, I am awaiting the result of public consultations with both councils.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: The hard working Mitcham office of Motor Registration at the Mitcham Shopping Centre is situated in my electorate. It does an excellent job. I am interested in the Government's initiative to introduce quarterly vehicle registrations and, more recently, over-the-phone credit card and Internet payment options for registration charges. These options have no doubt caused extra work, but have they proved popular with motorists, and will the Minister outline the practice of charging administration fees in relation to all these transactions?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Registration and licensing is a tough job. Over the past two years, we have not only asked that section to deal with all the national heavy vehicle changes to the registration system but we followed that closely with light vehicle registration changes, and it was also asked to undertake matters in connection with firearms. I am also conscious of the fact that as a result of CTP increases from 1 July more demands will be made on registration and licensing staff by the public.

We introduced different options for people to register their vehicles—I am pleased to see that the member for Peake applauds the Government's initiative. In the 12 month period from June 1997 to May 1998, approximately 40.4 per cent of

vehicle owners registered their vehicle for three months, 23.5 per cent for six months; 1.3 per cent for nine months; and 32.5 per cent for 12 months. Approximately 2.3 per cent of vehicles are registered with a common expiry date. The three month registration period clearly is the most readily acceptable to vehicle owners: it is now the most popular option followed by the 12 month option.

Administration fees have been charged for some years, but we have never distinguished them on the forms posted to motorists advising of the charges. That has been made apparent on the form since July 1996. The registration fee was \$5, but I think it will now be \$6 because of the merchant card fee and the credit card arrangements that will apply in the future. I never anticipated when the Government sought to respond to the needs of motorists by providing further options for registration of their vehicles that 40 per cent of people would avail themselves of the three month option. That has come as a surprise to me and, I suspect, to the Registrar.

The credit card facility has been popular, and that should reduce some of the pressure on front counter staff. We receive 500 telephone calls a day inquiring about the use of credit card facilities for the payment of registration fees. We have also just started the Internet, but that is not as popular: we receive about five telephone calls a day. There is no cash back facility, so we do not have EFTPOS.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Vol. 2 (page 6.8). One of the targets for the maintenance of transport systems (1998-99) is as follows:

Continue the recreational jetties divestment program established with local government.

As the Minister is aware, there are a large number of jetties in my electorate. How are negotiations progressing, particularly with councils on the Eyre Peninsula?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member has about 13 of the 49 jetties in this State in her electorate, and I think the member for Goyder has a large number as well. In respect of the 49 jetties across the State, we have reached agreement with 10 councils on 24 recreational jetties and wharves to be upgraded for divestment to local councils who will be responsible for their maintenance in the future. I seek leave to insert in *Hansard* a table setting out the councils and jetties or wharves.

Leave granted.

Council		Jetty/Wharf
Alexandrina	(3)	Goolwa, Milang and Port Elliott
Coorong District	(2)	Meningie and Narrung
Yorke Peninsula	(9)	Ardrossan, Edithburgh, Marion Bay, Port Julia, Port Rickaby, Port Victoria, Port Vincent (jetty and wharf), Stansbury and Wool Bay
Port Augusta	(2)	Port Augusta Mill and Port Augusta West
Mount Remarkable	(1)	Port Germein
Robe	(1)	Robe
Copper Coast	(1)	Port Hughes
Mid Murray	(1)	Morgan
Murray Bridge	(1)	Murray Bridge
Yankalilla	(2)	Second Valley and Normanville
OACDT(*)	(1)	Port Sinclair
Total	24	

(*) This facility is out of districts and so a lease arrangement has been negotiated with the Outback Areas Community Development Trust.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: One issue that may be of interest is the fact is that we have negotiated an agreement with the Outback Area Community Development Trust. It is

not at Lake Eyre but at Port Sinclair, which is just outside the incorporated region.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair is very familiar with Port Sinclair.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I was surprised when I was first told by transport officers that they were negotiating with the Outback Area Community Development Trust.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is going well. As I have just indicated, 10 councils have reached agreement with Transport SA on 24 out of the 49 jetties.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will go through these then. I did indicate that I would table this information but—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think that is a waste of time. The Chair suggests that you ignore the interjection of Mr Atkinson.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have written to the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association, which is now acting on behalf of all councils on Eyre Peninsula. We are looking at the lease terms. They may not want to be involved in a 25 year lease. We are happy to look at 50 year or 100 year leases if that is the case. They are concerned about what their long-term commitments might be, and we have indicated that all investigations to assess the amount of work and costs to upgrade the jetties have been confirmed whenever the councils have sought independent assessment—they have always confirmed the department's initial assessments.

Certainly, Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association can go through independent assessments. We will work with them on that issue. I suspect they will not find the assessment costs different from those that we have presented to them in good faith. We have continued to work with them. Perhaps as a whole Eyre Peninsula may not wish to maintain all the jetties and wharves which currently stand. It may wish to invest in some and take ownership of others but not all of them, and they should work through that as a community.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I refer to the Federal Government's announcement of the sale of Adelaide Airport. At the time the Opposition raised a number of questions about the proposed airport levy to fund the new terminal. How much revenue is the Government anticipating collecting from the \$2 passenger levy in 1998-99, when will the collection commence, and how will it be collected?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This I think is being handled through Premier and Cabinet. Mr Page advises me that perhaps it is the Department of Industry and Trade—although it still may be the Premier driving this. My understanding is that the new owners have made an application to the ACCC for authority to seek such a charge on each passenger in the knowledge that that charge would be dedicated to the terminal upgrade.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: It will not be the Minister for Transport administering it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, it would be collected by the new owners and invested in the upgrade of the terminal.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: That leads to my next question. Will all the money collected go solely into construction of the new terminal or will the State Government appropriate money from it? Will the Government give an undertaking that the passenger levy of \$2 will not be increased?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not aware of what the new owners have put in as the figure for the levy.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is their application. I can find out for the honourable member. I have not been involved in this issue so I am not aware whether the application to ACCC was seeking authority to collect such a charge or whether they had to seek authority for the amount of that charge, but I will find out for the honourable member. Certainly, the State Government has always approached this issue on the basis that such a charge would be dedicated solely to the terminal and that it would not be a revenue collection measure for the State Government. We may want the money, but it is not designed for that purpose.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Referring to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.32, the figure of \$920 000 for bike tracks is mentioned, which raises the question of bikes. In terms of the Government's goal to double cycling use by the year 2000, what initiatives have been taken over the past year to promote cycling generally and to invest in infrastructure to improve facilities and safety?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I was very disappointed that the honourable member did not come with me when I cycled at the launch of the southern veloway—nor did Mr Atkinson, who is a keen cyclist.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, the member for Schubert did come to the Morgan-Burra road with me when it was unsealed and the honourable member did ride it to celebrate the sealing of that road. I actually thought, Mr Chairman, that we may have had a by-election on our hands: he did not look very fit going uphill against the wind after 60 kilometres on the road, but it is good to see the honourable member here today still smiling. The southern veloway was opened in February this year, the first of its type in Australia, as I understand, and certainly with any road project that has been undertaken in South Australia. We have released a set of Bike Direct maps, so for the first time across the metropolitan area we have a series of maps which help people to understand which arterial roads have cycle paths painted onto the road and which adjacent or local roads could be used for safe cycling.

We have developed a code of conduct for bicycle couriers, and we are working with police in relation to offences committed by couriers. Generally, the behaviour of couriers in the city has improved dramatically. There is a recreational plan for the disused railway line between Willunga and Marino. That has been developed and should be presented to me next month. The construction of the Riesling Trail just outside Clare, in the member for Schubert's electorate, has just been completed and the signage is under way. That also was a disused railway line.

Transport SA supports the Cycling Institute for the conduct of cycling education projects in schools. A total of 6 000 primary school students participated in the BikeEd project during last year and members of the institute have recently met with me to see whether we could increase funding so that they could increase that program of education of children. I would like to consider how we could possibly do that. We have helped establish for the first time the Cycling Industry Association, so all retailers and wholesalers of cycles have finally come together and are working with enthusiasts, recreational and commuter cyclists, and other organisations. South Australia has won the right to host the Australasian Cycling Conference in Adelaide in February next year. That will be one month after the international road race for cycling up to the Barossa—

Mr VENNING: Tour Down Under.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Tour Down Under, which will be stunning. We also have the Share the Road Campaign which not only encourages safe riding and driving practices and highlights the relationship and responsibility between motorists and other road users but also tries to get cyclists to be more responsible in their driving habits and to make sure that their bikes are well lit if they are driving at night. As a motorist, sometimes it is a bit of a surprise to come upon a cyclist—

Mr ATKINSON: Wear reflective clothing.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, do you?

Mr ATKINSON: Sometimes.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have just been alerted by Mr Payze to the fact that a code of conduct arising from the bicycle courier strategy has been negotiated. I understand that they are seeking my endorsement and when I have read it I should be able to give it. That will be a further advance for safe practices within the bicycle courier business.

Mr SNELLING: Can Minister advise the Committee where the Highway Fund appears in the budget papers? We have been unable to locate it. The Highway Fund is set to receive a huge windfall as a result of budget tax hikes aimed at motorists. What is the estimated 1998-99 revenue to the Highway Fund from registration fee increases and drivers' licence increases?

Mr Atwell: The licence and registration fee increases announced in the budget this year are likely to yield an additional \$6.8 million per annum—\$4.5 million for registration fee increases and the balance for drivers' licence increases.

Mr SNELLING: What was the revenue during 1997-98 from those same sources?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Receipts for the coming financial year are estimated to be \$24.5 million from drivers' licences and \$170.48 million from motor vehicle registrations. I will obtain the figures for this financial year.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.18, which deals with the issue of drivers' licences and regulatory services, driver/vehicle/passenger compliance. The introduction of registration and licensing arrangements in December 1997 involved a computer based system for the production of photographic licences. What benefits have been provided to drivers and staff? Why has the Government introduced 10 year drivers' licences? Can drivers still obtain a five year licence or a licence for a lesser number of years?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The 10 year licence is an option—people can seek to renew their licences from one year up to 10 years—which will be introduced next month. My driver's licence was due to expire earlier this month and when I tried to do it for 10 years I was told that it was only available from 15 June. So from 15 June—two days ago—one could apply to renew a driver's licence for up to 10 years. This has been introduced as a matter of choice for motorists.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is a substantial benefit. I think it is \$210 for a 10 year licence, after 1 July.

Mr VENNING: If you die in the middle of it, is it refundable?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: If you die in the middle of it, yes, it is refundable—so you would have saved money in terms of the administration fee but your estate would benefit. We used to have standard photographic equipment for taking photographs which were then put on to the plastic disk for a driver's licence. The photograph was taken, processed and

posted, and generally drivers had to wait between 14 to 21 days while that occurred. In country areas it was worse still. If drivers went to Australia Post offices it would take between 21 to 28 days get the old disk.

With the advent of computer technologies the operator now knows immediately whether or not the photograph is valid. We got numerous complaints from people that they would go into the registration office or Australia Post offices and have their photograph taken, and no-one would know whether it was in a form that could be used for the disk. They may have been asked to come back, and in country areas in particular that did not please them, and not surprisingly. Now we know immediately if the photograph is valid. That is very helpful for staff in terms of some of the stresses and strains that they cope with.

I highlight, too, having just seen my new driver's licence with the holograms on it, that the conditions and restrictions applying to the driver's licence are printed in full on the reverse of the licence now, whereas previously it was a bit of a random practice on both sides of the licence and it was not clear. We have never had all the conditions printed on it so well.

Mr VENNING: Can you pay with your credit card?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You can make your payment by credit card, but not over the telephone or through the Internet because you have to come in to have your photograph taken.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I refer to the policy development advice and ministerial support output class. One of the Government's commitments during the last election stated:

legislative reforms will address penalties related to speeding and drink driving issues, including new penalties for the second and subsequent offences between .05 and .079.

That was outlined in 'Focus on transport' at page 13 of the Government's election promises. Does the Government intend to progress this policy commitment in 1998-99? What is the budget estimate and what would be the new penalties envisaged by the Minister?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Work has not been done on the penalties as yet, but certainly it is intended to progress this as part of the national road safety strategy that all Ministers have signed off on. It will be subject to debate in Parliament. I have signed off as part of the Australian Transport Conference consideration of this issue, as did all Ministers. I am conscious that there are areas of democracy here and that we go through the process of endorsement by Cabinet, Party room and Parliament.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: That was an election promise, so why does it go through Cabinet?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They may not like the penalties. If it is an election promise any legislation that comes to the Parliament must first go to Cabinet for endorsement as a Government initiative. That election promise was made as a Liberal Party going to the people. It must be a Government commitment, otherwise it could be a private member's Bill. If it is in Liberal Party policy it should be signed off and sealed by a Cabinet submission. Even your Party, if ever in government, would insist on the same processes of accountability. They would not let you run riot but would keep you accountable somehow.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to budget paper No.4, volume 2, page 6.47. Will the Minister outline the funding projections for the widening and upgrading of the Lincoln Highway north and south of the township of Cowell?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Transport SA has undertaken work in 1997-98 to widen some of the narrowest sections, predominantly the worst curves to the north of Cowell. The road shoulders are being widened and upgraded in these areas in preparation for stabilising and sealing them next financial year. It is anticipated that shoulder works will commence in June 1998 with stabilising to follow in October 1998, and this will result in a total of nine kilometres of highway being widened. Transport SA has a program to complete the upgrading of the section of the Lincoln Highway over the next four financial years finishing 2001-2. In 1998-99 it is planned to invest \$500 000 in the widening and sealing of the section north of Cowell. The total estimated cost of the project is \$5 million, subject to available State funds. Funds of \$500 000 have been made available for the next financial year.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been brought to my attention that it appears that certain departmental inspectors and the police, either unwittingly or wittingly, are attempting to make life as difficult as they possibly can for people involved in transporting agricultural machinery or who are involved in agriculture with spray units, and so on, by engaging in rather unnecessary and pedantic activities. I took up one example of which the Minister is aware on behalf of people who have to have a lot of John Deere tractors transporting around the country. The Minister indicated to me that the transport operator had been given a caution. However, I have in front of me a summons, which was due to be answered on 15 June. I have been contacted by the agency that engaged this contractor who pointed out:

John Deere actual extensions, which are not removable, are almost as wide as the tractor when fitted with dual rear wheels.

If the decision that has already been taken by the department continues, it will drastically and unnecessarily increase the cost of transporting this machinery. I find it difficult to understand why these machines are classed as agricultural machines. They are for every other purpose. I raise the issue not to be difficult, but because it is a very important issue. I have been through all the right processes and your office is aware of the situation. There is a lot more I could say. I will leave it at that and look forward to the Minister's response.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I applaud your self-control in these circumstances, Sir, because if I were you, with the further information you have provided to me, I too would be angry. I had been advised, and I alerted you accordingly, that the police had cautioned Mr Prestwood and had decided to take no further action. You clearly indicated, notwithstanding that advice, that the police did decide to proceed, and it is a matter that Mr Argent will take up with the Police Commissioner to get this sorted out.

We have not only this one case, which has clearly highlighted some difficulties over the advice given to your constituent from our area of permits and transport officers generally, but also this difficulty with the police indicating whether they have cautioned or determined to prosecute. With the South Australian Farmers Federation and others we must work through the further issue of the definitions in the Act of 'tractor', 'farm machine' and 'farm implement'. They vary according to whether they are self propelled, and this is a big issue in determining compulsory third party insurance, conditional registration and a whole range of matters that Parliament sought to address to the satisfaction of primary producers last year or the year before. Difficulties continue to arise from that exercise. It seems to me that we must be

able to do better than the categories to which I have referred. Streamlining those categories would help the police in administering the law, and our own officers, and it would certainly be far more satisfactory to primary producers.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Minister. I share her concern, even more now that she has answered the question. I look forward to being in contact with her. I am aware of some of the people involved, and I will have no hesitation in using the other Chamber as the appropriate forum to say what I think should happen to them. I understand that Mr Atkinson wishes to put a number of questions on notice.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to the policy development advice and ministerial support output class. In relation to all departments and agencies for which the Minister has responsibility, will the Minister:

1. Provide a list of all boards; their terms of reference; names of board members and their terms of appointment, including those appointed by the Minister; and fees paid, if any?
2. List all committees with external membership and provide their terms of reference; names of committee members and their terms of appointment, including those appointed by the Minister; and fees paid, if any?

In relation to all departments and agencies for which the Minister has responsibility, will she answer the following questions:

1. List all consultancies let during 1997-98, indicating whether tenders or expressions of interest were called for each consultancy; if not, why not; and the terms of reference and cost of each consultancy?
2. Which consultants submitted reports during 1997-98; what was the date on which each report was received by the Government; and was the report made public?
3. What was the cost for the financial years 1996-97 and 1997-98 of all services provided by EDS, including the costs of processing of data, installation and/or maintenance of equipment, including the cost of any new equipment either purchased or leased to EDS; and all other payments related to the Government's contract to outsource information technology to EDS?
4. During 1996-97 and 1998-99 have there been any disputes with EDS concerning the availability level or timeliness of services provided under the whole of Government contract with EDS; and, if so, what were the details and how were they resolved?
5. What are the names and titles of all executives with salary and benefit packages exceeding an annual value of \$100 000; which executives have contracts which entitle them to bonus payments; and what are all details of bonuses paid in 1997-98?

The CHAIRMAN: These are very similar to the questions that the honourable member asked yesterday. I suggest that it would more appropriate if you had forwarded them to the Minister. Then we would not have had to listen to them on a second occasion, which is somewhat repetitious.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister is hearing them for the first time, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not hearing them for the first time.

Mr ATKINSON: I continue:

6. What are the names and titles of staff who have been issued or who have access to Government credit cards; for what purpose was each of these cards issued; and what was the expenditure on each card for 1997-98?

7. What are the names and titles of all officers who have been issued with Government owned mobile telephones; what arrangements apply for the payment of mobile telephone accounts; and what restrictions apply to the use of Government mobile telephones for private purposes?

8. What was the total number and cost of separation packages finalised in the financial years 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98?

9. What is the target number of staff separations in the 1998-99 budget; how many TVSPs have been approved by the Commissioner for Public Employment for 1998-99; and what classifications of employee have been approved for TVSPs in 1998-99?

10. How many vehicles by classification were hired in each of the financial years 1996-97 and 1997-98; and what was the cost of vehicle hire and maintenance in each of these financial years?

The Olsen Liberal Government has on many occasions given explicit support—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will have to complete asking these questions later.

Mr ATKINSON: There are two minutes to go, Sir.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Putting together this information may take considerably longer than the normal time for answering Budget Estimates questions. So, in the view of the Chair the Minister may have to answer them at a later date, because it would be unreasonable to expect to stop the department to provide this information.

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

The CHAIRMAN: Will you complete your questions, Mr Atkinson?

Mr ATKINSON: As you know, Mr Chairman, the Olsen Liberal Government of which you are a member has on many occasions—

The CHAIRMAN: You are talking to someone who prides himself on knowledge of the Constitution.

Mr ATKINSON: I thought you sat in the Government Party room. Perhaps you took my advice and, as Speaker, did not attend—given explicit support to Mr John Howard's plan to introduce a goods and services tax. Has the Minister or any departments or agencies under her portfolio undertaken an analysis of the impact of the introduction of the GST at the likely rate of 10 per cent or at any other rate on the cost of delivering State Government goods and services? Secondly, for each department and agency within her portfolio, by how much will the cost of goods and services purchased increase on the likely GST rate of 10 per cent? By how much will the cost of each service provided to the public need to rise to prevent an erosion of State Government revenue? They are questions on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now deal with the Passenger Transport Board.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr Rod Payze, Chief Executive Officer.

Ms Heather Webster, Executive Director.

Ms Diana Cleland, Deputy Executive Director.

Mr Greg Fenn, Manager, Budget Finance.

Mr Barry Atwell, Managing Director.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I wish to provide an opening statement.

Mr ATKINSON: Is it appropriate to have an opening statement, given that we have not changed budget lines?

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with another heading. We will not get pedantic. The Minister will say it one way or another and we might as well get on with it.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Only with your tolerance, Mr Chairman. The Passenger Transport Board is continuing to make significant improvements to South Australia's passenger transport services. The board is also continuing to play a key role in integrating these services and forging a new direction for passenger transport. The 1998-99 budget for the Passenger Transport Board in accrual terms amounts to \$239.9 million. During the coming financial year the board will recommence a new round of competitive tendering for the provision of metropolitan public transport services. These new contracts will build on the service improvements that have already been achieved. The contracting process has provided a real bonus for taxpayers. Under the Treasury's no policy change methodology a net annual saving of \$14.9 million has been achieved in the cost of providing public transport. The total cumulative savings since 1994-95 have now reached \$58.9 million. These savings have enabled the Government to invest in improved services in the metropolitan area, such as the fully accessible suburban link minibus service in the outer North-Eastern suburbs and the city free services. In regional areas we have invested in new services in the Willunga/Aldinga area, for instance, and the community bus networks across rural South Australia.

In 1998-99 the PTB will complete a Ten Year Investment Plan for public transport. This plan will capitalise on the strengths of the current system, prioritise areas for new investment and build better links with the road network. The use of new technologies to improve customer information at bus stops and stations and for ticketing purposes will be explored as part of the investment plan. Patronage on metropolitan public transport is continuing to show signs of recovery but month by month figures are patchy. Certainly, the dramatic declines under Labor are a thing of the past. The incentives to improve services which are built into the board's contracts with TransAdelaide, Hills Transit and Serco has encouraged all operators to be more customer focused, which in turn is winning new customers and generating return business. This effort is to be reinforced by the PTB in the coming year with the development of a much stronger focus in the organisation on patronage issues.

