

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY****Friday 19 June 1998****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chairman:**

Mr I.H. Venning

**Members:**

Mr R.J. McEwen  
 Mr M.L.J. Hamilton-Smith  
 Mr K. Hanna  
 Mrs E.M. Penfold  
 Mr J.J. Snelling  
 Ms P.L. White

*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*


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Department of Education, Training and Employment,  
 \$1 309 119 000  
 Administered Items for Department of Education, Training  
 and Employment, \$260 285 000

**Witness:**

The Hon. M.R. Buckby, Minister for Education,  
 Children's Services and Training.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr D. Ralph, Chief Executive Officer.  
 Mr B.W. Treloar, Director, Corporate Services.  
 Mr K.G. Richardson, Director, Executive Services.  
 Ms L.C. Mincham, Acting Senior Policy Officer.  
 Ms D. Davis, Executive Director, Children's Services.  
 Ms Rene Bos, Assistant Director, Finance.

**The CHAIRMAN:** A relatively informal procedure is traditionally adopted. There is no need for members to stand to ask or answer questions. The Committee will determine the approximate time for consideration of proposed payments to facilitate the changeover of departmental advisers. Changes to the composition of the Committee will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure that they have provided the Chair with a completed request to be discharged form.

If the Minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be in a form suitable for insertion in *Hansard* and two copies submitted no later than Friday 11 July 1998 to the Clerk of the House of Assembly. I propose to allow the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make opening statements, if they desire, of approximately 10 minutes but no longer than 15 minutes. There will be a flexible approach in giving the call and asking questions based on three questions per member. Members may also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning, but supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule. Statements pre-empting a question are allowed, but they must be short—45 seconds will be acceptable.

Subject to the convenience of the Committee, a member who is outside the Committee and who desires to ask a question will be permitted to do so once the line of question-

ing on an item has been exhausted by the Committee. An indication to the Chair in advance from the member outside the Committee wishing to ask a question is necessary.

Questions must be based on lines of expenditure as revealed in the Estimates Statement on page 15. Reference may be made to other documents, including Portfolio Statements (pages 1.16 to 1.53). Questions not asked at the end of the day may be placed on the next sitting day's House of Assembly Notice Paper.

I remind the Minister that there is no formal facility for the tabling of documents before the Committee. However, documents can be supplied to the Chair for distribution to the Committee. The insertion of material in *Hansard* is permitted on the same basis as applies in the House of Assembly; that is, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the Minister, not to the Minister's advisers. The Minister may refer questions to his advisers.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to pages 165 to 168 and 173 and 174 of the Estimates Statement and Volume 2 Part 8 of the Portfolio Statements. Does the Minister wish to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Yes, Mr Chairman. At the outset I would like to inform the Committee that my comments will relate to education, children's services and training and that my ministerial colleague the Hon. Joan Hall will cover matters relating to employment and youth later in the day.

Since commencing as Minister I have made it my objective to ensure that all young South Australians are provided with educational opportunities that will give them the best start in life. I believe that South Australia's long-term prosperity and quality of life is critically dependent upon achieving excellence through education. We will achieve that excellence by focussing on the needs of young people and ensuring that linkages between care, education, and vocational and training programs are continually improved to prepare young people for the life and world of work.

A new DEET structure was implemented after the 1997 election. The new department is called the Department for Education, Training and Employment which embraces all aspects of pre-school care and services, education, training, employment and youth affairs in one fully integrated structure. It provides unique opportunities to deliver a better quality and better targeted range of programs that were not available before.

From the perspective of Government, the Department for Education, Training and Employment provides a more intensive focus for policy advice and for the potential for greater coordination across a wide range of functions. Very importantly, it brings together under one portfolio all of the key elements required to facilitate life-long learning and training. It will develop further the linkages between secondary school, tertiary education and industry to address the needs of young people in employment.

I have a strong commitment to the importance of early years of learning which set the foundations for the future of children. Parents are children's first teachers, and in recognition of this important role I have allocated a further \$100 000 to launch a parenting strategy across the State entitled, 'Growing and Learning in the Family'.

We have excellent teachers in our department. I have met many of them as I have visited many schools in the city and many in the country and in areas such as Eyre Peninsula, the

Mid North and the South-East. As I move around our pre-schools, schools and institutes of TAFE I am impressed by the commitment of the staff and the work that they are doing in many fields of endeavour.

Teaching is a complex and important role. Parents entrust teachers with the care of their children so we need to ensure that our teachers are well qualified, well supported and respected in their complex role. I acknowledge their outstanding work and thank them for their commitment to ensuring our State is well placed with educated and skilled people for the future.

I turn now to the capital works program in the 1998-99 budget. Despite budget restraints, we have continued our capital works program for 1998-99 to include redevelopment and upgrades of a number of educational facilities. The Kadina campus of the Spencer Institute of TAFE will be rebuilt on the Kadina Memorial High School site at a cost of \$5.285 million to provide a new integrated education campus. This project will expand the potential for development of new industries on Yorke Peninsula in intensive agriculture, aquaculture, tourism and aged care and will make the most of opportunities for educational cooperation and the sharing of facilities between schools and institutes of TAFE.

The establishment of the Education Development Centre at Hindmarsh will provide state-of-the-art training facilities and professional resources for South Australian teachers and students. It will be sited at Port Road—gateway to the city in one of Adelaide's most exciting and rapidly growing precincts. The centre will be a unique high technology educational facility, which will develop teaching materials, education and technology in a manner that is consistent with world's best practice. The centre will be more than just an extension of facilities previously offered at The Orphanage Teachers' Centre and will clearly enhance the opportunities for professional development for teachers.

Other examples of capital works to be undertaken in this budget include: a \$3 million refurbishment of the Adelaide High School; a \$3.6 million stage 2 of the William Light R to 12 school; a \$1.2 million redevelopment of Amata Anangu School; \$800 000 for Oak Valley School; a \$1.5 development at Clare High School; a \$2.75 million redevelopment and consolidation of Jamestown Primary and High Schools; the relocation of Kent Town Preschool at cost of \$700 000; the upgrading of Salisbury North Primary School at a cost of \$317 000; and, a \$500 000 upgrade of Woodville Special School.

Two other large projects are shortly due to commence: the new facility for the Centre for Performing Arts—a part of the Adelaide Institute of TAFE—at a cost of around \$26 million; and, the Urrbrae joint development project at around \$17 million, which is an excellent example of cooperative development involving the school and tertiary sectors.

Vocational education is a priority of this Government. Hand in hand with these initiatives that I have announced is the Government's continuing recognition of vocational education as a major priority. Education is for all students, including those who want real connections between school and work and who want to know that their qualifications will have credence in the marketplace. For example, I was particularly impressed on a recent visit to Naracoorte with a viticulture training centre at the high school which is providing state-of-the-art training for high school students and establishing strong links with local industry.

This Government's commitment to training has seen a growth of 200 per cent in student involvement in vocational

courses over the past two years. Since 1996 numbers have grown from 1 200 to 4 000 students and the budget will provide for further increases to 7 000 by the end of this year.

The highly successful Ready, Set, Go vocational education training program continues with \$4.2 million committed for 1998-99. This program will continue to strengthen links with industry and provide students with work placements and career counselling. Industry leaders—for example, BRL Hardy's involvement in the Naracoorte High School vineyard project—and schools recognise students involved in these programs as having state-of-the-art skills and essential work-related knowledge. In discussing with the Manager of BRL Hardy the Naracoorte viticulture project, he said that young people who have undertaken that course will get a job extremely easily within the viticulture and wine industries.

VET on line is important in isolated areas. The Government is acutely aware of the need to help young people in isolated areas and has therefore earmarked \$3.5 million for the provision of on-line delivery of vocational education and training. This flexible delivery will give students in communities and regional centres throughout South Australia access via the Internet to vocational education and training programs.