One of the keys to attracting people back to public transport is access to information. In the past year the Passenger Transport Information Centre has been upgraded and enlarged to make it more customer friendly. A new free, comprehensive MetroGuide—and I think all members received a copy for their electorate offices—to Adelaide's public transport system has also been launched. The sum of \$294 000 will be provided from the Passenger Transport Research and Development Fund in the coming year to trial small and medium sized bus stop information units at selected suburban stations. The trial will be the biggest roll out of bus stop information in Adelaide for nearly 15 years, since the early 1980s.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Would you like to ask me a question about that later? As the member is so enthusiastic, I put on record that I am as enthusiastic as the member for Spence or that he is as enthusiastic as I am about this initiative.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But now hopefully you will be able to get them at bus stops. Anyway, we want your feedback. South Australia has maintained its well deserved reputation as the national leader in the provision of fully accessible passenger transport. The board won an Equal Opportunity Award this financial year for the design of the large bus stop information units being introduced—

Mr ATKINSON: Despite what the Lord Mayor said.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Lord Mayor was wrong and, despite her objections, we are proceeding. We are also extending that work to the suburbs as I mentioned. A new Passenger Transport Board—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I did not think you liked North Adelaide. Why would you want to see anything go to North Adelaide? I thought you had a complex—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You have paranoia about North Adelaide. The new Passenger Transport Board contract for the Access Cabs booking service has cut average waiting times, allowing customers to be more certain about taxi arrival times. Under other moves to improve the accessibility of passenger transport, a further 50 fully accessible compressed natural gas buses will be introduced into service during the coming financial year bringing the total number in the metropolitan fleet to 157. Adelaide now has more bus route services exclusively operated by fully accessible buses than any other city in Australia.

In terms of taxis—and I appreciate there will be questions on this matter shortly—taxi driver and taxi customer safety have remained a top priority for the Passenger Transport Board and the taxi industry. In another Australian first, the taxi safety task force, which is elected directly by the taxi industry and which is funded by the State Government, is now identifying how funds raised from the safety levy on Adelaide taxi fares have been and should be spent. Meanwhile, standards in the hire car/small passenger vehicle industry have continued to be monitored in the community interest. I welcome questions.

Mr SNELLING: An identified target in the budget paper is 'to promote improved patronage on passenger transport'. I refer the Committee to the following public transport patronage figures from the latest PTB 1996-97 annual report: bus patronage decreased by 1.8 per cent; train decreased by 1.3 per cent; regular fare decreased by 2 per cent; concession fare decreased by 1.5 per cent; and, finally—and this is the only positive figure—tram patronage increased by .1 per cent, which is probably due to its tourism factor. What are the 1997-98 patronage results? What is the forecast for the 1998-99 figures for each of these services? Given that the 7 per cent fare increase represents an average increase, what is the total range of increases?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I may have to provide the full figures later, as I am not sure whether I have the full year's figures here. I mentioned in my opening statement that they are patchy on a month by month basis. They fell in January by 1.6 per cent compared to the same month the previous year. They increased by 2.3 per cent in February. For the March quarter overall, there was an increase in the number of journeys to 10.9 million compared to 10.6 million for the same quarter the previous year. April figures are down, and I do not think that we have collated May figures yet. It is patchy on a month by month basis. As I highlighted in my statement, essentially we have stemmed the sharp decline in overall patronage that was prevalent in the years before we

came to Government. It is still not on the increase overall, but the decline has been stemmed.

The Passenger Transport Board, its officers, the board and the Government have decided that patronage will be a major issue for focus for the board and for all contractors over the coming year. I will highlight some of the initiatives that will be undertaken. A six point plan has been developed, because we know that we can and must do better in making more and more people perceive public transport as being more relevant.

One big issue for us is to reduce fare evasion. I trust that, when the honourable member uses public transport, he validates his ticket. That is critical, because we cannot ascertain whether someone uses public transport unless they validate their ticket. Of course, fare evaders do not validate their ticket, so we do not know that they are on board. That is important in designing the service. We want not only the revenue but also the statistical information so that we can plan the growth of better services in the future. The member for Spence will be pleased to learn that, as part of this new strategy, all passenger service attendants will have delegated powers to check tickets. At present, only the more senior passenger service attendants are able to do that, but all of them will be able to do so under the new six point plan. That has been a bit of a breakthrough. Members who have been around for as long as the member for Spence and I would know that the union movement was reluctant to see this responsibility given other than to inspectors. Now it has come to see that inspectors, too, need this help, and it is important for the image of public transport overall that we have regard for the system, with people validating.

In terms of improving information, we will be providing bus stop information signs—and I may be able to elaborate on those later. With regard to improving the design of services, we are focussing on people travelling in the inter-peak period between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. There is capacity there. We want to fill that capacity. While there has been an increase in fares, we have not increased the inter-peak period at all. That has been frozen, because that is part of the strategy to get more people to travel in the period between the peaks. We might have a seven point plan, if we use the member for Spence as one of the arms of our strategy!

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: If you had listened, you would know that the inter-peak period is frozen. So, if you have 53¢, that is what you keep. We will be further promoting public transport, highlighting the environmental impacts of the motor vehicle developing a customer loyalty program—and the member for Spence might be part of that, too—developing timetable displays at selected ticket outlets, improving infrastructure—and I mentioned earlier the ten point infrastructure plan—and improving education such as safe track rail safety programs.

There will always be a reaction to any price increase. We accept that. However, it is important to know that we are, nevertheless, countering in a big way the issue of patronage and fare evasion using education and the like. Just for the record, I would just like to highlight that fares in Adelaide make the lowest contribution to the cost of providing a service compared to 32 OECD countries that have been surveyed in this regard. On rail, we have an average cost per boarding of \$5.97; for buses, \$2.67; and for trams, \$3.49. So the average ticket price per boarding is under 80¢. It is a heavily subsidised system, notwithstanding the increase of fares.

The Multitrip ticket still provides the most generous discount in Australia, and we have provided the best value in Australia, notwithstanding the price going up. With an operating subsidy plus the 50 per cent concession fare—in addition to what we are asking people who use the service to pay—the cost to taxpayers will be \$202 million in the current financial year.

Mr SNELLING: What has happened to patronage on those routes that have been contracted out? I refer particularly to Serco. If there has been an increase in patronage, to what extent has that been caused by shifts by existing public transport users: for instance, passengers shifting from trains to Serco bus routes?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure whether we can ascertain that information, because we use an integrated ticketing system and not separate ticketing systems for trains or buses. We have an integrated system across public transport irrespective of mode. I could make inquiries about that, but I doubt whether we would be able to distinguish between them unless we surveyed customers. I am told that the patterns for both rail and bus have been remarkably similar both before and after the introduction of Serco. I understand that the patronage of Serco and Hills Transit is increasing, although we have had some problems with contracts with TransAdelaide.

Mr VENNING: What is the State Government doing to improve links between passenger transport and tourism in regional South Australia?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This is important, because passenger transport not only works with metropolitan contractors but recognises that it must also work with country bus services. We believe there is enormous potential to do much more to help country bus services to help themselves and the community by promoting those services for the benefit of tourism. The Passenger Transport Board (through Di Cleland and her officers) has been working with the Tourism Commission to jointly fund a \$30 000 promotional campaign in the Flinders Ranges to encourage backpackers and students to visit the Flinders Ranges by bus. I will ask Ms Cleland how long it will be before this initiative is assessed and potentially spread elsewhere.

Ms Cleland: It is proposed to start very soon. The preliminary work has already been done regarding our involvement with the Tourism Commission. We are currently discussing with the operator in the contracted area ways to involve local operators in expressions of interest. The program will be promoted around Australia and overseas in conjunction with the Tourism Commission. In addition, it has become evident from Tourism Commission data that European tourists are now coming to Australia via Darwin and Alice Springs. So, we believe there is a good catch net to include local operators in that area of the market in the North. If the Tourism Commission and the Passenger Transport Board agree that this pilot program should be set up, and if it is successful, it will be extended to other areas.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I am interested in the point raised by the Minister in her opening remarks about fare evasion and the associated cost. In the balance statement of cash flows in the Budget Papers the payments figure is \$238 million whereas receipts are just over \$82 million. Will the Minister explain whether this fare evasion issue has been identified as a serious problem in dollar terms and say what specific actions are planned to improve those receipts and fix the problem?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is a serious problem, and I have highlighted it briefly, but perhaps I can provide a few more details for the benefit of the honourable member and the Committee as a whole. Generally, fare evasion is seen as an issue for the operator—TransAdelaide, Serco and Hills Transit—because their current contracts include an incentive to win passengers by being paid according to the number of passengers. Never has this happened before. I thought this would be a sufficient incentive for an operator to be diligent regarding fare evasion. We are now making sure that the Passenger Transport Board itself plays a key role in this issue. Since Ms Webster has taken up the position of Executive Director, the board has begun to look at a whole range of issues, and \$75 000 has been applied by the board. The board is also working with the other operators as they focus on—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am happy to answer that question when I finish with the issue of fare evasion. Perhaps the honourable member could listen to this important issue. The operators are being asked to focus fully on this. Passenger service attendants, who sometimes do other responsible work within TransAdelaide, will not do that but will fully focus on fare evasion over a nine week period (including weekends). Over a nine day cycle, every train will be fully staffed to do a saturation ticket check, and we will carry out customer surveys on this issue before and after those saturation checks. That will not only be beneficial in terms of boosting revenue but it will be important to drivers because they get very angry when people do not respect the system and pay their fair share of the cost of running public transport, and paying passengers become highly irritated when they see others cheating the system.

Regarding the unsolicited question about Ms Webster. Mr Payze was on the interviewing panel. A number of people were interviewed. When Ms Webster chose to apply for the position, she was working with me as—

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: In your political office?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, in my ministerial office. She applied for the job. I think Mr Payze chaired the panel for this public sector position, but I do not think it does credit to any member of the Opposition to suggest that this was a political appointment and that it was not won on merit.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not the purpose of this Committee to sit in judgment on who should win which position. I do not think it is particularly edifying or dignified, and I do not intend to allow any further questions regarding that matter.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was won on merit, and that will be seen.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair accepts that.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The Government's tax hikes have hurt all South Australians. However, they have hurt taxi drivers especially—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They're part of the Labor Party's debt.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: We are not discussing the Labor Party's debt; we are discussing the budget. I was 17 at the time, but that's another issue.

An honourable member interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We do not need interjections across the Chamber. The member for Peake will ask his question.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I welcome your protection, Sir.
An honourable member interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Well, they have no protection from this Government, Mr Chairman. However, that especially hurt taxi drivers with an increase of 113.2 per cent in compulsory third party premiums. The actual costs have gone up from \$912 to \$1 944, an increase of over \$1 000 per annum—enough to drive any small business to the wall. The Party which bases its foundation on small business has just increased it by \$1 000 and the impact of this increase, not to mention the increase in registration cost, is twofold: there will be fewer taxis on the road, which means service delivery will suffer and, secondly, taxis will have no choice but to pass on the cost to consumers—as the Treasurer pointed out to SATA and Adelaide Independent Taxis when the Minister refused to turn up to a meeting with some taxi drivers, probably because she did not want to cop flak from the taxi drivers.

Is it the Government's intention to support an application by the taxi industry for a full flow-on of the CTP premium increases and the registration increases, possibly resulting in an 8 per cent to 10 per cent increase in taxi fares to consumers and, if not, why not?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I did not refuse to turn up at the meeting: I was unable to go to the meeting. I have spoken with representatives of the taxi industry over the telephone and I met with SATA representatives and with other company representatives yesterday. I am not sure where the member for Peake is getting information from, but certainly the discussions yesterday with representatives of the taxi industry and representatives of the company—

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Who?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Representatives from SATA and Adelaide Independent are two.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am just saying what was discussed yesterday. I do not need to go through my discussions, but I will if you wish me to. The honourable member says that there is no choice but to pass the costs on. Many of the taxi drivers who speak to me are very conscious of price impact on patronage. There has been no application at this time for an increase and under the passenger transport—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the member for Peake for the second time.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Treasurer may say what he wishes. I am highlighting that under the Passenger Transport Act an application has to be made for any increase in fare to the Passenger Transport Board. The honourable member was not in this Parliament when it went through but that is the law, and no application has been made. Certainly, the industry would not see an 8 per cent to 10 per cent increase was necessary even if an application was made in terms of the CTP increases. Secondly—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, you have just said that they have no choice. You have asked when the application was made: there has been no application. What I have indicated—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I urge the honourable member to take heed of what I said. He will get the next question. But this is a very quiet and sensitive Committee which has been served very well. I want to continue but I will not turn this into unnecessary chatter between the Minister and members, one trying to talk over the other, because the Committee will not be in session. The Minister.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not a matter of who is in charge, whether the Treasurer or me, but I am indicating that the law provides that for any taxi fare increase there must be an application made to the Passenger Transport Board by the industry, not by me. I am meeting in 10 days with the representatives that I met with yesterday. We are looking at a combination of issues—possibly some fare application, possibly some public relations issue, certainly offsetting costs—and the industry is pleased to work with me to address those issues. I highlight in the meantime that the increase reflects the high accident—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I promised nothing in terms of CTP—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, it is interesting that you say that because the taxi industry said this was not discussed. I have never discussed the CTP issues in percentage terms with the taxi industry and the taxi industry will confirm that. Further, I would like to highlight that the figure of 50 per cent comes from the Third Party Premiums Committee which suggested what it would see as a desirable guide for the increase of any fare at any time. It is a guide: it is not something with which I am associated or about which I have made statements. For 2½ or three years I have been highlighting to representatives of the taxi industry that their high accident rate and the—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is 11 per cent more than the rest of the community. In relation to CTP increases, we must consider whether the rest of the motoring public subsidises the taxi industry. We either ask the rest of the motorists to subsidise the taxi industry—as they have been doing for many years—or we ask the taxi industry as a professional group in the community which we anticipate—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not accusing them of anything. I am just reflecting—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the member for Peake to order. He has had more than a fair go. If he wants to get on television tonight, that is entirely up to him. If he wants to be on the cameras, wants to be lead line, first up, he can continue as he is and that is where he will end up. It is entirely in your hands, but the member is now off the list for at least 20 minutes because he has had more than a fair go.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Mr Chairman, I want to highlight that I was not reflecting on drivers: I am reflecting on the accident record which is presented for all to see. It is a matter of whether the rest of the drivers in the community continue to subsidise the taxi industry or heavy vehicles or any other part of the industry. The taxi industry knows that the accident rate must come down. It is looking at accredited courses and looking at working with SGIC and MAC on a whole range of initiatives, including comprehensive insurance issues. While this is highly uncomfortable for the industry, and not easy for Government or me, I would highlight the fact that it has focused attention on the industry which we were not able to do over the past few years, notwithstanding the fact that both MAC and the Third Party Premiums Committee had recommended increases but the Government at that stage had not acted on that advice.

Mr ATKINSON: In April 1997 a meeting was held between the taxi industry and the Motor Accident Commission regarding taxi accident rates. At the time there was

discussion about the possibility of a 40 per cent to 50 per cent increase on insurance premiums. However, there were no subsequent discussions or consultations with the cab industry.

Mr Koutsantonis: None.

Mr ATKINSON: As the member for Peake says, none. Later that year, in July 1997 the South Australian Cabinet rejected a recommendation by the Third Party Premiums Committee for an 8.2 per cent general increase. Instead, the Government chose an increase of 5 per cent. That is less than a year ago. Why has there been no consultation with the cab industry on the increase to compulsory third party insurance, and how did the Government calculate the increases to compulsory third party insurance when the Motor Accident Commission flagged increases of only 40 per cent to 50 per cent roughly a year ago. Why is it 113 per cent less than a year later?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Because it's the recommendation of the independent Third Party Premiums Committee.

Mr ATKINSON: And the remainder of the questions: why didn't you consult it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It's not for me to consult. The independent committee is made up of representatives of the transport industry and is headed by a lawyer and has actuarial advice. It meets now as it did when the Labor Party was in government. This independent committee looks at these issues and takes advice. As I said, it has a guide—

Mr ATKINSON: There was an 8 per cent increase last year, and you knocked that one off—when an election was coming up.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, I am saying that it is an independent committee. As I am required to do under the Act, I table the determinations of the Third Party Premiums Committee. So, what it determines and what the Government announces is all before the Parliament.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Because we were working with the industry to advance these issues. As the honourable member would know, work through the Tax Industry Advisory Panel (TIAP) has been undertaken on some studies with the University of Adelaide, and further work is being done there. In the meantime, I think the Motor Accident Commission would acknowledge that it could have been working more closely with the industry, but that is an issue which you can take up with the Treasurer and the Motor Accident Commission. They do not report to me.

Mr ATKINSON: You're just a member of the Government!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: But the Motor Accident Commission does not report to me, just as it would not have reported to Barbara Wiese or Frank Blevins when they were Minister.

Mr ATKINSON: So it's someone else's problem?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, I have met with the industry and I am working with it. I am keen to support them and they know that.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2. The Minister would be aware of the reduction in Stateline services on Eyre Peninsula affecting particularly the elderly and students. In the light of this, can the Minister advise what the State Government is doing to improve community transport in regional South Australia?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: With the assistance of funding from the Home and Community Care scheme the Passenger Transport Board will be spending \$295 000 in the coming financial year for the development of more community

passenger networks. These are demand responsive, flexible networks and are particularly of assistance to the frail, the aged, isolated women, young people, those on low incomes and people without access to a car. In the Port Pirie region, on Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island, and in the Adelaide Hills, new networks will be developed in the coming year, so you may wish to do more to get some publicity for that fact.

The Passenger Transport Board has provided \$3 600 to do a feasibility study to introduce a community passenger network on Kangaroo Island; and a further \$4 000 will be provided for Yorke Peninsula. In the meantime, the board and HACC have set up networks in the Barossa Valley, Victor Harbor and the Goolwa region, Murray-Mallee, the South-East, the Mid North, the Riverland and the Willunga Basin.

I am particularly pleased at the way in which the Women's Advisory Council is working with the Passenger Transport Board in this area. Its community consultations have confirmed the needs of women to transport access with a rationalisation of services and ageing populations in country towns. Also, the Women's Advisory Council this year will be producing a guide for community groups—councils and a whole range of people—as to how to go about establishing such a service and working with the Passenger Transport Board and others to gain funds for trial studies and ongoing business.

Mr VENNING: I am a country person; I use the buses, but not very much, and I would like to use them a lot more.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You use the Bluebird passenger rail service, though.

Mr VENNING: I certainly do. I do not know where buses go nor the times they leave, and I want to know what is being done to improve timetable information at metropolitan bus stops. Will that information be in a form so that people like me can understand it?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A map of all the routes in country areas will be ready for publication in about two or three weeks. Never before have we had such a comprehensive guide of services in country areas. This follows the metropolitan guide, which was produced this past year—and I say again that never has there been such a guide of services across the metropolitan area.

In addition, I have been pleased to announce that \$295 000 will be spent by the Passenger Transport Board during the coming financial year to install 250 smaller information units at bus stops. Initially this will be in the inner south area on a trial basis, and I think they will embrace the member for Waite's electorate.

We believe that there is enormous room to increase interpeak travel. As I said earlier, we have frozen interpeak fares and we are focusing on that because research shows that that is an area where we could generate business. It is important in terms of generating new business and building patronage that people have access to information, not only where the bus goes but also the time at which buses will arrive at that stop. At the moment only 2 per cent of our 7 000 bus stops in the metropolitan area have any information at all other than just the destination. If they are lucky, some will have the destination and others will simply have just the 'Hail Bus Here' sign, and you would not have a clue where it was going or when.

This information should make it much easier for the honourable member to be a more frequent user of public transport. We want to win you over to public transport as we build the business generally. If this trial works extraordinarily

well, as I am quietly confident it will (and we will be looking for feedback), we will see these information signs spread throughout the metropolitan area.

Mr VENNING: It is easy to understand the signs on the Underground in London. I know that you have attempted to do that. It is becoming similar but could more work be done on making the diagrams simpler to understand?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That will be happening shortly on the trains, where we will have a stylised map of the rail system so that people can see where the next station is or how many stops it is until the station where they get off. We do not have such a map now but that will soon be installed in railcars. It must be easier to be able to use it than it is now.

Mr SNELLING: I refer to the outputs operating statement. In relation to legal consultants engaged by the PTB, will the Minister provide details on, first, how much the PTB has spent on legal consultants for 1996-97 and 1997-98 and on the estimate for 1998-99? In 1997-98 how many legal consultants were engaged by the PTB for specific projects? Can she provide details of these projects including the terms of reference, the name of the consultants and how much each consultant was paid? For 1997-98 how many legal consultants, including firms, were engaged on a retainer basis to provide advice to the PTB and how much was each consultant or firm paid?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will bring back the replies.

Mr SNELLING: I refer to outsourcing public transport. Are subsidies paid to Serco to operate specialised peak services?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: What do you mean by 'specialised peak services'? Do you mean the bullet or the express?

Mr SNELLING: Yes.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, it is part of its contract.