I turn now to child-care initiatives. I am particularly pleased about the establishment of 73 new child-care places in integrated services at Clare, Renmark and Two Wells, and the establishment of 40 child-care places in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands. The number of family day care providers will be increased by 40 in rural communities. The Premier's recent announcement of a further \$1 million is clear acknowledgment of our commitment to this area. This is not a bandaïd solution. While grants will be once off, they will be given to those centres which can demonstrate that they have long-term viability. This will involve centres in restructuring and reviewing their processes of management and focus services in lower socioeconomic areas.

The DECStech 2001 computer project has been received extremely well within our school community. We have a strong commitment to achieving the goal of one computer for every five students by the year 2001, and this year's allocation of \$15 million under that program will continue. Schools will receive high quality digital communication connections and a significantly improved Internet service as part of this program at a cost of \$1.5 million. A further \$4 million will be spent on the provision of subsidised computers to schools and additional significant funds will be spent on establishing school-based computer networks.

The Premier recently announced the Education Industry Development Council. The recognition of the vital part that education plays in our export income is reflected in the establishment of the Education Industry Development Council. A total of \$1.5 million per annum for up to three years has been committed to support its establishment with the aim of attracting more fee-paying students to Adelaide. It is estimated that each fee-paying student choosing to study in Adelaide will inject approximately \$30 000 per year into the local economy.

Let me turn briefly to local management in schools. As I have been visiting schools, a number of principals and council chairpersons have urged me to enable them to take on more local management practices. I am fully aware that creative people want to have greater flexibility in the management of funds in order to help the development of their schools. I am also aware of the significant savings to be

made—savings which can be real incentives for schools. I am establishing a working party to report to me on these matters.

The Government has committed over a quarter of its budget outlays to education, reflecting a strong commitment to ensuring that South Australians have access to quality education and training, providing them with skills and learning they desire and, in doing so, ensure the future economic and social prosperity of this State. I have a statistical summary which I now table, with your agreement, for it to be included in the 1998-99 estimates.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will distribute it amongst the Committee.

**Ms WHITE:** What is it?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** It contains purely statistical papers. It has been the normal practice of the previous Education Minister to distribute this information.

**Ms WHITE:** What is it?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** It is a statistical summary of education enrolments, etc., in South Australia. I will just read out the table of contents:

- Enrolments—Government schools;
- Enrolments—Non-government schools;
- School size—Government schools;
- Apparent retention rates—Government schools compared to national average;
- Student teacher ratios—Government schools compared to other States;
- School Card approvals;
- Children's services in South Australia;
- Preschool enrolments and attendances;
- Funded preschools;
- Licensed child care places;
- Family day care places;
- Children registered with family day care and/or respite care;
- Out of school hours care and vacation care places;
- ANTA Scope annual curriculum hours;
- Student activity trends & projections (VET);
- Projected comparative changes in student activity (VET);
- Comment on table featured on page 16.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As the papers this year are different from normal, I am sure members will find that information valuable.

**Ms WHITE:** Mr Chairman, you referred to an agreed timetable for today's proceedings; the Opposition does not agree to the timetable proposed by the Minister. We had requested that employment be given a higher priority, given that this State now leads the nation in the unemployment rate. I see that the Employment Minister is not here, which does not enable us to ask questions of her. I want to make the point that we did not agree to the timetable, and the Minister is aware of that.

I turn to the issue of education. The 1998-99 budget is the biggest slash and burn on education ever seen in South Australia. This year's cuts are much bigger than those in 1994, after the Liberal Government first came to office, and much bigger than the Minister and the Treasurer would have us believe. In fact, the statements made by the Government about the education budget raise a serious question of credibility. There are now serious doubts about whether the Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training has any vision for the future of education in this State apart from closing schools and slashing teacher numbers, and there is even more doubt about the Minister's standing in Cabinet. We now have an established budget pattern under the Liberal Government of three years of cuts followed by a pork barrel in the election year and then a bundle of broken election promises.

While retention rates plummet as fewer students complete year 12 and our unemployment rate leads the nation, the Minister's budget is based on closing schools; cutting teachers, even though he knows that we are facing an imminent chronic shortage of teachers; cutting funds for curriculum; slashing funds for TAFE; and forcing schools to increase their fees. In 1994 the cut to recurrent expenditure was \$22 million, building to \$56 million over three years in real terms. Members will recall, as will most of the public of South Australia, how four years of Liberal Government have meant bigger class sizes, 422 fewer teachers and 287 school services officer positions cut over two years. This year the Treasurer revealed a direct cut to the recurrent budget of \$29.8 million. What the Treasurer did not say and the Minister did not announce was that, with cost pressures, the real budget cut this year is \$48.6 million. The Minister also did not announce that in three years the cut will be \$69 million.

If this was the whole truth it would be bad enough, but it is not. While the Government's glossy pamphlets boasted how fair the budget was, they left out the fact that total education spending, including capital, will actually fall by \$97 million this year—that is, if one adds the cuts to recurrent spending and to capital works spending. These cuts are unprecedented and, while the Government has used teachers' salaries to justify increases in taxation totalling \$250 million a year, the education budget has been stripped. The teachers have been made the scapegoats. This year, due to the changeover to accrual accounting and changes to the format of the budget, all program details have been deleted. Accrual accounting is supposed to be about greater transparency; this Government has used the new format as an excuse for secrecy. These changes to the format have also been compounded by significant changes to administrative arrangements and the regrouping of agencies following the creation last year of the 10 super departments.

While we now have an impressive array of operating statements, financial statements and cash flows, all important for managing our financial affairs, agreed, we can no longer tell how much we are spending on preschool education or remedial services for children with disabilities. Last year the budget papers included details of expenditure and performance based but compared with the previous year over 13 programs. This year the program information is reduced to just seven lines described as 'outputs purchased by the State Government', and perhaps because of this the Minister thought he could get away with being less than frank about the cuts that are being planned.

The second matter of concern to me is that in the new Estimates Statement (Budget Paper 3) the appropriation figures, the operating statement and the statement of financial position are now shown as a comparison with last year's actual expenditure rather than what was budgeted for last year. Comparison is not made with last year's budget. This means that members in future years will not be able to compare budget changes year on year or make any judgments about over expenditures or under expenditures with the transparency that should be included in the budget papers. Perhaps this is not so surprising given the under-spending on capital works that we have seen right across the budget over the terms of the last Liberal Government. There is no way of telling whether programs have been wound down or over-spent looking at the budget papers.

The third issue relates to the new Portfolio Statements. The so-called key performance indicators are totally inad-

equate to monitor the outcomes of our education system or, for that matter, any other budget with an expenditure of \$1.6 billion. During briefings before the budget the Under Treasurer and the senior officials assured the Opposition that the transfer to accrual accounting would be totally transparent. The opposite is true: it is rather opaque, would you not say? The Parliament is no longer being provided with expenditure details previously available. The change to accrual accounting may be a wonderful thing for accountants but it has short changed everyone else, not only the Opposition, not only the parliamentary members but also the public of South Australia.

The present format does not satisfy the Parliament, community groups or the work of this committee. Departments still run programs; that is their core business. I believe that the Minister should ensure in future years that this Committee is given proper information with programs to enable it to do its work most effectively.

Mr Chairman, the grouping of education and TAFE has also effectively cut in half the Committee's time to examine these areas this year. I hope that the shorter time available to the Committee is reflected by a reduction in the number and the length of the dorothea dixers coming from the opposite benches.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Can I just address the discussion about this timetable? I have in front of me the details of the timetable, which I thought was agreed. I realise that the Minister has both lines and it really is open go, but if the other Minister is not here it is a bit pointless. If there is any difficulty with the timetable I suggest that we work it out over morning tea.