Mr SNELLING: And is it paid a subsidy to run those?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is not a fully commercial service operating in Adelaide. Even the Football Park service for \$5 a ticket does not cover the cost, and it is more popular than others. Just like TransAdelaide with its transit link services, Serco with its bullet service puts in a cost for the mileage and the basic cost of operation. It gets paid on that basis, if its tender was successful, as it was for Serco in the outer north. It also gets paid on the basis of patronage.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I was pleased to hear the Minister mention the district of Waite in the southern suburbs. We have the Belair line and a range of major bus routes through the Mitcham area. I am interested in the State Government's plans to improve passenger transport for people living south of Adelaide. Will the Minister elaborate on that?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: In terms of capital works, it is probably a TransAdelaide issue because it operates the rail service. The program overall for TransAdelaide is \$900 000 for railway station upgrades in 1998-99. The allocation for the Gawler line is \$400 000. For Keswick, upgrading of lighting will cost \$75 000; for Unley Park a new ramp crossing to the platform at the Belair end will cost \$30 000; the Unley Park upgrading of lighting will cost \$30 000; the Monalta shelter upgrade will cost \$60 000; for Mitcham upgrading of lighting the cost will be \$50 000; and for Pinera \$100 000 has been allocated. Therefore, \$345 000 is planned to be spent on the Belair line in the coming year on railway station upgrades. There is greater expenditure on capital programs overall—\$13.2 million is the capital program overall, including equipment purchases.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to the budget paper 4, volume 2, page 6.53. What is being done to reduce waiting times for people who use Access Cabs?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This was the PTB with its contract with the old specialised taxi service with the working name 'Access Cabs'. The waiting time was about 30 minutes. I understand that since the Passenger Transport Board has called for tenders and let the contract to the Yellow Cabs group the average waiting time has fallen to 17 minutes. I am particularly pleased that all the Access Cabs have global positioning systems, which is a first in Australia, so they are particularly safe in that regard. For taxis overall in South Australia, 97 per cent have global positioning systems, which is unheard of in other States. In terms of catching a taxi, it is certainly much safer in this State than elsewhere and it should be a promotional point for the taxi industry.

Another first in Australia is the Internet booking service. Under the old Access Cabs booking system we did not have the computerised dispatch system. There are two new free booking services: the VIP service (the personalised service that reduces booking times to a few seconds) and the easy cab (which automatically recognises a regular customer's call). It is difficult for some people with speech impediments to be able to ring and provide all the information. This easy call recognises their voices and they can press numbers or say one word and it will immediately register if they are at home or elsewhere and the taxi will be dispatched to that place. What is being provided for people with a range of disabilities, including people with hearing difficulties, is stunning.

Ms Cleland: The TTP system is in place, which means you can access through the system without having to use verbal communication.

Mr ATKINSON: A rail link to Football Park at West Lakes, branching off the Grange line at Albert Park—the line the Minister is closing for the golf tournament—was also announced during the election. However, it fails to appear in the Government's budget targets for 1998-99. Have consultants been engaged? If so, who are they and what is the estimated cost of such a rail link?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Mr Payze has just confirmed that a brief for the consultants is being prepared right now.

Mr ATKINSON: It is a good idea.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I want it to work, but we must get the brief organised for the consultants. I had forgotten that Mr Payze is a Commissioner of the South Australian National Football League. I should start lobbying him about this service. I have spoken to Mr Whicker and others about the administration of the National Football League and they are keen to see this work done, as are the people at the West Lakes shopping centre.

Mr ATKINSON: The Minister ought to see the way that trains in Melbourne take huge crowds away from Flemington racecourse on Melbourne Cup day. It is just magnificent.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Does it just go to Flemington and back?

Mr ATKINSON: No; it comes off the main line at Kensington, goes to Melbourne Showgrounds and then to Flemington racecourse.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: One of the greatest frustrations in operating the train system in Adelaide, whether it be at Adelaide railway station or elsewhere, is that it does not run through. For instance, trains have to reverse back over the same lines, and that means that you can run only half the services you would wish to run because you cannot run the

through services. I was wondering if it worked like that at Flemington.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, it would not be a through service but a loop. Most of that can be negotiated, but the SANFL believes that land could be made available for the service. I will have to brief Mr Payze on some of the lobbying he should do.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: On page 4.49 the 'Portfolio Statements' refers to compulsory third party insurance premiums payable by taxis. Is the Minister prepared to recommend to Cabinet a decrease in CTP insurance premiums for 1998-99 if the South Australian Taxi Association (SATA) and the Motor Accident Commission work cooperatively to reduce the taxi accident rate? Will the Minister decrease future CTP insurance premiums for taxis if the taxi industry demonstrates a reduced accident rate?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Treasurer takes those submissions to Cabinet, and I am sure he would do so if the accident rate came down. In fact, we discussed this yesterday in the meetings I had with the taxi people. Of course that would occur, because the premiums are based on the accident rate. So, if the accident rate comes down of course we would be looking at reduced premiums.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: There was an increase and you knocked it back and a year later you had a 113 per cent increase. It looks as though you were electioneering that year. You did not give them an 8 per cent increase, it blew out and you have raised it to 113 per cent, because you were electioneering. In 1997 you had an election coming on. You knocked it back then.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You may say what you wish; I can only indicate the fact that this is an independent committee that makes the recommendations to Government. The Treasurer took the submission to Cabinet, and it was based on the actuarial results. In previous years they have not recommended that figure. They did not recommend it three years out from the election, so you can hardly say it is electioneering, because now there have been further actuarial studies. When considering the budget imposts on motorists generally, Cabinet had to decide whether—notwithstanding the other imposts on motorists, such as registration fees—to ask motorists to continue to subsidise taxis or to say to taxis that their premiums have been subsidised for many years by general motorists. This is something that you as a professional group must be starting to address.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Absolutely, and I think that people should be prepared to accept that; that is why they are—

The CHAIRMAN: The member is now asking another question.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: May I, Sir, with your indulgence?

The CHAIRMAN: You may.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I accept what you are saying from what I have been told by them; that is why I believe they have made approaches to you to have this increase extended over a three year period. From my reading of the budget, for the past 20 or 30 years the taxi industry accident rate has been subsidised by other motorists, and all of a sudden in 1998-99 the industry has been asked to meet the full costs. Would it not be more prudent for the Government to introduce that increase over a period of time rather than all at once? I believe that the taxi industry has already told the

Minister that that is its preferred option, which it would be prepared to accept.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yesterday they said to me that they had been anticipating a 50 per cent increase and that they could live with that.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: That was in discussions with you?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No; I want to place on record again that I have not discussed with them a 50 per cent increase: I have discussed with—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It comes through the Third Party Premiums Committee, which I indicated uses this as a guide and through the MAC. I have alerted but not provided a figure to the taxi industry representatives. I have alerted them, and that is why the PTB has found the funds to do this study through TIAP.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We talked about it. I have been talking about it with individual company representatives for 2½ or three years. I have said that to the shadow spokesperson on transport in this place; we have talked about it with various companies for 2½ and three years. I know that it has been discussed on the Taxi Industry Advisory Panel (TIAP), because it made an application to the PTB to fund a study. It funded a study, which came out in October 1997, so this issue has been around for some time. This study would have been commissioned early in 1997, which means that the issue would have been before the Taxi Industry Advisory Panel for submissions to be made to the Passenger Transport Board in 1996, so the issue has been around; it is not new.

Mr VENNING: I refer to Budget Papers, Volume 2, pages 6.49 and 6.50. We are all aware of occasions where tourists have come into South Australia by air or train; they have lobbied in and do not know what to do, where to go or how to get there. It happens often. As a member representing a tourism destination I am often asked, 'How do I get there and where do I pick it up?' What is the State Government doing to improve the links between passenger transport and tourism in regional South Australia?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I answered a very similar question about the Flinders Ranges earlier in this session so, rather than use up more of the time of the Committee, can I refer you to that question and answer?

Mr VENNING: I refer to the public works program. I note that this year a lot of money is being spent on east-west roads in the Mid North of the State. I particularly notice the mention of a section running east from Snowtown to Magpie Corner at a total expenditure of \$1.1 million. This road has been long talked about. Is this east-west program an obvious strategy of the department? It is a very good strategy and has been a long time coming.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Have you returned to road transport, not passenger transport?

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest the honourable member pay attention to the lines before the Committee. We are now discussing the Passenger Transport Board. Are there any further questions on the Passenger Transport Board?

Mr ATKINSON: A key election commitment by the Minister was yet another feasibility study in relation to the extension of the tramline north of Victoria Square. I am interested in this because when I was in Sydney recently I noticed a tram running from Central Railway Station in Sydney through Darling Harbor to Wentworth Park via Pyrmont. A tramline is running through Sydney's city streets.

At what stage is the Adelaide study and what is the cost for 1998-99?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is also being scoped as part of the 10 year investment strategy that we are preparing. It will include the Glenelg line and any new trams. It includes the West Lakes rail initiative and cost benefit study, the Southern O'Bahn, and the investment strategy, and we will also be looking at the new technologies for demand responsive services because in many of the bigger centres and interchanges we should be looking at how we use new technology so that people can press a button or whatever and find out when the bus is actually coming. We can have a timetable at a bus stop or train station but people do not know when the bus or train is coming, notwithstanding the information showing when they are expected. We can use the technologies very cleverly and, in terms of South Australia trying to be a creative State in information technology, we could be using our public transport system well to advance our interests in that field. I am also keen to see bus shelters and railway stations generally done up.

Mr ATKINSON: We are talking about extending the tramline from Victoria Square.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is one of the matters being scoped.

Mr ATKINSON: On the Bob Francis show people ask me when it is happening.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am just saying it is being prepared for the consultancy as one part of the 10 year investment plan.

Mr ATKINSON: When will we know what is happening?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have said in my opening statement that this is the focus project for the PTB to complete this year for the 10 year investment plan. When you are talking to Bob Francis or anyone else, you can let them know, if you wish, that the 10 year plan includes all these parts plus more than was in the policy. They are all part of the investment plan. In terms of expending money, our assets in public transport infrastructure amount to \$1.1 billion and they must all be replaced periodically. We have to work out what we invest in, how we invest in it and what priority should apply and that work has never been done.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: The Minister is starting to talk about the future vision for the portfolio. I notice that in 1997 the Government indicated there was a 10 year plan for investment in the transport system. Can the Minister explain what progress has been made in that area?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have outlined a number of issues. I refer to the West Lakes rail, the Southern O'Bahn issues, the tramway and demand response services because I am very interested to see what we do with the Crouzet ticketing system in terms of looking forward. In some respects it is still the state of the art ticketing system because it is a magnetic integrated system and Melbourne, despite all the fuss and time taken to introduce an integrated system, despite the mode or company operating it, is doing it 10 years after we introduced our system. Nevertheless, there is a time limit on Crouzet. It was thought to be the year 2000 but we understand it could now be 2002 or 2003, which gives us a breathing space. At that stage we will find more work will have been done world wide and even in this country in terms of Smartcard and the costs of those technologies will come down all the time.

It is important that we are able to extend the life of Crouzet at a reasonable cost while we look for alternatives. The pressure is not in terms of finding an alternative to

Crouzet. There is pressure on us in terms of meeting the deadline for the millennium bug and making sure that it is not going to be a huge problem for us in operating the Crouzet system.

The CHAIRMAN: That completes our examination of the Passenger Transport Board.

TransAdelaide, \$5 908 000

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: For some reason I have lost the TransAdelaide Chief Executive Officer, so the committee will have to put up with me and the Chief Executive Officer of the department. The capital works budget for TransAdelaide is \$13.2 million. TransAdelaide is operating as a section B non-commercial agency and, therefore, the budget and financial information for TransAdelaide will now be found in the portfolio statement. I would like to add to that issue because the member for Spence raised it in terms of the information in the budget for the forthcoming year concerning TransAdelaide in previous years. Barry Atwell, Manager, Corporate Affairs, has provided me with this information. On pages 356 and 357 of the Program Estimates and Information documents tabled as part of the 1997-98 budget documentation the following financial information was provided for TransAdelaide under the program titles:

1. Public Transport, Services.
2. Support Service.

The figures were broken down into recurrent and capital expenditure and recurrent and capital receipts. In the 1998-99 budget papers the level of disclosure is consistent with other Government businesses. The Estimates Statement Budget Paper 3 contains the following financial information in relation to TransAdelaide: purchase of outputs, page 21; dividends, page 82; wholesale sales tax equivalent, page 82; operating surplus, page 198. In addition, Budget Paper No. 5 contains the details of TransAdelaide's level of capital expenditure and details of the major capital projects being undertaken by TransAdelaide. Both sets of financial information have been prepared on an accrual basis. That should help clear up the issue.

TransAdelaide has continued to consolidate its position as a major provider of public transport in the metropolitan area. With renewed focus on the individual customers' varying needs, TransAdelaide has established a benchmark of high quality passenger transport services in Adelaide. Since the commencement of competitive tendering 3½ years ago, TransAdelaide has actively pursued a range of initiatives to improve efficiency and service. This has enabled TransAdelaide to maintain a competitive market position in the lead up to the next round of tenders in 1999, in addition to achieving a real cost reduction of around \$20 million over the past four years. To continue to prosper in this market, TransAdelaide has recognised that it is more essential than ever to deliver high quality customer service at a competitive cost. This will require an innovative and committed review of all aspects of its business, including corporate and operational overheads.

TransAdelaide recognises that frequency, punctuality, safety and reliability of its bus, train and tram services are major issues for customers. TransAdelaide is concentrating on these factors. The frequency of the North East Busway services have been increased dramatically over the past year, and a great effort has been made to improve lighting at stations and interchanges, to provide mobile phones on board

buses and to install video surveillance cameras on board railcars—in addition to the activities of Transit Police and passenger service assistants—to address safety and security issues.

TransAdelaide's ongoing program to improve facilities at suburban railway stations will include upgraded lighting, improved shelters and the gradual installation of 'open-construction' shelters (designed to increase security for customers and deter graffiti and vandal attacks). We are also keen to improve station car park facilities, to upgrade pedestrian crossings and new mazes to replace subways, and improved general security—including cameras and help phones on-site at rail stations.

The capital works program also includes \$2 million to advance the refurbishment of the tram cars on the Adelaide to Glenelg line, as part of a \$5 million program overall. Meanwhile, the scope of TransAdelaide's service delivery is being broadened to meet the needs of customers travelling between suburbs in addition to services that run into the city. The recent launch of the Golden Grove suburban link services is an excellent example of this, as it combines innovative and practical service design that responds to the changing lifestyle patterns of the local community. Accessibility for customers with special travelling needs has also become a major consideration in planning services, ranging from the purchase of more fully accessible buses to raising railway platform levels for greater wheelchair and pram access.

TransAdelaide's focus on user-friendly timetables, brochures and service information is now being expanded with the development of an Internet site which will feature bus, train and tram timetables, ticketing, and other special service information. TransAdelaide's special services for major cultural and sporting events continue to be popular in the community, and they also present a valuable source of revenue outside normal services. These and other initiatives are part of TransAdelaide's commitment to building and maintaining a strong business that delivers quality and cost effective services that its customers want. Throughout the next financial year, TransAdelaide employees at all levels will be provided with the skills and incentives to take a personal responsibility and interest in the success of the business. Overall, TransAdelaide will concentrate on increasing the viability and value of the business to give it the greatest commercial advantage when competitive tendering of contract service areas resumes in 1999.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Ms S. Filby, Acting General Manager, TransAdelaide.

Membership:

Ms Rankine substituted for Mr Atkinson.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I refer the Minister to journey trends by bus, rail and tram modes. Journeys for all modes of transport between 1995-96 and 1996-97 all experienced a decline, buses being the worst hit, and I refer to the annual report (page 11). What are the 1997-98 journey results for the same modes? What is the estimate for 1998-99, and what is the anticipated impact on journeys of the average of 7 per cent public transport fee increase that are being introduced by the Government?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I suspect that I answered that question in some detail in answer to the first question asked by the Opposition regarding the Passenger Transport Board lines. However, my answer did not specifically relate to

TransAdelaide, and I acknowledge that. For the March quarter, we look as though we are down .9 per cent across the system in terms of TransAdelaide's responsibilities. As I have only the March quarter here, I will have to get more details for the honourable member. As I said, it is patchy month by month, but the March quarter was up for public transport as a whole but down for TransAdelaide.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: What is the total cost of market research undertaken by TransAdelaide for 1997-98? What is the estimate for 1998-99? What are the emerging customer trends for TransAdelaide for 1998-99?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have a lot of information here. The expenditure on consultants engaged in direct market research work for TransAdelaide is relatively modest, with a budget of around \$50 000 in 1997-98. I will table these figures for the honourable member.

Mr SNELLING: What are TransAdelaide's passenger safety strategies for trains and buses? How many Transit Police were operational during 1997-98? What is the estimate for 1998-99? What is the cost of Transit Police?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: First, I must point out that TransAdelaide has 100 railcars, and it is seeking to install on all railcars by December this year a video surveillance camera, and that will be a huge safety initiative and provide peace of mind for our passengers. In addition, through the Passenger Transport Board funding for three years, TransAdelaide has gained funds for the employment of a coordinator for the Adopt a Station program. Currently, about 54 railway stations and six tram stops have been adopted by community groups. The full-time coordinator will not only be working with the groups that have already been established in helping them to keep up their enthusiasm, because volunteers spend a lot of time working with them to keep the enthusiasm but, for example, we buy the paint.

Ms Filby: The Adopt a Station program looks at keeping the environment safe, but it also removes graffiti, puts in gardens and generally makes the environment encouraging to users. Many local communities have put a great deal of effort into this program.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The coordinator will work with the groups that we now have so that we do not lose them. We will look at working with local communities, church groups, schools and service clubs to see whether we can adopt more stations. We will also look to the private sector and businesses near tram stops, railway stations and bus stops to see whether we can involve commercial interest increasingly in the care of these public transport assets, recognising that they are also community assets.

Other safety initiatives include the work that will be undertaken on fare evasion with the Passenger Transport Board through passenger transport assistants and with the Transit Police generally. The new Rail Safety Act, which was passed by the Parliament last year, has now been proclaimed. I will ask Ms Filby to comment.

Ms Filby: The Rail Safety Act came into effect on 1 May. It requires rail operators to put in place measures to ensure the safety of the travelling public and employees who work in the rail system. It involves detailed compliance with the standards that have been set under the Act as well as compliance with one of the Australian standards. A significant amount of work has been put in place and is well advanced to ensure that TransAdelaide complies with those requirements.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I refer to the Capital Works Statement, Budget Paper 5 (page 1-30), which deals with

railway station upgrades. I note that \$900 000 has been set aside for this purpose. Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the capital works associated with those railway station upgrades, and will she address the issue of tramcar refurbishment and how that money will be spent? The Belair line runs right through the electorate of Waite.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member is pleased to have that asset in his electorate. I seek leave to insert in *Hansard* a table of the 1997-98 railway station upgrade works. This document is purely statistical.

Leave granted.

1997-98 Station Upgrading Works

Station	Scope of Works	Work Planned	Estimated Cost \$
Mitchell Park	New platform surface and fencing	Completed	12 000
Broadmeadows	Platform and shelter upgrade	Completed	12 000
Lonsdale	New pathway	Completed	5 500
Hallett Cove	New shelter/lighting	Completed	29 000
Hallett Cove Beach	New shelter/lighting	Currently underway	34 000
Gawler Central	Murray Street: New maze on east side	Completed	23 500
Mile End	New ramp shelter and platform surface	Completed	40 000
Keswick	Stairs from platform to underpass	Completed	15 000
Outer Harbor	New roof and platform surface	Completed	50 000
Pinera	New access path and shelter	In progress	150 000
Keswick	New platform surface	May/June	5 000
Mitcham	Upgrade lighting/rehab shelter	May/June	100 000
Alberton	Upgrade pedestrian bridge	July/August	40 000
Glenalta	Lighting/shelter upgrade	May/June	50 000
Lynton	Lighting upgrade	May/June	25 450
Largs North	Raise platform, new ramps and mazes	In progress	140 000
Warradale	New pedestrian crossing as alternative to subway	Deferred to 1998-99	70 000
Coromandel	Icon shelter	May/June	80 000
Tonsley	Lighting upgrade	June	27 650

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I also seek leave to insert in *Hansard* details of the work that is proposed for the station upgrades for 1998-99 and, if members wish, details of the rail lines also.

Leave granted.

1998-99 Station Upgrading Work (Including Car Parks)

Station	Scope of Works	Approx. Cost
Alberton	Upgrade pedestrian bridge	60 000
Alberton	Upgrade lighting	60 000
Womma	Raise platform, new ramp, crossing ex subway	200 000
Keswick	Upgrade lighting	75 000
Warradale	New pedestrian crossing, ramp; ex subway	70 000
Unley Park —Belair end	New ramp/xing to platform	30 000
Unley Park	Upgrade lighting	30 000
Elizabeth	Raise platform, new shelter	200 000
Glenalta	Shelter upgrade	60 000
Mitcham	Upgrade lighting	50 000
Various	Water connections	39 000
Pinera	Pathway	100 000
Supplementary Answer		
Rail Line	1997-98	1998-99
	\$	\$
Adelaide-Goodwood		75 000
Belair	404 720	270 000
Gawler	24 350	400 000
Noarlunga	96 764	70 000
Outer Harbor	286 000	120 000
Tonsley	39 650	
Various		39 000

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It's a different budget.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Do you think it's your manner?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr Venning): Order! The Committee will come to order.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I ask the Minister to withdraw that remark.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will come to order. The questions are with the Government.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I did not hear the comment. I will bring the Committee to order. The questions are with the Government side. I remind the honourable member that he is on a second warning. I will say that his behaviour is out of character. If the Committees affect the honourable member in this way, I think he should consider whether he should participate.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: The Minister might like to explain the refurbishment plans for tramcars.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The tramcars were built in 1929, so they are nearly 70 years old, and there are 20 of them. An amount of \$2 million will be spent in the coming financial year as part of a \$5 million program over five years to upgrade railcars. This work is critical, because when we had the flash floods in January/February, the rain affected the electrical system and stopped the tramcar altogether. It could have caused a fire. Windows of tramcars are not secure, they are hot in summer and cold in winter, and a lot of work needs to be done on them. I am pleased to see that this investment will be made.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I note from the budget that TransAdelaide has managed to achieve a cost reduction of

about \$20 million over the past four years. Does the Minister anticipate that further efficiencies will be achieved, and will that mean job cuts, or is she looking at other forms of efficiencies to achieve that surplus?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Substantial cost savings have been made as TransAdelaide has sought to become more robust in the way in which it operates and competes to win business. I am pleased that this Government kept a public transport operator (TransAdelaide) to work with the private sector in the tendering process. Other Governments across Australia have not chosen to do that but to go straight to the private sector for the delivery of buses and private transport services. I am pleased that this State has at least put out the challenge to TransAdelaide and its work force to compete and not just thrown up its hands and said, 'The public sector can't do this work competitively or as well as the private sector.' I do not believe that, but it is now up to TransAdelaide and its employees to make sure that they do so.