**Ms WHITE:** I agree that if the Minister is not here it is a bit pointless. I intend to start by directing questions that affect all budget lines.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Minister can take some of those questions and I am sure that we can work it out later on.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The member for Taylor may want to deal with all budget lines. However, some of the staff involved are not here, so we may have to provide some answers later. I do not have an initial answer for her, because specialist staff are not here. We thought the best and most sensible way of moving through the budget was to take Children's Services first, then SSABSA and continue with the program as it is laid out. That will give us a structured way to move through the budget, thereby allowing questions as we move through the different areas. That will mean that we do not have departmental staff tied up here, waiting around for a question to be asked later in the day. My concern is that those staff have other work to do within the department, and obviously waiting around here for a question that may or may not be asked is not the best use of their time. That is why the structure has been put in place.

**Ms WHITE:** It might help the Minister to know that I have no doubt that most of my questions will be able to be answered by the Minister without any assistance from his staff.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will be flexible, and we will work our way through it.

**Ms WHITE:** I am concerned about the information that is not contained in the budget papers that have been provided to the Committee. Will the Minister table estimates of expenditure for 1998-99 under the same program headings as those of last year's budget, including comparisons to last year's budget; if not, why not, because I have no doubt that the Minister has that information?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** All States in Australia are changing over to accrual accounting. The reason for that is that the previous accounting system was a cash flow system that did not show the full assets and liabilities, and the position of each department and of the State budget as a whole. As a result of that, for one year—that is, this year—a direct comparison will not be able to be made. All departments and Governments recognise that, because of this transitional year of moving over to accrual accounting from cash accounting, the figures will not quite align. I agree with the member for Taylor: it is more difficult to make a comparison. However, in following years that direct comparison will be possible, so it will become easier for the Opposition to look at exactly what was spent in the previous year and what is estimated for the following year.

We cannot go back and supply more figures so that we can compare this budget exactly with that of last year, because we have used a different system of accounting. As well as that, that budget has already been passed, and to rework all the figures to align with a previous budget would take a lot of time of departmental staff. It is not feasible to do that. I agree that it will be more difficult to compare figures this year, but this is the changeover year. I will be as open as possible with the honourable member and with the Opposition when providing information.

**Ms WHITE:** I really cannot let that pass. That was rot, Minister. You know that you have to run programs, and you know what you spent on them last year and what you budgeted for them. You have a budget strategy within your department, so you know what you will spend this year. The Minister knows what strategy he has in place for this budget. For the Minister to tell me that it is not possible to get those figures is coming pretty close to a cover up. Other Ministers in these Estimates Committees have indicated that they will provide exactly the information I am seeking. Why is the Minister refusing to table that information? He has it available; why will he not table it?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I think the honourable member may be unaware of the change that has taken place between cash accounting and accrual accounting. Accrual accounting changes the system to one of outcomes rather than specific dollars spent. I did not say that it would be impossible to provide that information but that there would be a great deal of difficulty because of the time that would be needed by the department for that purpose. As the honourable member says, there are programs such as DECStech 2001 on which we know we will spend \$15 million again this year. Those programs have been openly listed. All schools are aware and have been advised of the funding they will receive for back to school grants and those sorts of programs, but to individually target each program would take a lot of time. I imagine that these programs will be raised in questions by the honourable member, and hopefully I will be able to provide answers for her.

**Ms WHITE:** The Minister is refusing to provide information which he obviously has. In order to prepare this budget, he had to look at the programs. He has made cuts in this budget: he would have had to look at where those cuts would come from. I simply ask him to provide that information to the Committee, but he refuses. Other Ministers have promised to provide that information. I understand that the cuts to the education budget are significant. I know that the Minister can provide that information, because he has it. So, I ask him to do so.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** We can provide the actual expenditure on programs for 1997-98 but, as I have again been advised, as the 1998-99 estimates are in terms of outcomes, the figures are different and therefore are not comparable to 1997-98. I do not know whether the honourable member understands the process of accrual accounting, but that is the difference between accrual accounting and cash flow accounting.