As part of that \$20 million saving to which the honourable member refers reductions have been made for labour and reduced staffing levels. The honourable member mentioned wage cuts. He would recognise that the work force at depot level has voted on these matters with an absolute majority and determined whether it wants to continue to do business in a competitive world and offer a bid. This has not been established by the Government; it is something that the work force has worked through to become a competitive business.

Over the next six months TransAdelaide will look at its support services and corporate structure. An assessment will be made of whether businesses should be retained in-house but re-engineered or co-sourced by maintaining internal expertise with a proportion of the service being contracted out, whether they should be fully contracted out, whether there should be portfolio amalgamations—for example, the delivery of services by other Government agencies; or whether there should be a combination of any or all of those alternatives.

In relation to operating costs and reductions in the future, I am certainly conscious that TransAdelaide occupies three floors in Roma Mitchell House. They are overheads that other operators probably would not have, and TransAdelaide has indicated to me that it would be interested to move its headquarters to Mile End and to rationalise other depots. The agreement with the owners of Roma Mitchell House provides that TransAdelaide cannot move out until I have found another tenant. So, both Mr Payze and I are working on that issue, because about \$200 000 could be saved on headquarter costs.

Ms Filby: We can certainly make savings on that, and by rationalising structures across the depots we can assist with that.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not just a matter of job losses: it is a matter of looking at the whole of the business—the arrangements which apply at depots, the amount of land we have, and the way in which we do our corporate services.

I am keen that TransAdelaide does not see renewal of competitive tendering in the next year as its just being an operator issue at depot level—that it is vigorously looking at all costs across the whole system.

Ms RANKINE: I ask the Minister to forgive me if she has answered this question in a previous reply, but my colleague the member for Peake was making such a kerfuffle about the number of questions that the member for Waite had asked that I am not sure whether or not the Minister answered the question. There has been a steady reduction in the average

number of TransAdelaide employees over a period of time. For instance, in 1994-95 there were 2 534; in 1995-96 the figure was 2 388; and 1996-97, 2 101. What are the employee numbers for 1997-98 and what is the estimate for 1998-99?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Some of that reduction in the work force has been because of the loss of contracts—Hills Transit and two areas to Serco. There are 1 850 employees at the present time. In relation to competitive tendering in 1999, it depends what progress is made with the time table for those contracts and the assessing of tenders, and how much TransAdelaide would win, if any or all of it. That will influence the employment numbers in the next financial year.

Ms RANKINE: Does TransAdelaide have a program of targeted voluntary separation packages for 1998-99 and, if so, what is the cost of such a program?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It expires at the end of this year. I have not received any submission to take to Cabinet or even to discuss what arrangements will apply, but I suspect Ms Filby may have something to say on that.

Ms Filby: The current agreement expires towards the end of the year. We are looking at what future direction we should be taking in terms of any extension or otherwise of that scheme.

Ms RANKINE: The next question is specifically related to my electorate. I am sure the Minister will acknowledge that the O-Bahn is a very efficient public transport system. There is a major interchange at the Village Shopping Centre at Golden Grove that a lot of people are using on a daily basis. However, there is a great deal of difficulty for people coming from outlying areas accessing the interchange because no car parking is made available for public transport commuters. Does the Minister plan to provide car parking for public transport users and, if so, when?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There are two issues here. The honourable member would be aware of the suburban link service which was introduced last Monday and which is based at the Golden Grove Shopping Centre with the mini buses all fully accessible, going in a circuitous route, fanning out and back to the centre. The area of coverage is so much more effective than it has ever been in bringing people to the interchange. This is an absolute revolution in the way TransAdelaide has ever focused on delivery of its services in the past which have been centrally coming straight into the city. They are now looking at cross-suburban services. I will ask Ms Filby to report on the success of that suburban link service so far, and say what influence the car park and access issues have had on the design of these services.

Ms Filby: The Golden Grove Shopping Centre has a mini hub centre that is currently being linked into the new suburban link services which started on Sunday and which were launched on Monday. A lot of work is going on in the community to ensure that people understand what transport options are available in the area and to link into the O-Bahn services. Suburban link is one of those options. Certainly, there was a great deal of space available in the car park on Monday afternoon when I was there for the launch. TransAdelaide is looking at the take up and impact of suburban link services to determine what that means for car parking.

Mr VENNING: My question relates to certified agreements. What progress has been made by Transport SA in terms of negotiating certified agreements with each depot, a matter that is dear to the Minister's heart?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Unions across Australia have had to negotiate agreements as part of the Federal Govern-

ment's industrial conditions, and TransAdelaide has been looking at this at each depot. I understand that Womma Road and St Agnes are the only two TransAdelaide depots which have not reached certified agreements in the bus sector, but we still have to conclude such agreements in the rail and tram sector. I was pleased that we made progress in the bus sector because it will be the bus sector, I suspect, that is first for competitive tendering next year. This certified agreement process is important not only to meet the Federal industrial requirements but also to ensure that TransAdelaide depots are poised for competitive tendering in the coming year.

I applaud the Public Transport Union and TransAdelaide staff, and the workplace generally, particularly the consultative committees, who have worked through some difficult issues. The results of the Morphetville, Mile End and Port Adelaide depots were resolved on Monday, and Ms Filby might want to talk about those results.

In the meantime, I want to highlight that the Morphetville depot was one on which both TransAdelaide and I were focusing. The PSA has been taking a very active interest in gathering members at that workplace. It is a membership activity and drive that the UTLC does not accept as legal and which it does not recognise in terms of the coverage that the PSA is seeking to provide. It recognises the PTU, but that has not deterred the PSA in its activities. It has been rather distracting, even though the union movement does not recognise the PSA as being qualified to enter the negotiations for the certified agreements.

Notwithstanding all those distractions for the management and work force and the stop work meeting called by the PSA last Thursday, which did not disrupt any services to our customers—I am pleased to say—but at which the PSA called on its members (even though it had no legal recognition as part of the certified agreement process) to vote 'No' in terms of the certified agreement ballot vote, I was particularly pleased that an absolute majority at Morphetville voted 'Yes' to the certified agreement on Monday: I think that was 93 to 76—a very good result. As the member for Waite said, it is an excellent result, and I am particularly pleased about it. Ms Filby may wish to highlight the other votes.

Ms Filby: The Mile End ballot was 102 'Yes' to 11 'No'; and the Port Adelaide vote was 81 'Yes' to 32 'No'. So, they were very strong results.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: My advice is that the PSA may be seeking to be disruptive again and looking for a flaw in the process, but I think everybody who has been involved in this exercise has been diligent and very careful about the way in which all the steps have progressed.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question relates to improved customer information. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.4, which highlights the use of information technology as one means of improving customer information in an effort to revitalise public transport. At present only a limited number of timetables feature on TransAdelaide's web site. When is it envisaged that timetables for all TransAdelaide services will be available?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We have provided TransAdelaide with capital funds for the next 12 months to upgrade Internet facilities and we believe that almost all our timetables will be available through the Internet within that 12 month period. The O-Bahn and tram and all train timetables are already there. Regarding the contract area timetables, we are seeking early July for the inner south and the south-west, mid July for the Circle Line, late July for the east, north-west and the Le Fevre Peninsula and early August for

the outer south. We are getting lots of hits on a daily basis, and that is good.

Mr SNELLING: What is being done to improve passenger safety at the Salisbury and Paradise interchanges? I draw your attention to my previous question which I do not think you answered, namely, how many transit police were operational during 1997-98, what is the estimate for 1998-99, and what is the cost of transit police?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will have to get those figures because the transit police are responsible to and accountable, in terms of authority and dollars, to the South Australian Police. I will get those figures for the honourable member. I think it is about 80.

In relation to Salisbury, the Salisbury council has recently upgraded the interchange at a cost of \$500 000, but it got the funds to do so through an exchange of land with TransAdelaide and the Department of Transport. The lighting is vastly improved, as are the shelters. The vegetation is not as bushy and clustered and is not as scary for the people who use the interchange at night; and there are surveillance video cameras there.

From time to time we have used security guards at Paradise, and we got rid of a lot of the vegetation there. While the bushes look fine, people hide behind them and you cannot see them when you are going from the bus to your car. We are looking at replanting vegetation along all the public transport corridors and at interchanges generally. Noarlunga was our first example of that, where a complete revegetation program occurred.

There is considerable interest in what we do at car parks at interchanges. Golden Grove is owned by the private sector and it is hard to get into the shopping centre. If you want to catch public transport and leave your car there all day, lighting issues are involved. Some people have suggested that we should pay to ensure that somebody looks after the cars because that would be cheaper than having your car vandalised. An option is to have security with a dog coming in on an irregular basis, and we are looking at these sorts of approaches. I do not want to add a deterrent to using public transport by asking people to pay for their car park in the outer metropolitan area and then pay for public transport as well. We will have to look at some of those issues. Vandalism to cars has been a problem in some areas more than it has in others.

Mr SNELLING: What is the incidence of capital remaining idle (and by that I refer mainly to buses and trains) during interpeak periods? Is it true that in some cases it is more economical, particularly for the big diesel engines on the passenger trains, to leave them running during the interpeak periods rather than turning them off and having to restart them in the next peak period at the end of the business day?

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr S. Warren, Group Manager, Finance.

Ms S. Hanlon, Group Manager, Corporate Relations.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Mr Chairman, I introduce Steve Warren, who is Group Manager, Finance, and Sharon Hanlon, Group Manager, Corporate Relations and Marketing. Both tell me they do not have any idea how to answer the question. Ms Filby does not and neither does Mr Payze; and Mr Atwell does not know, either. I will have to seek more information about that. There is a problem of noise with the idling motors, not only with the trains but also with the buses.

One of the wonderful things about gas buses is that they do not pollute, but you cannot turn them off and expect them to start again when you are out on the road. They stop and you have to get a service vehicle to come out, so they must keep running. Where we let them idle while drivers have a break is an issue.

In terms of the way in which we have designed the public transport system in the past and have inherited it, it is focused on the city. There has been downgrading of employment in the city for some time and there is a real effort today to boost employment and focus on the heart of the city. With the public transport system focused on the city and fewer workers coming here, it is no wonder we have problems. While it is still focused on the city we do not have the flexibility or money to meet all demands elsewhere, which is why the Golden Grove service is so important. At the same time a fleet of buses has been purchased over the years for peak periods coming into the city. We have to look at the way we utilise the rail system more with our fixed corridors and costs there and how we can, as we are doing at Golden Grove and on the O-Bahn, bring services more effectively to an interchange. That means we will have a different configuration of buses. It will not always be the big articulated buses but more of the midi and mini buses which are accessible and which will be providing a strong frequency of service in the suburban areas, feeding into a more frequent transit service, whether bus or rail.

We have some high costs for peak periods, focused on capital that has been used for buses purchased for city runs for the two peak periods in the day. We have a lot of idle capital for the rest of the day and in the evening and it is a big issue for us in terms of our debt and depreciation structures. That is why the 10 year investment plan is critical in determining how we do this better, to look at what we have invested in the past and at what we will invest in future so that we are meeting the changing needs of people and their circumstances. Geographically we have developed over time and have not catered for that in the design of our public transport service. It is quite a challenge.

Mr SNELLING: It would seem that if all this capital remains idle, particularly if, as I have been informed, the engines are being left running through the day between peak periods, would it not be better to have them running more frequently in interpeak periods, even if they are only picking up a few passengers? At least there is an offset of the cost of keeping the engines running rather than just sitting idle in the station or wherever.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Whenever they are running there are additional maintenance and wages costs. That issue must always be taken into account. I suspect that the idle running costs would be minimal compared with wage costs and maintenance costs. I agree in part because that is why we have said we have spare capacity interpeak and why we have specifically designed a strategy to help us build our patronage by freezing interpeak fares over the coming year and hopefully longer to try to get people to realise there is an advantage in travelling at interpeak times. That is why we are tailoring the bus stop information initiative to the inner south suburbs at this stage because that is where it shows.

It must be the older people who may not be in the work force and who live in the district of Waite—Unley and some of those areas. PTB's research shows that they may be good interpeak users: they are not going to school and are not younger people in the work force. That must be part of the rationale. I am not sure if that is right, but I suspect it may be.

We are deliberately designing strategies to do what you are suggesting—idling buses with motors running but the buses not moving compared with buses sitting idle in the bus depots.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: In light of the fact that the Minister has mentioned Waite, it inspires me to ask about bicycles on trains and buses. Being a fit lot down my way they like to go for a good bike ride on the weekend. What plans are there to allow for the better utilisation of bicycle carriage on trains and buses in future?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have been trying to get you to ride a bike, but you tell me you prefer to run and not ride. Perhaps if we are able to provide free bike travel on trains and into peak periods we might encourage you. At the moment one must buy a concession ticket to take a bicycle on a train. In other capital cities, particularly Victoria and New South Wales, it is free on weekends or at interpeak periods. In January next year we will introduce free interpeak use for bicycles. We can now take up to four bicycles at any one time. The Belair line is causing us some difficulties, particularly on weekends when a number of families or groups wish to use the Belair train service all at once. Sometimes all the aisles and spare spaces are taken up with bicycles. If people want to get on later, they are tripping over bicycles and helmets. For 53¢ they can do that. We are looking at taking them free.

We are keen to look at our services for interpeak times. This compliments our cycling strategy to doubling cycling use. There is a good relationship between public transport and cycling. We have looked at how we can improve lockers for bicycles at secure places and at the carriage of bicycles on trains. Bicycles on trains to Gawler and through the Barossa region will be fantastic for tourism. We have the international Tour Down Under in January. We have the Australasian cycling conference in February. I am keen to see this initiative proceed.

TransAdelaide for the first time in Australia is trialing bicycles on the front of buses on a bike rack similar to a roo bar that flattens down. You can put your bike on it and take it off quickly when you get to your destination. There has been some success working with cycling groups generally.

Ms Filby: They have been trialing that at the Morphettville depot on some buses there, following American and European models. They are talking with Bike South and bicycling organisations. The rack takes two bicycles.

Ms RANKINE: I refer again to the Golden Grove interchange. Whilst I am sure patrons are grateful for the mini services feeding into Golden Grove, that will not meet the needs of all patrons because many women will be taking their children to school. They desperately need car parking. The car parking there is privately owned by the shopping centre and people are warned constantly that they will be fined. Even I am warned all the time by the shopping centre attendant that I will be fined, because I am in their car park. So, it is a real difficulty and something that TransAdelaide should address quite urgently. What was the average working week for employees in 1997-98; how does this compare with 1996-97; and what is the forecast for 1998-99?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It varies according to the rosters and awards. We do not have anything at hand, but we could get the information—and we will.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Hamilton-Smith.

Ms Rankine interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: It is up to the discretion of the Chair. I am allowing one question at a time.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I will continue with my passion for the Belair line and the excellent job that has been done on our railways and focus for a moment on railway stations. One option for stations in my area and I know in many other areas has been the 'Adopt a station' program the Minister mentioned earlier. There is an opportunity there for the community and local businesses to get behind our efforts to make sure these railway stations are in great shape. What is planned for the future with the 'Adopt a station' program?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Even since March, with the 'Adopt a station' coordinator—so, in a very few months—a number of additional stations have been adopted, including Hove on the Noarlunga line, Pinera and Glenalta, which are on the Belair line but not necessarily in your electorate. Are all the stations adopted in your electorate, or should you be doing more work there?

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: To varying degrees; I am trying to get a better outcome for Mitcham.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We will work with you there. Salisbury is part of the interchange program that we were talking about earlier and has been adopted, as have Islington, Dry Creek and Kilburn on the Gawler line. I am encouraged that at Glenalta we are looking at the private sector—the local hotel—being involved; I think that will be positive. At Blackwood a tenant has taken over the wonderful heritage railway station and is providing a good service with restaurant and refreshment facilities as well as providing care for the whole environment.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the member for Wright that if the Chair wants to stick to the rules I will make her identify the page and line references. I first chaired an Estimates Committee in 1983 and I know exactly how to be difficult and pedantic. I have tried to make this a pretty friendly arrangement in taking questions. If the honourable member wants me to be rigid, it will not hurt me, but it will affect the manner in which the Committee operates and you will get less information, so I suggest you let me go across the House and use a little flexibility. The member for Wright.

Ms RANKINE: I am happy with that, Mr Chairman; it is just that I get confused, because it seems that the rules change from one question to the next.

The CHAIRMAN: No; the rules are not changing. It is in your interest.

Ms RANKINE: One minute we are having three questions in a row and the next minute we are chopping across the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: We are running out of time.

Ms RANKINE: I am happy to take your guidance, Sir; I would just like to know the rules. What are the significant occupational health and safety issues for TransAdelaide employees, including back, shoulder and neck injuries? I note that injuries per thousand hours worked have increased from .19 in 1995-96 to .28 in 1996-97. What is the figure for 1997-98, and what is the estimate for 1998-99?

Ms Filby: I am happy to provide that figure. Generally, backs, necks and shoulders are a great risk for us, particularly those manual handling injuries arising from driving and lifting practices. TransAdelaide has a very active occupational health and safety prevention program in place; in fact, only this week we are having our WorkCover audit for our level three status. So, we have a very progressive program in place. The statistics are showing that we have had a significant reduction in new back and neck injuries. There certainly are some recurring issues involving ongoing injuries but, as far

our new injury rate is concerned, that is significantly reduced. I am happy to dig up that figure.

Mrs PENFOLD: Page 6.9 of Paper 4, Volume 2 refers to an increase in the percentage of buses which are wheelchair accessible as a target in the 1998-99 financial year. What percentage of TransAdelaide buses are already accessible, and what is TransAdelaide doing to make its services more accessible to persons with a disability?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: TransAdelaide currently runs 45 accessible buses, of which 38 are the smaller midi-buses and seven rigid buses, and all are wheelchair accessible. This is equivalent to approximately 8 per cent of TransAdelaide's bus fleet. Another 53 wheelchair accessible buses are on order, and TransAdelaide expects to receive these by the end of this year. That will bring the total percentage of wheelchair accessible buses operated by TransAdelaide to more than 17 per cent.

It is important to look at other issues in improving accessibility. There are designated seats for the elderly and people with disabilities, and there are one and two positions for the wheelchairs or a pusher or shopping trolley on each of these buses. There is a kneeling facility, which allows the driver to lower the front left-hand corner of the bus almost to kerb level; and accompanying this kneeling capacity there are low level technologies which result in a minimal step height for passengers. That is very important, given that so many of our passengers are increasing in age and that climbing on board a bus, especially when the bus is not directly opposite the kerb, is quite a task. So, the kneeling lower floor capacity is important. There is the extending ramp to the footpath, and that is important. There are the bright yellow handlebars and rails, which provide a highly visible environment for vision impaired customers. There are also air conditioning, non-slip flooring, public address systems and additional signage.

In the rail system, we are just about to trial an extendable ramp, not a portable one. Currently we ask the driver to be alert to a passenger's need if they are in a wheelchair. So, if a passenger service attendant is not present, the driver has to leave their position to carry the portable ramp and put it in position. This is all a factor in the back and shoulder injuries that Ms Filby was talking about a moment ago. We are looking at extendable ramps and they would be installed at the station.

Ms Filby: We would build up the platform to remove the gap between the platform height and the train.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: You have been a very wise moderator, Sir; King Solomon would not have been as wise as you, Sir. Frequency and punctuality are two important performance indicators in delivering a satisfying service to customers. I notice that the 1997 annual report indicates the outcome that customers rate TransAdelaide less favourably on these two indicators. What is the performance trend for TransAdelaide in relation to the frequency and punctuality indicators for 1996-97 and 1997-98? Are there any strategies in place to improve these two indicators for 1998-99?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will have to get specific information because, as the member would appreciate, our frequency has never been so good since Labor cut back those services in 1991. We have not been able to make up since then.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You need not shoulder all this yourself: I said 'Labor'.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes. You will not be able to blame us for long because Mr Payze—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I would expect no less once it is done. What I want to highlight in terms of frequency of services is a fact of life: frequency was cut back after hours, on weekends and public holidays. About a third of services were cut by the Labor Government and we have not been able to find the funds and sometimes it would not necessarily even warrant the restoration of one of those services, but it is a problem. That is why the Suburban Link services that TransAdelaide has just introduced at Golden Grove are so important, because they provide a fast and frequent service to a transit link or rail service—or O’Bahn in this instance, which is a more direct service—and we can improve frequencies that way. I would like to see how we could do that across the system generally. Punctuality is better on some than other services.

Ms Filby: In terms of late running and missed trips, some of those events are beyond TransAdelaide’s control, as you would appreciate, but areas like our Womma Road depot have had 100 per cent services for some months and deserve to be recognised for that.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Interestingly, that depot is self-managed, the 560 and TL services run from Womma Road. They were let as separate contracts. The outer north was won by Serco but TransAdelaide kept the 560 and the 10 and 3. As a self-managed depot the achievements they have made are quite remarkable. In terms of frequency and punctuality the legislation at present before the Parliament requiring motorists to give way to bus drivers will satisfy the question completely. I am pleased to see the endorsement that you have just given about punctuality. Buses must go to the kerb and out again to drop off passengers. Today we ask drivers to meet tight timetables and, if they cannot meet those timetables, they will not meet their connections, yet people rely on them to get to various appointments. If drivers cannot meet the connections, it is a big issue because of the frequency of services. You have highlighted punctuality in your question, and I welcome it and your support for these issues, because these are the very issues we are seeking to address through legislation.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Minister and declare the examination of the TransAdelaide expenditure completed.

Membership:

Mr Conlon substituted for Mr Koutsantonis.

Mr Williams substituted for Mr Venning.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr M. Hennsey-Smith, Executive Director, Planning SA.

Mr B. Teague, Director, Development Advice.

Mr S. Mosley, Director, Development Policy.

The CHAIRMAN: We will be dealing with planning for the next period. I invite the Minister to make an opening statement.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Government’s decision last October to join transport, passenger transport, planning and the arts into a portfolio integrating urban and regional development, cultural development and all forms of transport represented a unique opportunity to further improve the living environment for all South Australians. Our commitment to producing good urban and rural development outcomes is reflected in the significant appropriation for Planning SA of

\$12.3 million for 1998-99. This is up by almost \$700 000 from last year.

The release of the metropolitan planning strategy in January this year featured a fresh new emphasis on urban regeneration, the revitalisation of the Adelaide central business district and the protection of our prime agricultural land. In order to stem fringe development, to maximise taxpayers’ investment in infrastructure, to address the demographic trends and access to community services there is a need to regenerate our inner and middle ring suburbs. In this context, issues of ‘open space’ must also be addressed.

Shortly, the Government will release a Green Paper designed to canvass all the complex issues associated with urban regeneration. A major goal of the State’s planning and development assessment system is to promote economic development whilst protecting the environment for the benefit of the people of the State. It is important to provide maximum certainty and clarity for proponents and the community in terms of policies, processes and decision making. While overall our planning and development system is acknowledged nationally as the best in the country, we can always do better. To this end, Planning SA activities in 1997-98 have included:

1. the adoption and release of the revised metropolitan section of the planning strategy;
2. the release of the consultation draft report on the metropolitan centres policy;
3. the release of the draft guide to development plan amendments;
4. a reduction in the time taken to process council initiated plan amendment reports;
5. the bringing into effect of the performance based Building Code of Australia 1996;
6. the introduction of a requirement that existing dwellings be fitted with smoke alarms;
7. the release of the revised guidelines relating to development assessment and the assessment of major developments;
8. improvements to the statutory requirements relating to the private certification of building work;
9. a range of industrial land planning projects which are part of a coordinated program involving strategic planning, development policy and regulation, site specific investigations and industry support; and
10. the release of the industry database incorporating an inventory of industrial land in the Adelaide region.

The planning and development priorities for 1998-99 include:

1. preparation of a ministerial discussion paper on urban regeneration policy directions;
2. revision of the country section of the planning strategy including the central Adelaide hills;
3. adoption of the metropolitan centres policy;
4. the refinement of the planning and development processes, including the plan amendment report and development assessment processes, to provide greater certainty for proponents and the community;
5. an increase in the extent to which socioeconomic and environmental data is available in electronic format, including the updating of the Metropolitan Retail Database;
6. further developments to the policy with respect to waste management to improve the scope for the development of waste recycling centres and to give greater clarity to locational decisions with respect to landfills.

It should be noted that the additional resources provided to Planning SA in last year’s budget have been retained in

terms of the number of full-time employees. It is worth reflecting that South Australia is a wonderful place in which to live, to work in and to visit. Our parklands, hills and beaches, our pleasant suburbs, our city with its focus on the Arts, education and heritage, our rich rural areas, our wilderness areas, our skilled work force and manufacturing base are all assets for the State. I believe, without qualification, that a sound, well administered planning and development system is an important factor in adding value to these assets for the benefit of future generations.

Mr CONLON: Upon examining the budget documents, it seemed to me that there had been at least a colourful attempt to make it look as though the amalgamation of these three portfolios into one had some purpose or strategy about it. However, the attempt falls short. The use of the matrix to try to show some global overview is simply trite and cute. I note that there are comments such as 'ensure arts practice and public transport considerations are integrated into improved urban planning and design' as some sort of justification. It sounds as though the Minister is delivering pre-graffitied train stations and bus shelters. If the Government was serious about a global view of urban planning, perhaps it could have integrated things such as housing—instead of cutting the Housing Trust and reducing public housing—and the environment. I am entirely unconvinced—and I will put it on the record—that the integration of Transport and the Arts, and the Status of Women into Urban Planning has been anything other than change for change's sake, rather than any overall global strategy. However, I will leave my opening comments at that. My first question is: Minister, can you explain to the Committee the role of the Environment Protection Agency in planning approval for landfill sites?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Before answering that question, the honourable member's comments deserve to be reflected upon. The suggestion that women are not comfortable in terms of their mix with transport and urban planning is out of touch because women are the greatest users of community resources. I think the honourable member's colleagues, the members for Norwood and Wright, would agree with me wholeheartedly that it is very poor that women have not been taken into account in making planning decisions on the way we use the community and that that matter should be, and indeed is now being, redressed.

Both the member for Wright and the member for Norwood have a keen interest in the arts, as do I. They know that the best way to express one's views about the community is through the arts. More should be done in the arts community to build a sense of place. It is a natural alignment with—

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I point out to the honourable member that the Minister is entitled to answer the question however she determines. That has always been the practice during the time in which I have been associated with the Estimates Committees. In my view, the Estimates Committees are not the most productive way of seeking information, but we have them and I have been associated with them since 1983. The Minister may continue.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This has worked very well over the past four years in terms of transport and the arts. There are hosts of examples, whether it be public transport focusing on sporting and arts events, or the way in which we now look at railway stations, or whether we look at entrances to towns and cities—

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, I am just saying that you may well find that it is not a matter of artistry but the way in which people relate and work.

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We adopt the station with the support of TransAdelaide. It is not a matter of the railways not keeping it clean. We work with local communities, providing the paint and resources to help local people adopt a station. They do it as volunteers, and I should have thought that initiative would be supported, not demeaned.

Mr CONLON: Come and look at my electorate; that is all I can say.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know the honourable member's electorate well. The Development Assessment Commission is the approving authority, and we seek advice from the EPA, as we do from all public agencies. If the DAC approves a project, the EPA will negotiate on the licence. That process was used in the case of Dublin and will be used in every landfill project that is approved in the future.

Mr CONLON: You say that the EPA makes submissions just like anyone else, but I would have thought that in the matter of landfill and balefill depots, most of the considerations would be environmental, would they not? Therefore, would not the EPA's views be very important?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They are extremely important. The EPA has the power to direct the Development Assessment Commission to refuse a project, but we gather information from everywhere.

Mr Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, the information is gathered from everywhere. Ultimately, the EPA has more authority and status. It even has status under the Act to direct that an application be refused. In respect of all the landfill applications that we are required to assess, we work closely with the EPA. For instance, in respect of Inkerman, the EPA has said that the proponent has not provided enough information to satisfy it and that it has further questions, and we have sought answers to those questions on behalf of the EPA.

Mr CONLON: In about January 1997, the EPA prepared for the Environment, Resources and Development Committee a document called 'Interim criteria for solid waste landfill depots'. Have those criteria been adopted, or have they been changed? Are they the criteria with which we work?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They have been approved from 4 June.

Mr CONLON: Will the Minister assure us that the Dublin balefill site, in particular, is not in conflict with any of the criteria contained in those interim guidelines?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I think you were a lawyer before you became a member of Parliament. Is that so?

Mr CONLON: Yes.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Then you would appreciate that under the Act we must assess an application on the basis of the rules that apply at the time.

Mr CONLON: I agree with that, but my point is that these guidelines were adopted in January 1997, and I think planning approval for Dublin came after that. The Minister may take this question on notice. I am asking not whether that approval was properly made but whether it was consistent with the EPA's own criteria.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Does the honourable member want to know whether there has been any change between the interim rules and the rules which were confirmed on 4 June?

Mr CONLON: I want to know if the Dublin approval is consistent with those criteria. I might stay on the subject of

dumps because I have a number of concerns. The Wingfield dump is operated by the Adelaide City Council. In 1996 the EPA rejected any increase in height of that dump above 15 metres. Among the reasons for that decision was the concern about leachate. In fact, leachate was found in the ground water. As I understand it, on some occasions it has been shown to have been entering North Arm and the Barker Inlet wetland system. I understand, too, that this matter is again open for contest and that the Adelaide City Council is seeking approval from the Port Adelaide and Enfield Council to increase the height of the dump. Is that the case?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It has always sought to increase the height and Port Adelaide has always sought to challenge that height. It is still before the courts and I understand that both parties wish to continue to pursue it before the courts. In the meantime, a lot of discussion is under way to reassess some EPA decisions made earlier about the height, and a variation could be considered that could possibly extend the life of the dump by a short period, rather than seeing it fully closed at the end of the year 2000.

As a member representing an inner suburban seat, the honourable member—and also the former Mayor for Norwood—would be well aware that Wingfield takes up about 45 per cent of Adelaide's 940 000 tonnes of solid waste which goes into landfill each year. If we can possibly extend the life by a short time that would be a cost advantage not only for the Adelaide City Council which is the receiver of the material but also for all councils and ratepayers because of the distance to cart that material to Wingfield rather than to any other site. We do not want to cart it from the northern suburbs to the south, or to Pedlar Creek for example. Discussions are being held between the Department of Industry and Trade, the department I work with, the Adelaide City Council and Port Adelaide to look at closure issues with the EPA.

Mr CONLON: I understand that it might be advantageous to a number of people to keep the dump open longer than the current cap of 15 metres would allow. A newspaper clipping from 1996 states:

The EPA Chair Stephen Walsh says that extending the dump over its present height limit would have led to increased leaching of contaminants into nearby ground water in the sensitive Barker Inlet wetlands.

The Environment Minister at the time, Mr Wotton, said:

The EPA's decision to refuse increasing the dump's maximum height 'has clearly been vindicated'.

We do know that below the height of 15 metres—or assuming it has not reached it—we have leachate going into Barker Inlet and North Arm. I grew up down the Port and I am fond of the Port River. What do you say has changed that would now allow it to be considered to go beyond 15 metres?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is not what I say because I am not the licensing authority: the EPA is. I will refer the honourable member's questions to the Environment Minister because I am not an authority in that area. I deal with planning issues, not licensing.

Mr CONLON: As you are aware, these issues overlap frequently.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: They do not. The licensing has nothing to do with me. I do not issue the licence: the EPA issues the licence.

Mr CONLON: You have the power to do something about it.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have indicated that my officers are working with the Department of Industry and

Trade, Adelaide City Council, Port Adelaide council and the EPA, but I do not direct the EPA—nor would you believe that I should do so legally. If I did you would be the first to protest.

Mr CONLON: You are engaged in discussions basically with a view to seeing what can be done to increase the height of the dump. In my view, the matter has been laid to rest. Why are we having further discussions?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Because the EPA believes that it should be discussed. The Adelaide City Council has undertaken various practices and it would have to convince the EPA, as the licensing authority, that it was worth changing either the height or the licensing conditions. That is what the discussions are about at the present time.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.10 of the Portfolio Statements. The Minister would be aware of the huge increase in development occurring in the electorate of Flinders and how difficult some applicants are finding the planning system to understand. What initiatives does the Minister undertake through Planning SA to improve the understanding of the planning system by applicants and by the community?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: In addition to releasing the metropolitan section of the planning strategy earlier this year, which has a focus on the City of Adelaide, urban regeneration and industrial development, we will also be releasing the country section of the planning strategy later this year. It is critical for us to prepare those planning strategies in consultation with councils and a whole range of other parties to provide guidelines for development plans (PARs) within a micro area, in a sense—in a council area or part of a council area. We have the overview big picture planning strategy, which we have already released in the metropolitan area, and the country section will come out later this year.

As part of that we will look at new initiatives for the Regional Development Board. We will be incorporating the findings of the marine and estuarine strategy in the regional airports review—which will be important to your electorate of Flinders—and we will also be looking at (although not so much of interest to Flinders) the Mount Lofty Ranges strategy and the Barossa strategy plans.

The implementation of the strategy occurs in a variety of ways with councils able to make changes to land use through the plan amendment reports. It is also important in terms of the supply of land and the demand and infrastructure requirements that must be met in planning strategies for both metropolitan and country areas. We have worked quite hard to make it clearer through the planning strategy what guidelines should be applied at local council level, both in the metropolitan and, shortly, in the country areas.

Mrs PENFOLD: Referring to page 6.3 and the output operating statement of the Portfolio Statements in the budget papers, what action has the Government undertaken to update the centres policy for the metropolitan area, particularly in regards to obtaining a balance between the growth of regional centres and maintaining the vitality of the city centre?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I mentioned that it is a focus of the metropolitan section of the planning strategy which I released in January this year that there is a stronger focus than ever before on the city centre. That has been reinforced by the City of Adelaide Development Strategy which was released by the Premier a few weeks ago. In reading that strategy you may have noted that there has been the idea floated about stronger planning controls that would give consideration to the impact on the City of Adelaide of any planning initiative

or application—retail or any other economic development, but particularly retail and centre development. That is something that the Government is considering at present.

A centres policy has been considered by DEPAC but has not been released yet because of two factors: the governance of the City of Adelaide; and the review of shopping hours which has been undertaken by the Government. The centres policy will take those issues into account and will be released shortly.

Mr CONLON: The Chandlers Hill Road PAR—where is that at present?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Development Act allows me as Minister to prepare a PAR where it relates to an area covered by two or more councils. The land south of the Happy Valley reservoir is within the former council areas of Happy Valley and Noarlunga and is now surplus to SA Water's requirements. The current zoning is for agriculture but that is clearly not appropriate, and on the basis of advice from my predecessor a PAR was initiated to review the planning policies applying to the area. It is zoned agriculture and has to be rezoned, and is also surplus to SA Water's requirements.

The independent investigations undertaken as part of the PAR indicate that the land is no longer required as a buffer to the reservoir. Options for development have been examined and a draft PAR has been provided to the Onkaparinga council and relevant Government agencies for comment. Issues such as surface and ground-water flows, residents' needs, access, surrounding land uses and site characteristics, including slope and vegetation, have been considered in preparing that PAR. I am waiting for council and other agency advice at present.

Mr CONLON: Have you had any submissions from the EPA on this?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We are seeking those at the moment in the consultations with agencies, because it has been sent to the agencies as well as the council.

Mr CONLON: I am concerned that the EPA consider the matter because I understand that it was a buffer zone for the reservoir and because of concerns in particular about contamination of the surface or ground-water running into the reservoir. I hope that that matter will be fully considered by the EPA.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I believe that it will be; it may wish to comment. It has been sent to all the agencies. It is zoned as agriculture and as such clearly is not zoned correctly. Whether or not it is used as a buffer zone, that matter should be addressed.

Mr CONLON: My understanding to date is that the EPA has not given it any consideration. I would like to make sure that you seek something from them given the importance of it.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I am not sure about the practice of seeking or requiring information in terms of the law. I will inquire about that. We are not required to consult agencies, but it is our practice to do so. You have asked me to do so with the EPA, and I will do that.

Mr CONLON: I think that the EPA has a large work load and I want to make sure that it has its memory jogged.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The indication is that we are not required to do so but we will. I will report back to you on that.

Mr WILLIAMS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 16.10 and the heading 'Performance Criteria'. My question is about performance in the planning process. I

believe that at least one PAR seriously threatened a development in my electorate a while back and it took a considerable amount of toing-and-froing to finally get the thing through.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Which PAR?

Mr WILLIAMS: Robe. We are anxious for any investment opportunities that come along to get under way as soon as possible and quite often the planning process is cited as stalling some of the investment decisions. What, if any, action is being taken in the department to speed up the whole planning process to try to overcome some of these difficulties?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is interesting to reflect on the point the honourable member makes, that it is the planning process that is frustrating decisions. The planning process would probably work extraordinarily smoothly if everybody put in an application which complied with the plan. Where it often gets frustrated and is frustrating for all concerned is where the application varies to the plan or where the council has not updated its plans so that they are relevant. It is on these issues that I think local councils and the Government must work very closely together to make sure that the planning strategy is sound and respected, and that the council plans based on that strategy are up to date and relevant.

Then we have to look at how councils and Ministers, when considering major development processes, look at the applications and decide, irrespective of the plan, whether or not to go ahead with an application and whether we insist on its complying with the plan. It is a big issue for councils and the community as a whole. I have been associated with the Le Cornu development for a long time, and it was a great thrill for me to be present when, seven years after the first application, the big Flintstones type of hammer went into the old Le Cornu building last week.

I have never accepted that the planning process or the Adelaide City Council thwarted or frustrated that eyesore: it was the applicant who, from the first, submitted a proposal that was absolutely outrageous and then got angry that the community was upset. Developers ask for certainty but the community wants certainty, too. A lot of work can be done with the many institutes that represent developers, financiers and others to work out how we can make sure that PARs and the like are relevant and that applicants do not come up with a proposal that they would like to inflict on a community but present a proposal that would be an asset to it.

Mr WILLIAMS: To follow up the same line of question, the PAR development I was referring to earlier related to Robe. A lot of time was wasted in my office trying to chase up what was going on with the application and where it was. Have the Minister and her department considered using information technology systems to make more readily available information about where plans are and for getting information back and forward more quickly?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: To explain the Robe situation: I am not having a go at the developing sector and community in South Australia. Councils have to do more work. It is a requirement of the Act that councils do their section 30 reviews by February but only about half had and that is not good enough. Councils have to lift their game as does Planning SA and the Government. It is difficult in terms of promoting development. We all have to lift our game, including Government agencies. We can do a lot in terms of speeding up the process.

The Act requires agencies to assess projects but with no time frame on them after they have been out for public

consultation. One of the main offenders is the EPA, which takes an inordinately long time to report back after the public consultation period. It may be a resource issue, but we have to look at how we as a Government agency do not frustrate the updating of plans where council has done the work and it is sitting around Government agencies and in Planning SA. We need to streamline those actions. I assure the honourable member that that work will be done this year.

In the Robe issue there was a late discovery of Aboriginal sites. They should not necessarily have been brought up as an issue at the last minute because the council and others were aware of them and had not taken it into account. It became highly confused. The information was available and should have been considered and brought to mind earlier. I respect the amount of time and effort the honourable member put into working with us to try to resolve the issue. I took it to Cabinet twice thinking it had all been solved and got last minute calls to say that it had still not been solved. It was a very frustrating exercise. The local member has helped us.

Mr CONLON: The Minister would be aware that Peter Ward wrote an article on about 27 February in the *Advertiser* in regard to developments along the South-Eastern Freeway fringe, including commercial developments at Monarto and some units along the strip near Mount Barker. The arguments he seemed to make were sound. I have had any number of letters challenging the wisdom of this course. Why is it happening?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Why is Peter writing like he is?

Mr CONLON: Why is the development happening and why is it being allowed? Why are the developments at Monarto and developments on the South-Eastern Freeway fringe being allowed?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The article was completely inaccurate. I can provide more details. It was based on a misunderstanding by the Conservation Council, which put out a press release and has since written and apologised to me and Transport SA for inaccurately assessing the ministerial PAR. Dr Tim Doyle wrote to me about that. It is not a ribbon development—it is well back. I am referring to the Monarto area. It is about 400 metres back from the freeway, is a confined area in terms of regional development, and an issue that Transport SA was dealing with separately earlier because there were a number of calls for a service facility or centre. With many lengths of expressway interstate and overseas there are service centres and Transport SA has been looking at that sort of approach for many years. The ministerial PAR on this issue is being considered by the Department of Industry and Trade in the calling of tenders.

The southern portion of the zone seeks to accommodate a petrol filling station and service centre. The development of this service centre does not seek to replace existing service centres provided along the Dukes Highway. Transport SA will assess the detailed design of the interchange prior to granting an access permit. The new development area does not erode the rural character of the locality other than the highway service centre. All commercial development is set back 400 metres from the freeway. The proposed uses of the commercial zone are to be set well back—20 metres for private property plus 10 metres of road reserve and landscape to retain the approach to the Monarto Zoo. We have insisted upon all that. I can provide more details on this project, along with the letter from the Conservation Council if the honourable member would like that in terms of completing his file.

Mr CONLON: What about the report on the Mount Barker development?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was zoned for rural living in the early 1990s by the Labor Government and the latest PAR fiddles at the edges and does not encroach on the freeway.

Mr CONLON: Will the Minister provide details of that also?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, I will.

Mr CONLON: It is a vexed question in my electorate. One of the outcomes for the portfolio refers to the retention of open spaces. In my electorate I have had the closure of the Marion High School and the South Road Primary School. In both cases people purchasing them would not have been able to afford them if they were not allowed subsequently to subdivide them for housing. That has happened and the bulk of the open land has been removed. I understand that this is not entirely within the Minister's portfolio. How are those sort of actions consistent with the outcomes of the preservation of open land?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member would appreciate that in any circumstances there is a balance between what the community would wish and what is possible. It is zoned residential, and has never been zoned as open space, apparently. I can get more details on that. It has just been reinforced that to our knowledge it has never been zoned other than residential, so that is a council process. In the meantime we are providing funds for councils to consider how they can work more open space into their areas. Sometimes they may swap areas. I am about to announce grants for more State investment in the retention of open space. As individual council based open space strategy plans are completed they will be used to formulate the regional open space strategies with regional priorities which recognise the importance of the Metropolitan Open Space Scheme (MOSS) and link open space and organise a manageable hierarchy.