**Ms WHITE:** The Minister is refusing to provide information which the public of South Australia want to be given.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The Chair rules that the honourable member must ask her third question.

**Ms WHITE:** Given the requirement to renegotiate your department's enterprise agreement before December this year, will the Minister confirm that the 1998-99 budget includes a cut of 1 per cent or \$11 million in funding for salaries?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The final 1 per cent of the enterprise agreement is due to be paid in December 1998. However, it is also a term of that 1996 agreement that that final 1 per cent may be renegotiated within the new enterprise agreement, which will commence on 1 July. Obviously, we will commence discussions with the union on 1 July. The 1996 enterprise agreement provides for the payment of that 1 per cent in December, but it also allows for renegotiation.

**Ms WHITE:** Again, the Minister has avoided answering my question. The Treasurer has announced a \$29.8 million cut in this budget that we are examining. My information is that \$11 million of that will come from a 1 per cent cut in salaries. Does the Minister deny that funding for salaries has been cut by \$11 million in this budget, and how can he reconcile that with the Treasurer's statement that the Government will cut funding for 90 to 100 teachers, or does the Government intend to cut more positions?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I will outline for the honourable member how we arrive at the figure of \$29.8 million. First, \$13.7 million will come from efficiency and productivity measures such as continuation of conversion to outcome cleaning contracts; secondly, implementation of a Government procurement strategy; thirdly, administrative efficiencies for the formation of a new department; and, fourthly, further improvements in the efficiency of service delivery. It is estimated that \$2 million will be achieved by the continuation of the existing policy of review and restructure of schools in consultation with the community, which may involve school closures, amalgamations or consolidations to ensure that curriculum opportunities are optimised and assets are managed efficiently.

We estimate a reduction in teacher numbers by 90 to 100 from the beginning of 1999. This will amount to a saving of \$3 million. The non-Government school sector will also take the same percentage cut as has been allocated to the Government school sector. In 1998-99, that will amount to \$1.2 million, and \$6.4 million will come from maintaining goods and service grants and subsidies at existing levels. The final \$3.5 million comes from TAFE SA efficiency and productivity savings. I think the honourable member will find that that totals \$29.8 million.

**Ms WHITE:** Again, the Minister has avoided—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member cannot keep asking the same question.

**Ms WHITE:** But the Minister has avoided answering my question directly. Does that \$29.8 million include an \$11 million saving from a 1 per cent cut in funding for

salaries? The Opposition has a leaked document which says that it does.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I have just read out where the \$29.8 million will come from.

**Ms WHITE:** Yes, I know, Minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The enterprise agreement renegotiations will commence on 1 July. That 1 per cent payment in December, to which the member for Adelaide consistently refers, is likely to be paid, as the honourable member knows, but the wording in the enterprise agreement is that it is available for negotiation.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** My question relates to Commonwealth specific purpose payments for child care (Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.22). What assistance is the Department for Education, Training and Employment giving to child care in South Australia?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** South Australia has a strong history of commitment to children's services. Under successive Commonwealth-State child care agreements, the South Australian Government has provided a capital subsidy of \$10 000 per place compared with \$5 000 per place from the Commonwealth for the 26 new child care centres established since 1993. An amount of \$1.17 million was spent to develop and implement Kids Biz, the child-care business initiative designed to support the efficiency, management and administration of community based child-care centres.

The State provides recurrent funding to out-of-school hours care and vacation care services, and the State licences and regulates centre based care. The Premier's \$1 million rescue package for community based child care and outside school hours care services is new funding for the 1998-99 financial year. The package will provide grants to services in low income areas or to those services which are in danger of closing. The new funding has been provided in recognition of the difficulties currently faced by long day care and outside school hours care services as a result of Commonwealth budget changes, including the withdrawal of operational subsidy funding.