I am advised that Planning SA has recently instigated the first of the regional open space strategies in the inner south. It is a coordinated initiative dealing with regional open space and recreational needs. This is in your electorate—Marion—and also in Unley, Mitcham and Holdfast Bay council areas; so we should get you more involved in this regional open space strategy for your council areas.

Mr CONLON: Springwood Park is a very current issue. As I understand it, it originally filed an application for some vineyards, which would have changed the use of the land. It has been suggested to us that you might be considering giving it major project status or that, even if you had not received an application, you had made inquiries of the department as to whether it was suitable. I am not making this suggestion: it has been made to us.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Is the suggestion that I have made inquiries of the department as to whether it is suitable?

Mr CONLON: Yes.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Mr Garrett wrote to me asking that it be considered a major development. I would forward that letter on to the department for advice on the criteria set out in the Act for assessment of a major development project, on environment, social or economic considerations. The Parliament has provided that the decision be made on the Minister's opinion alone. In reaching that opinion I assure you I seek lots of advice, and you would not be surprised that I would seek it from the department. Rather than looking as

though it was a nasty thing to do I think you would be surprised if I did not.

Mr CONLON: It was suggested to us that no letter had been sent to you but that you had made inquiries. You have answered that to my satisfaction. I make no apology for raising matters that are raised with me.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: He has written to me, but made no formal application.

Mr CONLON: I understand that you would take advice from many people. At first glance I would find it hard to understand how vineyards could be major developments, or we would have an awful lot of major developments in South Australia. We have planted an awful lot of new vines in the past couple of years.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will not get into debate here, because I do not have the advice and I have not reached my opinion, but the council has already said that on environmental grounds it would not consider the project. The Parliament has charged the Minister to reach an opinion on the basis of environmental, economic or social considerations. It may be determined that the council has already ruled itself out of considering the project on its merits. I may consider that environmental considerations would warrant examining this project. There are a whole range of issues; it is not just a vineyard but also a hotel and a whole range of things, as I understand.

Mr CONLON: So it would have tourist facilities?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is what Mr Garrett says he wants and has the money for.

Mr CONLON: We will see what comes of it. I noted that one of the outcomes listed in the budget papers was to encourage women's involvement in planning decisions concerning the built environment. That seems laudable.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Are you a bit alarmed about that?

Mr CONLON: I am not in the least alarmed: I just said I think it is laudable, but I am intrigued as to what it means and what sort of projects you will put in place to achieve it.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There are two issues. When I was asked to take responsibility for this portfolio I was pretty shocked to think that, not only in the hierarchy of Planning SA but also on the 22 statutory or advisory committees which I had inherited, you had to work hard to find a woman around. There are some very able women with planning qualifications and interest in planning matters. Also, as I indicated earlier, we should remember that women are working in and using the community and are probably on the receiving end of planning decisions more than anybody else in the community, and I want more involvement of women in the planning process. I make no apology for that, and it is definitely one of my goals.

In addition to that, the Office of the Status of Women is currently undertaking a joint project with the University of Adelaide and the Adelaide City Council which arises from the planning strategy and the focus on the city and all these things that work really brilliantly together in this department now (whether or not you wish to believe it). Arising from the planning strategy, the Office of the Status of Women is now working with the Adelaide City Council and the University of Adelaide on a project on women and the built environment in the City of Adelaide. It will determine the use of the city by women and their response to it. The honourable member would know that, in many families, the decisions about where they go for holidays and whether to go to theatres, restaurants or the arts are generally made by women, and we want to

know the response of women to the lighting, public transport, walkways and pathway facilities in the city.

Mr CONLON: I ask for the particulars. It is a laudable objective and laudable outcome, but what programs are there? You have some sort of program with the University of Adelaide to identify issues; is there a program for increasing the influence of women?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: There is the Government policy that we have a goal of 50 per cent of women on boards, and I am very keen to see that that happens. We currently have 50 per cent women on the Development Assessment Commission and the Development Planning Advisory Committee. All other committees are being reviewed as membership comes up—even the relevance of the committee at the present time. We will have a lot of input from women's groups in the community on urban regeneration issues, and we will be actively seeking that opinion.

Mr CONLON: For us making half the Parliament in the Lower House women we thought was a pretty good move.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: You just 'made it'—they did not get there on their merits? Well done, Pat! We are all very thankful that you made it for the girls.

Mr CONLON: I am sure my colleagues to the right are more than able to defend their own interests.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I know they are. It was just the way in which you put it.

Mr CONLON: We are a Party and something we have seen in the news in recent days is something you people do not manage to achieve.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We are alive and well.

Mr VENNING: As to improved processing of development plan reviews and amendments (page 6.10), this is a favourite subject of mine and the Minister will be aware of discussions I have had with her as Chairman of the ERD Committee in trying to speed up the process. So far as the ERD Committee is concerned, we want to be involved earlier in the process. The planning process is often criticised for stalling investment decisions and frustrating job creation, which generally takes too long. What action has been taken or is proposed to speed up the process?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: A similar question was asked by the member for MacKillop concerning frustration but not from the perspective of your involvement with the ERD Committee. I know that your committee is keen to be involved in the process earlier and we are looking at that as part of the whole assessment of the timetable for development applications to go through the approval, rejection or amendment processes and the plans themselves. Over the past 12 months a number of initiatives have been taken to improve the speed and efficiency of processing the PARs and the development plan reviews. These have included the preparation and release of a draft guide to development plan amendments; to provide improved guidance to councils; the undertaking of information and consultation programs with councils and Government agencies in late 1997, which coincided with the release of the draft guide; building stronger links with councils by visiting metropolitan and country councils on a more regular basis to discuss planning issues; adopting a concurrent consultation for most PARs where Government agencies and the community are consulted over the same period, enabling significantly faster processing of PARs.

That is a big initiative. There is improved tackling of PARs in the production of management statistics through the upgrading of the computer based Plan Amendment Manage-

ment System (PAMS). I know your committee has expressed some interest in seeing that. Really, it is technically boring, but useful. Whether it is relevant to the committee, you will have to make your decision. I have suggested it will not be, but you can make up your own mind. There is a reduction in processing time for PARs at most stages of the process. This is what I am anxious to see. We have planning bulletins to be published and released this coming few months on a number of issues.

All those initiatives that I have announced are outlined over the coming year and what we have started this year. Planning SA has assessed that the average total time for a PAR with Planning SA has declined since late 1997 until now by 40 per cent, so we are getting on top of that. I am not sure officers are looking younger or enjoying it, but we are getting on top of it.

Mr WILLIAMS: I refer to Budget Paper 3 (page 150) 'Abridged statement of cash flow for administered items' for the department. The first couple of items appear under both Receipts and Payments 'Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs—Catchment Management Subsidy Scheme, \$3.850 million'. There is then reference to 'Hospital Fund—Contribution \$13.509 million'. This also appears as a receipt and a payment. Can the Minister explain what they are?

Mr Payze: There is a difference between an item controlled by the Minister as distinct from an item administered by the Minister. They are controlled by agencies. All the administered items are in one part of the budget papers. I will give you a definition of what they are. Could I have a repeat of the specifics?

Mr WILLIAMS: The first two items on page 150. The first one is 'Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs—Catchment Management Subsidy Scheme, \$3.850 million'.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We do not control them. We process the funds. The second one has to do with the CTP and the hospital side of it. The other is stormwater drainage.

Mr Payze: As to the issue of stormwater drainage and subsidies, the Government provides a subsidy on a dollar for dollar basis with local government for management of catchments. This provision is for the disbursement of those subsidies to local government. There is a committee under the Minister for Environment and Heritage which determines the priorities for those subsidies and there is also a cost to administer them in making sure that the Government gets value for money where the subsidies are placed in the field.

Mr WILLIAMS: Are they appropriated from Consolidated Revenue through your department?

Mr Payze: They are administered items provided for that purpose. You will find the appropriation with the Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs and it comes back to the department to administer in terms of the dollars for dollar with local government and the implementation.

[Sitting suspended from 5.55 to 7.30 p.m.]

Membership:

Ms Key substituted for Mr Conlon.

Ms Thompson substituted for Ms Rankine.

Ms Ciccarello substituted for Mr Snelling.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. O'Loughlin, Executive Director, Arts SA.

Ms D. Contala, Director, Lead Agencies and Planning.

Mr G. Kling, Manager, Budgets, Lead Agencies and Planning.

Ms C. Treloar, Director, Arts Industry Development.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will read an opening statement. The appropriation for Arts shown in the outputs operating statement for 1998-99 is \$63.701 million, which comprises \$53.701 million recurrent funding and \$10 million capital funding. This figure does not include the capital provided for projects within Arts SA and its divisions—an amount of \$10.695 million. This time last year I announced increased funding for the arts in the 1997-98 budget, together with a series of specific initiatives designed to encourage stronger performance from the arts sector at all levels, to provide new opportunities for artistic development and to improve the capital infrastructure supporting that performance. I am pleased to advise that the strategy has paid off.

At the level of the individual artist, applications for assistance for projects are now 35 per cent higher than they were at the corresponding point last year. At the organisation level, performance agreements are now in place for almost all the 20 lead agencies, and there are already indications that the endorsed targets are being met and, in some cases, surpassed. The proposal to assist organisations to develop their business skills has been readily accepted by the sector, and 11 organisations have had their proposals approved for financial assistance from Arts SA. This process will be developed further later this year, when the first payments are made under the unique business incentive program put in place in last year's budget. The 1998-99 budget maintains the high plateau of funding put in place last year. This means that the substantial increase in funding for individual artists of \$400 000, introduced last year, is being repeated again this year. Mr Chairman, I know that you would be pleased to see such an initiative.

Funds available for lead agencies and for other arts organisations have also been maintained at the higher level provided in 1997-98. This has been achieved over a period in which costs of operating the North Terrace institutions and the running of the statutory authorities have increased significantly as a result of programmed wage increases. Funding has been maintained in spite of these cost increases, due to two factors: first, the Government has provided significant compensation for the wage increases, thereby demonstrating our commitment to maintaining the vibrancy of the State's arts sector; and, secondly, the balance of the cost increment is being met from savings in non-core areas.

In the coming year, the South Australian Film Corporation will be assisted in its development by a provision of a \$3 million revolving production fund. An amount of \$1.5 million is provided this year, with the balance to be provided in 1999-2000.

In relation to the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, works on the main auditorium are nearing completion, and include the first major use in Australia of cutting edge technology in the enhancement of acoustics. The trust will receive \$6 million in the 1998-99 budget to continue with major redevelopment works.

Further capital funds are being provided for the ongoing 10 year redevelopment of North Terrace, South Australia's most unique cultural asset.

Plans for the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery at the South Australian Museum are well advanced, and \$4.2 million is provided for the first stage of design and consultation in 1998-99.

The budget also provides \$4.235 million for the first stage of planning for the \$36 million redevelopment of the State Library. By the end of 2001, this Government will have invested over \$70 million in the redevelopment of North Terrace.

The \$5 million redevelopment of the Birdwood Motor Museum will open later this year, and the budget also provides \$200 000 for the upgrade of the very successful and popular Maritime Museum at Port Adelaide.

The program of rejuvenation and reform does not end with this budget. In the coming 12 months the Government will be examining development opportunities for the arts in three areas. The first is the legal structure for the arts in this State which has remained largely unchanged for 20 years. There are now some indications that some of these arrangements are falling short of best practice. The Government will be reviewing these areas to identify and implement the reforms needed to underpin its performance objectives for the arts. Secondly, the Government maintains that the arts can make a significantly greater contribution to the community generally, particularly through partnerships with other Government programs.

A major effort will be made to identify opportunities for the arts and artists to be involved in and to enhance the policies and practices of other Government agencies. This work will reinforce the Government's move to establish a per cent for arts scheme in relation to public works. Thirdly, the arts, like any other industry, are going through a globalisation process. The Government is keen to actively pursue opportunities for international collaborations. The Adelaide Festival is leading the way in this regard and has received additional funding from the Government for commissions and international collaborations for its festival in the year 2000. However, it is recognised that broader opportunities are available and these will be examined for the benefit of the entire arts sector and the State. I welcome questions.

Ms KEY: Will the Minister table—not necessarily today but shortly, I hope—estimates of expenditure by program, including all those programs shown in various parts of last year's Estimates documents?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I addressed this same issue when we started the Estimates program today in terms of Transport SA. We have moved to this system of accrual accounting, which is a new form of accounting rather than using the old system that involved cash. We have also moved to outputs. We would like to oblige, but I want to ask the agency about the ease of doing so. We are able to do that, and we will remove the accrual accounting factors and provide the information on a cash basis.

Ms KEY: As there is a different budgeting procedure this year, it is difficult to make comparisons.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will comment on that later.

Ms KEY: I refer to Portfolio Statements Paper No. 4, Volume 2, page 6.13. In the overview, the targets for 1998-99 in the program 'Access to artistic product' include the aim 'deliver incentive payments to reward arts organisations that are performing well'. What are the criteria for 'performing well'? Are they related to audiences or budgets? Who decides on these agreements? Can the Minister table the details of these agreements for every lead agency across the arts portfolio?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Regarding public access to performance agreements, I am advised that our plan was to finalise all performance agreements and consolidate them into a business plan and that they could then be released. As I noted in my opening statement, most of the performance agreements with lead agencies have been finalised. However, as you may have read in the newspaper we have a problem with one outstanding performance agreement, so they have not all been finalised.

Therefore, the business plan is not ready, but Mr O'Loughlin has indicated that we believe that they could be made available. I accept that advice and am pleased to receive it, because these performance agreements have been undertaken as we want companies to recognise the fact that taxpayers are investing in their work and we want complete understanding between the funding body (Arts SA) and the body in which we are investing (the lead company) about what is to be delivered for the taxpayers' dollar. So, I am pleased to learn that those agreements were negotiated on the basis that they could be released.

Ms KEY: Is the Minister saying that those agreements will be made available for the Opposition to peruse?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes.

Ms KEY: There were two parts to my question, one of which involved the criteria. Will that form part of the information that the Minister will supply?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Two issues are involved. The performance agreements with the lead agencies are about the dollars invested by the taxpayers in the arts by way of various companies and getting those companies to think about what they are delivering today and will deliver in the future and what they want to achieve for themselves and the South Australian community as part of the creative State, reinforcing the value and strength of the arts in this State.

There are also the triennial funding agreements that we seek to reach with these companies. When we say that Treasury and Arts are prepared to invest on a long-term basis, it must be on the understanding that these companies have longer-term plans. Triennial funding helps them to plan and it helps us and the community to understand what they seek to achieve. We will certainly make these agreements available.

Incentive payments have been provided: \$100 000 has been allocated to reward arts organisations for superior performances, involving \$50 000 for lead agencies and \$50 000 for annually funded organisations. It is my understanding that we can provide those criteria. I do not have with me the amounts that have been provided to each agency.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question relates to project grants, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 (page 6.1). I refer to the portfolio of arts industry development. Will the Minister outline the impact and result of the new projects grants scheme introduced in 1988 which removed arts specific categories?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This was a bold move by Arts SA. It has clearly been welcomed by the arts community in South Australia. As the honourable member said, we have moved away from art form funding to three categories, the first of which is professional development, and that category has been divided into leadership and emerging artists. So, emerging artists, generally younger artists, are not competing with professionals for funding. Clearly, they have welcomed that, as I indicated in my opening statement. The 37 per cent increase in funding applications has largely been the result of applications by emerging artists.

The second category is cultural, tourism and export, and the third is festivals, events and new commissions. We added \$400 000 to the project funds for those new categories so that people could apply for funding for research and development as well as projects. That made a total of \$1 million available in 1998 for projects and emerging artists. There was a total of 272 applications from artists and arts organisations during the first round in 1988, an increase of 21 per cent on the round in 1997 under the old art form system. That is an even greater increase when compared with the previous corresponding round of April 1997, representing a 36 per cent increase from that time.

The standard of applications is extremely high. Not only the quantity but also the quality of applications have been assessed as extremely high by peers who have been appointed to those three categories. The closing date for the second round is 30 September this year. Particular attention will be paid to community cultural development projects and indigenous arts projects. We concentrated on emerging artists this time, and we have done well. We want to keep up that emphasis, but we now want to see more applications from community cultural development projects and indigenous arts projects.

Mrs PENFOLD: My question relates to the new theatre initiative (Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.13). I refer to portfolio access and to artists' products, which includes grants to annually funded companies. Following the Australia Council's decision to cut all funding to both Red Shed and Magpie last year, the State Government has resolved to continue the State's share of funding to the second tier theatre sector. Will the Minister provide information about the development of the new theatre initiative?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It was a big decision on our part to continue to provide the \$300 000 that the State had provided in the past to those two companies, notwithstanding the withdrawal of Federal funds through the Australia Council. We maintained those two companies until March this year when the State Theatre Company indicated that it would no longer continue with Magpie, and the Red Shed board resolved that that company should no longer continue its operations.

In March, having sustained those two companies after Australia Council funds were cut, we announced that up to \$300 000 would be made available for a new second tier theatre company. We sought expressions of interest, and I have been advised that 13 applications have been received—which is stunning—from artistic directors or artistically driven theatre companies.

A reference panel has been established that comprises Rodney Fisher, Artistic Director of the State Theatre Company, Jill Smith, General Manager of Playbox Theatre in Melbourne, Paul Black, a well-known South Australian actor who has been interstate and who has recently returned to live in South Australia, Robyn Archer, Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival, and Carol Treloar, Director of Arts Industry Development. My understanding is that this group has met, shortlisted and asked for further information about two or three companies—Ms Treloar, you look very relaxed sitting there, but I'm not: I am waiting for the answer and I think many people in the arts community are also waiting for the outcome. I am told that you will be able to give me your advice by the end of June.

Ms THOMPSON: I refer to the 'Portfolio Statements', Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 6.13, specifically access to

artistic product and the list of achievements in 1997-98. One of the achievements is listed as follows:

Established performance-based funding agreements with most lead agencies.

In the House on 4 June in answer to a question about funding to the arts, you said:

Arts SA and the Government are agreeing with the lead arts agencies—including the South Australian Theatre Company, State Opera, Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre, and many others—on what we will seek to purchase for taxpayer investment in these companies. In each instance, the performance agreement requires that country work be undertaken.

Given newspaper reports of a rift between Artistic Director Meryl Tankard and the board of ADT over the issue of regional touring, what is the allocation to Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre for the next financial year and what is the financial value of the performance-based agreement Arts SA has with Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The sum of \$732 000 was provided last financial year to the Australian Dance Theatre. The company will receive the same sum in the coming financial year. As part of the performance agreements which, as I have indicated, have been worked through with every company and signed and sealed with almost all of our 20 companies, we are asking the boards and management to work through where they are, where they want to be, how they could do a variety of work that would best promote the artists or, in this instance, the dancers, that would best see national and international exposure, and that would also make a performance contribution to South Australia, including regional South Australia.

The board of the Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre, quite rightly and responsibly, has put in train a comprehensive review of the company's purpose, its strategic objectives and the means of meeting those objectives. I am advised that the company has been assessing the following issues: Meryl Tankard's success in building her international reputation; the impact of this development upon the company's activities within Australia and South Australia; and the associated need to generate greater income needed to support international activities. Members would appreciate that it is more costly to go overseas. Those performances do not generate sufficient income to cover costs and we must see how we can generate that income, and the board is addressing that issue. There are also the structural changes to the presentation of dance in Australia's major performing arts venue, and that relates to Performing Australia funds, essentially. The Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre last year did not qualify for any funds for touring as part of the Made to Move Program which is the dance package with a touring component promoting dance across Australia.

The review has obviously required the company to focus on its artistic direction, including the mix of activities between international, national and South Australian performances. For the record, it may be of interest to members that in 1995 the company performed on 24 occasions in South Australia and on 37 occasions interstate or overseas; in 1996, 15 occasions in South Australia, essentially Adelaide and one performance in the Barossa, and 69 overseas or interstate; this past year, 14 occasions in South Australia, including one in the Barossa Valley, and 48 interstate and most of them overseas.

Between 1995 and 1997, 53 of the 154 performances have been in Adelaide. Of course, the company has had a very successful tour overseas this year, and we enjoyed her

performances at the Festival with *Possession*. Clearly, there are some differences in emphasis at the present time between the company and the Artistic Director concerning the balance of activities between international, national and South Australia. I have enormous confidence—and continue to have confidence—that the board and Meryl Tankard will work out these differences. I have lost some of that confidence in terms of the Artistic Director in the past 24 hours. Her statement that she has been given marching orders and that she has been sacked is false. There is an old wives' saying, Mr Chairman, 'May her conscience be her guide,' and I would ask members to reflect on that when reflecting on the issue as a whole.

We will work through this, and I ask Meryl Tankard to work through this with us. We are very keen to continue the association with Meryl. That is certainly the offer that is on the table, including opportunities for new work and international touring. If she does not wish to be involved in regional touring and if she does not wish to be involved to such a large extent in South Australian work, perhaps she may care to change the way in which she has been working with the company. That is all that is on the table at the moment for consideration. There is no sacking, and I say that without qualification, but I also say, 'May her conscience be her guide.'

Ms THOMPSON: Can you tell us the financial value of the performance-based agreement Arts SA has with MTADT as opposed to the allocation?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is the same.

Ms THOMPSON: Will you advise if funding flowing from these performance-based agreements will be in jeopardy if the current dilemma between the Artistic Director and the board does not result in a change in policy direction in regional touring if that ratio you have just talked about does not change?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I doubt it from a State perspective. What I would be concerned about is the Australia Council funding.

Mr WILLIAMS: I would like to ask the Minister about the Festival Centre Trust. Through my work with the parliamentary Public Works Committee I recently had the privilege of inspecting the Festival Theatre and the work currently going on there.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Did you sit in the new seats?

Mr WILLIAMS: They were not screwed down and we were not allowed to because we were going to scratch the floor. I understand that funding for the current works was in last year's budget, and in Budget Paper Number 5 (page 1-29) I see \$6 million allocated, which amount is to include exterior lighting, signage, access and dining facilities. I hope that that \$6 million will go further than that. The Public Works Committee was told that some 60-odd individual projects were involved in the master plan for the upgrading and refurbishment of the Festival Centre. Can the Minister give a very brief outline of the current works and more of an insight into what is proposed for the next 12 months.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It will include riverside access to the Backstage Bar and Grill, a new entrance from King William Street and improved pedestrian access from the plaza car park. If you had walked through the car park to get to the centre you would realise that it is a real hazard to cross as a pedestrian when all the cars are coming down the roadway and the drivers are impatient because they were held up farther up the street. It is not a good start to an investment in enjoyment or of dollars.

Ms Thompson interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Exactly. This centre was built 25 years ago and it clearly needs help. In many senses it is the central focus for arts performance in South Australia. We know that it has to have a much higher degree of relevance to the community. There is a lot of competition around not only from cinema but sport and entertainment generally and we have to make it more attractive in the competitive business of gaining patrons. So we are looking at the Backstage Bar and Grill facilities and the entrance. We are looking at cutting away much of the plaza area and the frontage to King William Street, because the frontage is essentially taken up with bus stops and garden beds and one would not know that this important centre for the arts is behind the foliage or bus stop signs and shelters. We want to open that up.

The kiosk will be upgraded. We are looking at a plaza cafe. I have not formally approached the presiding members and members of Parliament about this but there is an opportunity in the master plan to look at a parliamentary cafe and how we could use the facilities of Parliament to outsource and outreach from Parliament House, and break down the barriers between Parliament House and the plaza. I think the investment that taxpayers have made in the facilities here could possibly be used to capitalise on investment in the finances of this place and also make the plaza look more hospitable, friendly and relevant, with many more people around. I see the Chairman frowning a little bit about the plaza cafe: I will have to work on him a bit. He is getting restless, too, so I know I will have to work hard on this idea. It is one of a number of propositions in—

The CHAIRMAN: I am well aware of the suggestion some 12 to 15 months ago.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: After some 15 years in the Party room I know your body language well; I know when you are restless, happy and not happy. So, I will work on you. There is also provision for better signage and information including touch screen technology and linking visitors between the river, the plaza, the Convention Centre and surrounding areas. It is extraordinary how Adelaide people have mind sets about the Festival Centre, Parliament House, the Convention Centre and over the road with the parade ground. We do not seem to link these facilities very well as public assets.

I think the South Bank in Melbourne has done it extremely well and we should learn from that exercise how we can link our investment in our State-owned assets fronting on to the Torrens Lake much better than we have, and this is a real opportunity for us to do so. We could even link Parliament House to the plaza but, as I say, I will have to work on the Chairman about that. That will follow the \$3.6 million investment on acoustics and seating. I am sorry that the honourable member could not enjoy the seats but if he will come with me to a performance shortly I know that he will have good seating, good sight lines and excellent acoustics.

Mr WILLIAMS: I am looking forward to taking up that invitation.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: At the same time we might work on a strategy for working on the Chairman for this Parliament plaza cafe, too.

Mr WILLIAMS: I see that the total estimated cost on that line for the master plan of the Adelaide Festival Centre is \$18.7 million, and I am a little surprised because I thought it would run to considerably more than that. In view of the investment that the taxpayers of South Australia are making into the physical infrastructure, can the Minister advise the

Committee of any strategies the trust may have to repay to the South Australian community its support of the arts centre in South Australia.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is a reasonable question. If the taxpayers are to invest that money for the purpose of making the Festival Centre a focal point for performance and making it as relevant in the next 25 years as it has been in the past 25 years there is work to do. The honourable member may not have been present at the recent open day to celebrate its past 25 years. I think 20 000 people attended, which clearly demonstrates that the Festival Centre is popular and has generated a lot of goodwill and interest over the years. We must build on that and on the service that the centre has provided to the arts over that same period.

Members would be aware that later this year the centre is to be the host of Wagner's *Ring* cycle, which is an enormous coup for South Australia. If you do not like Wagner and opera—and many people do not—what I want people to understand is that we have, a year and a half out of presenting Wagner's opera, sold all the tickets, and all the sponsorship (and Mr O'Loughlin might wish to speak about this shortly) was raised a year ago.

People on high incomes travel the world to see Wagner productions of *The Ring*. We have these high income earners in Adelaide for eight days. They attend a performance every second night. How they spend their money on the intervening days and nights is something I am really keen to see. With the Grand Prix we had them here for three days. They go to an event and do not spend other money because most of them are sponsored guests. These people are actually paying for themselves and want to spend money and do other things in the meantime and the opportunities with regard to tourism are fantastic. It is generated for the arts and the Festival Centre. It has been important to improve the acoustics for this event to ensure the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and all international and local singers are presented in the best way in this venue.

I am keen to see the Festival Centre, with its relevance to the arts and performances in the future, stage future performances of *The Ring* cycle and probably present our own productions. We are now looking at a whole performance policy in a fresh light at the Festival Centre Trust because of the upgrading program. We are looking at the performance program also because the trust has invested over some 10 years in musicals, both as a presenter at the Festival Centre Trust and also as a producer. If one reads the papers one will see that large scale musicals have been a real financial hazard for most presenters over some years worldwide and this has been the experience of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust too. Members would know that there was a write-off last year in the Festival Centre's balance sheet. It has been difficult to turn that around this financial year.

Arts SA has provided extra working capital—about \$240 000—as a loan to the Festival Centre Trust. We are looking at the performing policy because of the upgrade to the centre and because the large musical, which has been a focus of so much of the performing policy over recent times, is not so relevant to the future.

While we are looking at performance policy we are also looking at the way in which the Festival Centre Trust is structured, at its board membership and the way it works. It will now be placed under the Public Corporations Act and a regulation will be brought before the Parliament for this purpose in the very near future, because it works in a risky

business and the Public Corporations Act is a more appropriate structure for the commercial nature of the business it undertakes. It is part of the growing up of the Festival Centre Trust after 25 years of operation. The Parliament will have an opportunity to address that in the very near future.

Extra funds have been injected as working capital and a loan. There will be changes in terms of the structure and organisation as we have the benefit of new management and Kate Brennan is a breath of fresh air. She is looking at the operating costs and a number of other factors at the Festival Centre currently on the understanding that the performance obligations and number of nights and opportunities for South Australian companies is maintained at the same level.

The CHAIRMAN: I am interested, like my colleague the member for MacKillop, in some of the expenses involved in the arts. Will the Minister provide information on the costs to the department of running the State Opera? We have not been able to find the relevant information in the various documents. Will the Minister advise the cost to the taxpayer of the State Opera and whether it is likely to meet its outgoings this current financial year?

Ms KEY: On a point of order, Sir, why is the Chair asking questions?

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair has every right to ask questions and is going to ask questions. If you want to stick by the rules, I will—I have been very flexible today. This is the second question I have asked today. I was the first Chairman of these budget Estimates Committees in 1983, so I know how they operate. I have bent the rules to assist, in particular, new members. If you want to have a shot at me I will apply the rules right down the centre of the Standing Orders. From now on there will be no further questions unless you tell me to what page and line of the document you are referring to.

Ms KEY: I have been here since 7.30 p.m.—

The CHAIRMAN: I have been here since 11 a.m.

Ms KEY: I appreciate that, Sir. Perhaps your comments are somewhat inappropriate in my case, since yesterday I certainly abided by your ruling. I was just asking you a question because yesterday it was raised with you whether it was appropriate for the Chair to ask questions, especially a Chair from the Government side, when this is really a day for the Opposition to ask questions of Ministers.

The CHAIRMAN: You completely misunderstand the role of the budget Estimates Committees. The budget Estimates Committees are for members of Parliament to seek information from Ministers and their officers. It is open to any member of the House of Assembly to come to either of the budget Estimates Committees and seek the concurrence of the Chair and ask a question and that does not preclude the Chairman. I have asked two questions and I was considering asking a third and decided I would not: I now intend to. I suggest that, if the honourable member looks at the number of questions the Opposition has asked today compared with the number the Government has asked, she will find it is about two to one.

The honourable member needs to have a good look at the mirror and see how this committee has operated. I have bent over backwards. If she wants me to apply Standing Orders, I know them and will apply them to the letter of the law. It makes no difference to me—it is quite good sport. I object to the point of order taken as I have bent over backwards. We can apply it straight down the middle—it does not worry me. I have asked a question of the Minister and I would appreciate the Minister's commenting.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Earlier today I recognised that you asked a number of questions and no issue was made by any member of the committee of that fact. For the State Opera company, \$1.7 million has been devoted this year as the State's investment in *The Ring* cycle. That sum has increased by about \$240 000 because, for the first time, we have allocated to State Opera its costs in engaging the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to support the State Opera program. State Opera now gets its performance and operating costs and subsidies, plus the cost of engaging the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and it will achieve its budget and there will be no overrun or blow out.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to the State Library. I declare an interest as a former employee of 17 years. I refer to the Arts SA operating statement, 'Information and Library Services', specifically the State Library. Public Service consultant Ken Baxter has recommended the State Library should develop strategies for commercial activities with the private sector, conduct extensive market research into its services and allow other services on site. Has the Library considered what such commercial activities should be and how will they impact on the free and highly regarded services provided by the library, and is this a warning that the State Library will have to start looking at funding elsewhere because the State Government cannot guarantee its funding?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Certainly, the State Government is strongly supportive of the library. It has made a capital investment of \$36 million in the new library. The library has just completed a marketing plan, which the board is considering. Mr O'Loughlin may wish to add a little more about the commercial activities being considered by the board and commented upon by Mr Baxter. I understand that this approach is being undertaken by State libraries throughout the country and overseas.

Mr O'Loughlin: Mr Baxter's report focused on the need for the library to generate more of its own income. He pointed out that by Australian standards a very small proportion of its income was generated from its own exertions. However, there was no suggestion in that report that that income should or would replace the subsidy that is being provided by the State Government at present. It recognised that, in the event that the redevelopment went ahead, the higher levels of service that would be expected would also require some increase in operating expenditures. However, it asserted that there was the potential for that to be met from the increased commercial activities.

Ms CICCARELLO: Is it appropriate for a State library, which should be providing a free information service to the community, to be involved in commercial activities?

Mr O'Loughlin: Mr Baxter's report pointed out that all the mainland libraries in Australia had activities that were generating from 15 to 20 per cent of their own revenue, that the State Library of South Australia was relatively low with respect to those but that it could increase that activity without compromising the core activities of the library in providing those free services.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Ms Contala has advised me that the concept consultants engaged to look at the design of the new State Library have already engaged business consultants to examine the nature of the business that the State Library could negotiate and determine how that could be incorporated in design aspects. That has been undertaken with the endorsement of the board.

Ms CICCARELLO: On page 144 the Estimates Statement (Budget Paper 3) there is reference to 'Information and

Library Services' under 'Outputs purchased'. Will the Minister explain the difference in the two figures listed for library information services? The 1998-99 budget is \$16.138 million and the 1997-8 estimated result is \$18.749 million. Why has there been a \$2.5 million difference in the allocation?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We will take that question on notice in order to keep the Committee moving. I will provide that information either later tonight for *Hansard* or for the honourable member later.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I am fortunate to have the Carrick Hill Museum in my electorate. On page 6.12 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, I notice that a business plan has been completed for Carrick Hill. What is the Government doing to ensure the financial viability of Carrick Hill and its continued survival?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have had a rather chequered history with Carrick Hill. In the early days of my responsibility as Minister for the Arts I found it difficult to accept that we should be spending so much on the maintenance of a property—the gardeners and so on—out of the arts budget when we were having great difficulty maintaining arts effort in the employment of dancers and maintenance of companies. It was suggested that land should be sold and a select committee was set up for that purpose. After working through that select committee process and hearing more evidence I came to the view that Carrick Hill deserved another go and that it should be provided with a new board. That came about with the resignation of the then board members.

On the recommendation of the select committee the Parliament has given the challenge to the Carrick Hill Trust to come up with a business plan looking at the first three years in a robust way and a 12 year plan for Carrick Hill being more self sustaining than it is at the current time, given its dependence on the arts budget and taxpayer subsidy. The 12 year plan is in its final stages. I have seen the 3 year plan and the board is working on the 12 year plan. I will get that plan within the week—I certainly hope before Parliament returns—so it can be tabled.

The current financial year, 1997-98, is proving to be a particularly good year for Carrick Hill, with visitor numbers having increased by 30 per cent over the previous year. We have a new board, headed by Mrs Fiona Adler. The confidence of the select committee and Parliament that Carrick Hill should be given another go seems to be paying off. They are all working hard, and the residents also understand. Part of the difficulty in the past is that the residents have been extraordinarily reluctant to see any efforts at Carrick Hill that would mean after hours activities, and therefore a more secure, commercial, self sustaining financial basis for Carrick Hill.

The anticipated result for this financial year is over 45 000 visitors. There have been fantastic outdoor performances; I assume the honourable member went to *Much Ado About Nothing*, which was part of the fringe festival program. There have been outdoor performances by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra; did you go to that?

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: No.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Well, you missed something there. There have been opera recitals and the Olive Festival; did you go to that? I want to know whether the honourable member was among the 45 000 visitor numbers, and how he can help us increase that number further. In 1998-99 a land management plan will be developed, and the important building work required to the foundations will be completed.

The management and board is returning the house to the manner in which the Haywards lived in it and left it, and that presentation of the house will make it more interesting. Certainly, the exhibitions are more interesting, and the outdoor programs and the association with other arts activities and partnerships are fantastic. As a sign of confidence in the future the Government has maintained the 1998-99 allocation to Carrick Hill at the previous year level—this year's level—and this has been achieved in a difficult budgetary climate and notwithstanding my misgivings.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I am also interested in the development of North Terrace. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 6.3 to 6.6, and specifically to the portfolio outcomes and strategies. Will the Minister outline the initiative plan to improve the activities and access for the community to North Terrace as a cultural precinct?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I have indicated that our forecast investment as a State Government and taxpayers on North Terrace amounts to \$70 million. Some \$36 million has been assigned in the forward estimates, including \$4.3 million for the library this coming financial year. As to the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery, all the feasibility work has been almost completed and we should see tenders let this year. Mr O'Loughlin will explain how he is pushing this project forward.

Mr O'Loughlin: We expect to go before the Public Works Committee in mid August and we will progress the project to that stage.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We certainly want the work finished before the Olympic Games because the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery will be a major drawcard for this State. We know from survey after survey that international visitors are particularly interested in our indigenous cultures and we have here the best collection in Australia. It is about time it was displayed and we are going to have it on show for the year 2000, for the Olympic Games and for the next millennium.

Ms THOMPSON: I refer to Program Estimates, Paper 3, page 144, specifically the Living Health aspect of Arts SA outputs operating statement. Given the Treasurer's announcement in the budget that Living Health will be axed, I seek more detail about how the arts proportion of Living Health funds will be administered. The Treasurer's statement on 27 May on the demise of Living Health said its administration costs and processes were estimated to be \$880 000 in 1997-98, with further administration related costs of some hundreds of thousands of dollars included in other budget lines. He also said there was considerable duplication and administrative overlap in various Government and Living Health grants programs in the arts area. In terms of the administrative arrangements, how many staff will transfer from Living Health to Arts SA and how much will this save? Where will operating savings be made when allocated funds will continue through 1998 and 1999?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I thank the honourable member for her question. These are issues that we have actively addressed. It has been very important to the Government in our working relationships with the arts and in the promotion of the arts generally in South Australia that we get this right. If Living Health was to be disbanded, we had to be confident not only in our own minds but also to sell to the arts community that we were doing the right thing by it, plus the health promotion area as well. I feel confident we have done so. In a moment I will ask Mr O'Loughlin to go through some of these issues, because he has been dealing with grants for

health promotion purposes with Ms Christine Charles, Chief Executive Officer of Health and Family Services.

I highlight that for the coming financial year the sum involved is \$2.39 million. All the recommendations from the Living Health Board have been endorsed by the Government and letters went to all the arts organisations today advising them of their grants. That letter also advises that for the next three financial years—so that we have four financial years in all—the sum of money to the arts will be the same. So, this is not just a one-off allocation from general purpose funds to the arts. We believe that we will simply be able to manage this exercise by extending the existing frameworks that we have for assessing grants, but keeping separate the allocation of grants for health promotion purposes.

Also, we will be establishing a separate peer assessment grant category for cultural community development grants. This is something that we probably should have done some time ago but have not done well, that is, to look at how the arts work with the community in terms of what would be defined as 'amateur' arts activities. We have stood as an arts organisation removed from much of that. I name the Independent Theatre Company. We really have to assess why it would not qualify for some funding through the arts in terms of quality of programs, the employment of artists or working opportunities for artists, designers and producers. Those things have challenged me for some time.

We have not been able to address the matter, but I think there is an opportunity now, through the disbanding of Living Health, for us to look again at the way we do some things and how we could do it better, but also in many aspects with a health focus as well which we would not wish to lose, because I think Living Health achieved a lot. I say that as a smoker. I have not yet given up, but I have learnt a lot.

Mr O'Loughlin: It is expected that one staff member from Living Health will transfer to Arts SA and, as the Minister said, the management models that we are pursuing at the moment are very much driven by extending the use of administrative systems that are in place rather than achieving overlap. In the case of Arts SA, it becomes another grant category which we believe can be simply added without great expense to the existing administrative machinery that we have there for the management of grants. In the case of the health promotion function, we would be looking at purchasing services from the Health Promotion Unit in the Department of Human Services. This will have the benefit of having existing expertise supplemented by the expertise of the previous Living Health organisation when it transfers over.

Ms THOMPSON: My second question relates specifically to the emphasis on the hands-off aspect of the grants processes. Can you please amplify that issue?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: In common with the member, that issue has been important to me, the Government and Arts SA. It is a particular issue for the arts community as well. Whether it be a Liberal or Labor Government, they do not seem to trust politicians and want anyone but politicians involved. They want us to fight for the arts funding for arts purposes, but when it comes to the allocation of arts funds, they do not want us anywhere near it. That has always seemed a bit of an irony to me. That is the way it is and that is the way I work it. We have made sure that, in terms of the allocation of the Living Health promotion component of the grants, it will be applied for and provided through Arts SA in the future. Assessment of grants will be done by the peer assessment committees that have been established. The Government established new committees for the new

categories of professional development, emerging artists, festivals and cultural tourism, and I am completely confident that the arts community have confidence in the capacity of those committees and their membership; otherwise there would not have been such an overwhelming number or increase in applications in this last grant round.

The arts community clearly has confidence in the peer assessment system that we have established—that they will be judged fairly. Those same groups, plus a new group for community cultural development, will be looking at these grants for under \$5 000 that we would be looking to establish within the next six months.

Mr O'Loughlin: The Minister's discussions have also related to the protection of the integrity of peer assessment for the purposes of the former Living Health funds, so that there would be some representation from the health promotion sector on that panel. Obviously, one of the things that people compete on is the extent to which they can deliver healthy messages. So, there is a need for some added expertise to make that assessment.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Again, it will not be my expertise!

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Estimates Paper No. 3, (page 144) 'Access to artistic product'. Can the Minister outline the financial situation of the Fringe Festival after the 1998 Fringe? Specifically, will the Fringe incur a debt, and will this be picked up by the Government? Given the focus on moving Arts administration to the West End, will the Minister urge the Fringe to move back to the other end of town?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Fringe was given an opportunity last year to nominate whether it wanted to use its increased funds to relocate to the East End or to stay in its current premises—a part of the Living Arts Centre. The board decided to stay at the Living Arts Centre, using it as a headquarters, but to host its festival in the East End. I have always argued that it did not matter where it hosted its festival and that it was irrelevant where the headquarters was. What was relevant for the board to determine is whether it wanted to move its headquarters to the East End and pay \$160 000 more in rental each year, or whether it wanted to use those extra funds which Arts SA provided for arts product and festivals. The board—I think wisely—chose to keep its headquarters in the Lions Arts Centre and use those extra funds which we provided and which amounts to about \$160 000 per annum. It stages the festival every two years, and we are providing \$160 000 per year more to the Fringe, and, I think rightly, it did not choose to use that simply on rental payments to Mancorp in the East End. It was its decision, and we agreed. We have not yet received any accounts from the Fringe for the last Festival. I am told by Ms Contala that she phoned the organisation today.

Ms Contala: We were advised today that the board has auditors there now, and we will have audited statements early in July. The information we have received to date is that there is a balanced result for the Fringe.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We wish that that would be so.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to Budget Paper No. 5, (pages 1 to 29), the portfolio of capital works, and note that there is no mention of the redevelopment of the Port Lincoln civic hall. The Minister is aware that the electorate of Flinders is the only major regional centre without a performing arts centre, and the city has standard visual arts areas. Perhaps the funding could come from efficiency savings on other capital

works. Can the Minister report on the progress of this redevelopment?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Are you suggesting that the funding for your favourite project could come from inefficiencies on other capital works?

Mrs PENFOLD: Yes, \$1.8 million could come off the State Library redevelopment of \$34 million, or from the \$18.7 for the Adelaide Festival Centre, and it would hardly be noticed.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: With all due respect, it would be noticed. I hope that the honourable member is not lobbying the member for MacKillop and other members of the Public Works Committee with your current proposition.

Mrs Penfold interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member is right: no funding is provided this financial year in the capital works purposes for the upgrade of the Lincoln Civic Centre. In the past, we have provided funds for the preparation of the study, as I recall. The sum of \$5 000 was provided for a design proposal for the Port Lincoln Civic Hall. Then council proceeded with the \$34 000 for the design development proposal for the project, and this has been partly funded by the arts community in Port Lincoln. The proposal for the civic hall to be developed into a multipurpose arts centre, incorporating a high quality theatre, a visual arts display space, craft workshops, community meeting rooms and office space for arts staff, at an estimated cost of \$1.8 million, has now been put to the Government by the Port Lincoln council. The council is seeking Government support of \$1.2 million towards the project. The honourable member said we should trim \$1.8 million.

Mrs Penfold interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Why are you asking for more than the council has sought?

Mrs PENFOLD: I am trying to pick up another \$600 000 for my interpretive centre; that is why.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: So you are trying to take off the arts budget not only \$1.2 million for the Port Lincoln centre but you want \$600 000 for what else?

Mrs PENFOLD: The interpretive centre.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The honourable member asks a lot, given all the money she has for the roadworks that no other Government ever sought to fund. Now she wants to take off funds that have been fought for for years for the State Library, and so on, for her favoured projects—not only the civic centre but also an interpretive centre. I do not even know that there is an arts component in it.

In all fairness, this is a worthwhile project. The honourable member has been most earnest and diligent in pursuing it. I am being equally earnest and diligent in looking for funds. I would prefer the Public Works Committee not to trim the funds that we have fought for and gained for the State Library.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to 'Arts SA outputs—operating statement—library and information services'. How many positions have been lost in the Art Gallery, Museum and Library as a result of the centralisation of corporate services in the North Terrace institutions? Which corporate services have been taken over by Arts SA and which ones have been left for the organisations to do? Will the Minister list these?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This project was undertaken mainly because of the wage strategies and the enterprise bargaining offer that the staff of Arts SA resoundingly accepted. I am relaxed about that. However, we must find the

wage cost component of that enterprise bargaining. In part, our costs have been supplemented by Treasury, which is terrific, and I commend Mr O'Loughlin, Rod Payze—as Chief Executive of the department as a whole—Barry Atwell and others. Many people fought hard to get that supplementation, and I compliment them, because it has meant less pain in the arts overall in terms of how we would fund those wage increases. We have been supplemented for part of the funding. We have had to find the other part ourselves. Arts SA has spoken to the divisions for which we are responsible—the Art Gallery, Library and Museum—to look at what are non-core functions.

We have insisted that they not cut funding from any core arts program, and the boards and the management have agreed to that. We have looked at non-core functions, which means that the functions will still be undertaken but by a different unit and not separately by each of those divisions. Savings will help to meet the wage costs overall. We will still have all the services. I think there is a loss of about 12 positions, but Mr O'Loughlin may wish to report further.

Mr O'Loughlin: The Minister's advice is correct. There is a net loss of 12 positions. However, the actual loss in terms of displaced persons will be significantly less, I think it will be about three or four, because obviously we have been planning for this for some time. As various positions have become vacant they have been filled with casual or temporary staff. In the first instance, we attempt to find positions for people within Arts SA before attempting to find positions for them in the broader Government sector.

Ms CICCARELLO: So, we will be able to have a list at some stage.

Mr O'Loughlin: The functions are relatively straightforward: accounting and finance, human resources and administration (in particular, contracts administration).

Mr WILLIAMS: I refer to the Capital Works Statement, Budget Paper 5 (page 1-30)—the South Australian Film Corporation. It states that there is an intention to 'establish a revolving discounted loan facility to help fund the production of films in South Australia by independent film makers'. I am interested in this discounted loan facility, because the other discounted loan facility that has been mooted is in Queensland by the One Nation Party. It suggests that it can lend funds to farmers at a rate of 2 per cent. I wonder where they got that idea? Could it have come from within the Minister's arts budget? Will the Minister please explain?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: To think that the member for MacKillop would judge any of our public works programs for the arts is a frightening prospect based on that last reference. I hope that the One Nation Party will revolve around itself, but we will work on that. The revolving fund for the film industry is a critical part of maintaining jobs in South Australia in the film industry and seeking to sustain continuous employment in this important industry in this State. Local members generally would have all celebrated the success of Scott Hicks in directing *Shine*. That was a one-off revolving fund effort in the sense that we cash flowed his up-front costs on the basis of production guarantees.

Many of the funds that are raised for films are guaranteed to come in later, but they do not have the up-front costs needed actually to produce the film. For *Shine* the State provided \$2.5 million, which was quickly repaid. It was guaranteed anyway by other contracts.

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Norwood Town Hall looked fantastic in the film. We would love to see you

provide good rates for further films. If you can persuade Norwood councillors to help us with costs associated with film production, that would be good. I heard Helen Leake, the producer of a film called *Heaven's Burning*, speak on the radio the other day, and she said that our production costs here because of the goodwill of South Australians are probably 30 per cent to 40 per cent lower than if the same film were produced in Sydney. So, we have that competitive advantage.

We want to provide this revolving fund to help with the up-front costs. We are guaranteed to get back those costs; that is why it is called a revolving fund, so that we can reinvest in films and attract high levels of film production in this State. It is about jobs; it is about locations, and it is about the profile of this State.

Mr WILLIAMS: I note in the budget that the estimated total cost is \$3 million and the proposed expenditure for the forthcoming year is exactly half that amount. Is it proposed that \$1.5 million will be injected over each of the next two financial years, and will the Minister tell the Committee what the discounted rate might be?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We already have more than enough projects before the South Australian Film Commission to use the \$1.5 million for the next financial year. We have not even begun the financial year. At this stage, the number of projects amount to more than the \$1.5 million that we will allocate for the next financial year. So, there are plenty there. They could probably use up the \$3 million straight away, but \$1.5 million is to be allocated for next year and \$1.5 million for the following year as new funds for this purpose.

Mr O'Loughlin: Because this funding will come into effect next year, we are still formulating the guidelines for recommendation to the Minister, and the issue of the discount will be addressed in those guidelines.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It will not be a 2 per cent loan, will it?

Mr O'Loughlin: No.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is a cash flow loan.

Ms CICCARELLO: In relation to the Festival Centre Trust, I refer to the outputs operating statement, specifically to access to artistic product. What is the allocation to the Festival Centre Trust, what component goes towards supporting accommodation for the Adelaide Festival, and will this continue?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The allocation for the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust for 1998-99 is \$4.717 million, and the accommodation allocation is \$70 000.

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is being negotiated at present.

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

Mr O'Loughlin: The current tenancy arrangement expires on 30 June, so the matter must be resolved by then.

Ms KEY: I would like to read two questions into *Hansard* for the Minister to take on notice. I refer to Estimates Statement Budget Paper 3 (page 144)—access to artistic product. The Australia Council's report 'Taxation reform and the arts' prepared by KPMG outlines the implications for artists and arts organisations of a proposed goods and services tax. I will now quote from a media release issued by the Australia Council on 26 May 1998, which states:

'According to a report in this week's *Business Review Weekly* [18 May], economic modelling... indicates that the cultural and recreational services sector is one of the three sectors of the economy

likely to be worst hit by the introduction of a GST. KPMG tax partner, Stephen Frost, expects that a broad based consumption tax will increase admission prices to a range of cultural and recreational activities. The Government may wish to explore the option of increasing arts funding to help the arts community ease the GST impact,' he said.

The questions that I wish the Minister to take on notice in relation to that matter—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member should not make statements. She must put the questions or I will have to rule her out of order.

Ms KEY: First, has the Minister read or been briefed on the report? Has Arts SA analysed economic modelling that predicts that the cultural and recreational services sector is one of the three sectors of the economy likely to be worst hit by the introduction of a GST? Has any consideration been given to the impact that a GST will have on an already struggling South Australian arts industry? If a GST is imposed, will the Minister increase funding to the arts community to help it cope with increased costs?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! These are hypothetical questions. The honourable member is testing the tolerance of the Chair.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: We received a report last week. The analysis has been done. I can answer the question. I challenge the comment about the struggling arts sector: it has never been better funded.

The CHAIRMAN: We now come to the Office of the Status of Women.

Departmental Advisers:

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

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, would you like to make brief comment?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Budget for the Office for the Status of Women in 1998-99 is \$1.358 million. 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.

The Government has revitalised the women's program and strengthened the contribution women make in setting the agenda. There is closer collaboration between those three areas which is resulting in better outcomes for the women of South Australia. The focus, Women Investing in the Future, which is the overriding theme of activities in the women's area that I manage has produced significant results. An example is the series of check lists which have been developed by the Women's Advisory Council to inform women about financial issues. The check list, which will address issues such as signing a guarantee, obtaining of finance and signing of a contract, will in fact be launched by the Premier tomorrow. Other checklists will be developed in consultation with women through focus groups and a phone-in and they will be distributed through the Women's Information Service in various languages.

The Women's Information Service has relocated to a shopfront in the Station Arcade. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in the use of the service and provided opportunities for more women to access information and information technology. An Internet program enables women to learn basic computer skills and to access the Internet. Staff are rostered for direct customer service in the shopfront and

are co-located with the Office for the Status of Women to update the information system.

For the third time, an annual women's statement will be tabled in the spring session of Parliament. This statement gives the women of South Australia an account of departmental programs and projects which affect women. The last statement highlighted work across Government agencies and between the public and private sectors and highlighted many best practices in the delivery of services to women.

The office aims to identify women who can make a strong contribution to business, Government and the wider community on Government boards and committees and through the private sector. The office is providing a series of networking opportunities for women and I am, in turn, working with the office to increase representation of women on Government boards and committees.

An executive search is undertaken by the Office for the Status of Women which complements the register. A handbook outlining roles and responsibilities of board members is being finalised at the present time. We are working well across the portfolio in relation to vacation care programs and family and workplace responsibilities and there may be an opportunity to highlight that work during questioning.

We are also working with the Adelaide City Council, the University of Adelaide and TransAdelaide to give women the opportunity to have more say about their use of the city. Views of women are being sought through focus groups and telephone surveys on a regular basis about a range of financial issues. Domestic violence is another area which will be a focus of activity in the coming year, plus this issue of women, the built environment and planning issues.

We have revitalised the women's portfolio and I am pleased with the Women's Information Service, the restructure and the relocation which is providing information to more women throughout the community no matter their geographical location or background or age, and access to information is absolutely critical to any decision making in the world today.

Ms KEY: My first three questions refer to the Portfolio Statements, page 6.66. In the 1998-99 budget, reference is made to a number of portfolios impacting on women. The portfolios mentioned are industry, trade and tourism; human services; transport, urban planning and the arts; education and training; employment; and primary industries and resources. Will the Minister cite other strategies and initiatives in relation to women undertaken under other portfolio areas? In days gone by we had a women's budget, which was helpful in identifying—and hopefully was helpful for departments in identifying—where departments and programs were directing resources to women. Will the Minister consider reintroducing that initiative?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: No, the Government does not plan to reintroduce the old women's budget, which simply looked at where departments were spending sums of money. Today in terms of the annual women's statement presented to Parliament we are looking at the outputs of expenditure outcomes, which is directly relevant to the program initiative. We are looking at best practice. We are not putting down everything the department may wish to have presented. We are seeking in a sense a more challenging exercise and only putting in the best, so we provide some incentive for other agencies as to why they are not presented in this statement—because their practices are not sufficient for inclusion.

This is the way in which Governments across Australia are now presenting their work on behalf of women. Ms O'Loughlin may wish to comment on that. I can certainly find from each Government agency some of the specific outcomes that the honourable member has sought in terms of the portfolio areas. Certainly, they are highlighted as achievements in the women's statement. The last one was last October. We expect the next one, because of the sitting arrangements, to be in November, and work is being undertaken by the Office of the Status of Women with those agencies at the moment.

Ms O'Loughlin: Generally, women's budgets are not being produced any more federally or in the other States.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: That is irrespective of the persuasion of the Government.

Ms O'Loughlin: We are endeavouring to highlight best practice so that we can look at collaboration across agencies and across Government and the private and community sectors to achieve better outcomes with the same amount of money.

Ms KEY: I am interested to know, particularly in my shadow portfolio areas, what the strategies and initiatives are, as I cannot find them. I would be reassured by the Minister's offering to highlight some of the other portfolio areas: that would be helpful.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will do that.

Ms KEY: I refer to the Portfolio Statements, page 6.66, regarding the Women's Advisory Council. What was the cost of the Women's Advisory Council for 1997-98 and what was the estimate for 1998-99? Have the targets for the past 12 months been achieved and has community consultation been undertaken by the council with country and metropolitan South Australian women and, if so, what has it cost, especially in the south?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The \$100 000 is the expenditure for the Women's Advisory Council in this budget year and next financial year. You wanted to know the range of projects?

Ms KEY: I was looking at the consultation aspect of what the Women's Advisory Council has been doing and the cost of that.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The cost is in the overall budget figure. In the development of financial information and the range of checklists that will be developed, the Women's Advisory Council consulted widely (and I will gain the specifics on that) to identify the issue that it should be focusing on, with the assistance of the Office of the Status of Women. Having identified the issue, it has consulted widely through phone-ins and surveys, to identify the range of issues in that financial information package to be presented. In addition, this weekend a phone-in will be conducted which will examine not so much what women earn but more particularly how they use that money and provide themselves financial security and contracts and a whole range of matters. We are seeking the information to help them and ultimately to help us provide better information not only through the Women's Information Service but also through the financial institutions so that they can distribute and use the information that we have gathered.

Mrs PENFOLD: I refer to access to information, reference: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2. What initiatives are in place to assist rural and remote women in South Australia to have access to information regarding issues that may affect their lives?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Women's Information Service applied for and was successful in receiving funds through the Federal Government for the Rural Internet Access program. Ms O'Loughlin may wish to elaborate on that.

Ms O'Loughlin: The Federal Government has given some money to enable women to access information technology. A pilot project is already in place in the Mallee, and the rest of the projects will be established this year.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: One in the electorate of Flinders?

Ms O'Loughlin: Yes; on the peninsula in any case. There is a remote one as well, where we use a laptop. It has been in conjunction with women's groups in the areas. The one in the Mallee has been very successful, and the others will be starting in the near future, because of the success of that one.

Ms THOMPSON: I refer to Portfolio Statements page 6.66 and further to the report entitled 'Once victim, always victim' by Katherine Littler as part of the parliamentary internship program. Will the Minister support legislation to protect the confidential counselling records of sexual assault victims in South Australia?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Are you referring to the Women's Statement last year or the budget this year?

Ms THOMPSON: It was the Women's Statement; it arises from page 6.66, but you probably know the answer without reference to the papers.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: This issue has been pursued by the Attorney. It is to be brought to the Cabinet table by the Attorney, but he has not yet done so. It has been earnestly sought through legal sectors and the women's movement throughout Australia, and I think the proposal has merit.

Ms THOMPSON: I refer to Portfolio Statements page 6.66, and note that one of the Government's goals to advance the status of women is to promote the relocated Women's Information Service answer shop to a broader customer base. What do the figures show about the impact on patronage of the Women's Information Service since its relocation to a shopfront location?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It is certainly higher than even our high expectations. The move to new and easily accessible premises has resulted in an almost 1 000 per cent increase in the walk-in patronage, which is fantastic—and this was our goal in having a shopfront. It was quite a bold initiative, and I remember Ms O'Loughlin, the staff and the volunteers at the centre all being a bit nervous—first, at being in a fish bowl and thinking that they were being observed; and, secondly, really worried about whether anyone at all would come. It was quiet for a little while, but now it is just fantastic, and I love walking by, or even entering and seeing the range of people and learning of their background. There is a 93 year old woman, who comes in by train, who is learning the computer: she is just sensational. It is fantastic to see the range and age of people coming in for the first time and not being intimidated, and learning and thinking that it is all much easier now that they are communicating. They are learning, they are communicating with their children and grandchildren and also with people from a whole range of cultural backgrounds, which is exciting.

Ms CICCARELLO: My question also relates to Portfolio Statements, page 6.66, and I refer to child care. I understand that Transport SA has work-based child care. How many other State Government agencies have work-based child care; what is the cost associated with work-based child care; how many public sector employees are involved in the program;

and are there any strategies in place to further encourage more work-based child care?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: The Transport SA vacation care child-care program was established about 18 months ago. It arose from a study on family and the workplace. It is a user pays service. There were some establishment costs which, if they have not been fully recouped now, I understand they will be by the July school holidays. It has been very successful for the children, but particularly for the parents. I have been really keen to push for this vacation care program—only knowing my own sister's experience, and I cite the fact that four terms may be fine for teachers and students, but for parents it is really very difficult to manage. No sooner has one holiday period finished than one seems to be planning for how to address the next.

The vacation care program has seen absenteeism drop quite dramatically within Transport SA. It has also engendered really good, positive feelings between workplace and management, in that this project was supported at a time of reform and rationalisation, and families and kids were seen as valuable, despite all the other matters that we were seeking to tackle.

The second floor of Roma Mitchell House, which has an outdoor area, will be the base for the second program. A total of 12 children between the ages five and 12 will be accommodated for the first time for the July school holidays, and we are pleased with that response. The Premier's statement on child care the other day (which I was involved in formulating) also indicates that we are keen to see this vacation care initiative move across other Government agencies. I know that the Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism, the Minister for Government Enterprises and the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training will be the next Ministers with whom we will be working.

Mr WILLIAMS: My question is supplementary to the answer given to the member for Flinders. The Minister referred to Commonwealth funding to provide information services to rural women. Did that funding come from the Regional Telecommunication Infrastructure Fund resulting from the one-third sale of Telstra? How much was applied to that function?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: It certainly came from that fund and the sum is \$50 000.

Ms CICCARELLO: My question relates to Portfolio Statements 6.6. I note the following comment in the 1997 Women's Statement:

As at June 1997 women held 18.5 per cent of the executive level positions in the public sector work force. The rest are held by men.

What was the figure for 1995 and 1996 and what is the estimate for 1998? What programs are available to support women seeking promotional opportunities into the executive stream, and are executive level women overly represented in particular agencies, or is there an even spread?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will have to take that question on notice and get more information.

Ms CICCARELLO: As to my next question, I have had an answer through the members for Flinders and MacKillop relating to the Internet and it has been stated that \$50 000 has been allocated for the technology.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I refer generally to volume 2. I am interested in non English-speaking services for women and am interested to know what the service provides for women of non English-speaking backgrounds. Is there

coordination with the Office of Multicultural and International Affairs?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes. There is cooperation. I mentioned earlier the new financial check list to be launched tomorrow by the Premier. It will be translated into a variety of other languages. At the Women's Information Service we have a staff member who is using communication technologies and has access to the telephone interpreter service. This enables a woman's inquiry to be dealt with immediately in her first language, and that is important. We have a staff member who was seconded for 12 months to the Domestic Violence Support Unit to undertake a project producing a series of audio CDs for radio announcements in 13 languages, along with written materials in 12 languages about domestic violence, which is a huge issue for the community at large to address.

In addition, a large number of women who book in for the Women's Internet Access Program are from a non English-speaking background. For several of these women it is their only method of contact with family and the countries from which they have escaped as refugees. That was an interesting element of the Internet access project which I had not appreciated and which I think other members of staff and volunteers had not appreciated. One of the big issues for non English-speaking people is the question of dialect. In various languages dialects are often difficult. Many refugees and others may speak a language but do not read or write, and that is always another issue for us in trying to communicate.

Ms KEY: My last question relates to the Working Women's Centre. As a former worker there, I am interested to know the centre's budget allocation for this financial year compared to last year. Secondly, I understand that the Working Women's Centre is probably about to join the shop front service across the road. Can the Minister give me some details about future funding and the services we expect the Working Women's Centre to provide?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I will have to provide at a later date the budget figure which is provided by the Department of Industry and Trade. The centre has a new Director, Ms Sandra Dann, following the resignation of Ms Leena Sudano, who has begun full-time law studies at Flinders University. The centre has just secured a five-year lease on the first floor of the Station Arcade in Hindley Street. This is a much more central location. I think that it will be much more effective and, if it has anywhere near the success enjoyed by the Answer Shop of the Women's Information Service, this will be of enormous value to women generally, and certainly an asset to the Government in terms of locating the centre at that site.

It will be working closely with the Women's Information Service and the Office for the Status of Women. That is an advantage also when one sees how well we work with the Women's Advisory Council, the Women's Information Service and the Office for the Status of Women. Ms Dann will be addressing the Women's Advisory Council at its meeting this coming Friday regarding issues relating to working women. That is an area in which the Women's Advisory Council is keen to become more involved in the future.

Ms KEY: Will you advise me of the centre's allocation?

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: Yes, I will get that figure. I do not have it with me.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister will recall that we are currently still considering the Department of Transport budget. I will ask a brief question relating to an earlier

question I asked. Can the Minister give an assurance that those people who administer the Road Traffic Act will not use it to the detriment of South Australian business, particularly the rural industry, in the way in which it is currently being administered because they are penalising people and making it difficult to do business? I hope the Minister will ensure that her officers take that into consideration.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: I very much hope, Mr Chairman, that the one example that you highlighted today is an isolated one. I think that an extraordinary number of able officers administer the Act with integrity. I would not

wish even one example, or a number of examples, which would still be isolated examples in terms of the nature and extent of the work that the officers undertake on a daily basis. Certainly I am keen to work through those examples that you can provide me.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.58 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 18 June at 11 a.m.