District staff provide support and advice to child-care centres as an advisory service is provided on request to private operators wishing to establish child-care services. The department meets regularly with the Child Care Centre Industry Reference Group to discuss key issues in the sector. A financial management package has been developed for more than 180 out of school hours care services which will be released shortly.

The Government has a commitment to families living in rural communities through funding of integrated child-care and preschool services in country areas. Ongoing support and training is provided for out of school hours care management committees, and staff policies and financial management packages are designed to boost the management and administrative competence of out of school hours programs.

Advocacy has been undertaken by the South Australian Government on behalf of the SA child-care providers and families via joint proposals to the Commonwealth and a key role for the department is providing information to parents. Some 40 000 calls each year on children's service matters are handled in the State office of the Department of Children's Services. Coordinators provide support and advice at the district level, and significant developments have occurred in curriculum support and early learning which are a first in Australia.

Curriculum documents for the child-care sector have been developed from zero to three years and three to five years, as well as the ECLPS (Early Childhood Literacy Package). In-service training for the child-care sector is provided, and the department sponsors family day care in South Australia supporting a Statewide network of some 2 000 approved care providers.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.13. Can the Minister advise what the future is of the TAFE child-care centre at Nuriootpa?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** This arose earlier in the year when I met a delegation of people from Nuriootpa—right in the heart of your electorate, Sir. It had come to the attention of the Chief Executive that that centre was losing some \$30 000 a year and that, in fact, only one student's child was being cared for in that TAFE centre.

We have had ongoing discussions with the people representing the centre. It was due to cease operation as at 30 June. I have approved that funding continue for the month of July while negotiations are continuing between the parents and TAFE staff to work out how best we can provide a service there but as a viable proposition.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.4. Can the Minister advise what is being done to maintain the continuity of care for families using the Pennington child-care centre following its closure, and what is the current situation in regard to the Keith Sheridan child-care centre?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** This issue was raised in the Lower House by a question from the local member. The Pennington centre has been managed by the Port Adelaide Central Mission for over 12 months. The Central Mission took over the centre, which was struggling to maintain viability, from a parent-based management committee. It combined the operations of the Pennington centre with its own child-care centre in Dale Street, Port Adelaide.

Port Adelaide Central Mission has been faced with a downward trend in utilisation since taking over the centre in spite of reducing the maximum weekly fee from \$180 to \$165 per week. Utilisation has continued to fall by an average of 10 places from 30 to 20, a loss of 33 per cent in space over the past 12 months. A fall in utilisation combined with the withdrawal of the Commonwealth operational subsidy has meant that the Port Adelaide Central Mission can no longer afford to operate the Pennington centre. At a parent meeting on 9 June this year, it was agreed to accept closure of the centre after it became clear that more families would leave the centre if the staff team was restructured again. The possible departure of these families would drop utilisation from 20 places to 14 places. It is not possible for this centre to operate viably with an average of 14 children in care.

Port Adelaide Central Mission has spoken with the department about the availability of restructuring funds following the Premier's announcement of \$1 million for this purpose. The mission believes that the service would need extra ongoing funding to reduce fees to a level that families in that community could afford. The new restructuring fund is designed to meet one-off restructuring costs. It is not able to provide ongoing support. This is a Commonwealth responsibility. The State has consistently lobbied the Commonwealth to extend the disadvantaged area subsidy to low income communities in metropolitan areas, but the Commonwealth has argued that it lacks funds to extend the disadvantaged area subsidy beyond the urban and rural fringe communities that currently receive benefit from that support.

Parents affected by the closure will be offered alternative care at the Port Adelaide centre or nearby centres. Vacancies are available. District officers of the department are able to provide advice to families who might be unaware of alternatives that are available to them. The department, as owner of the site, will assess the long-term viability of child-care provision on this site. If the assessment shows that there is a need for child care to be delivered from the Pennington site, alternative operators will be invited to tender for that program.

**Ms WHITE:** I want to follow up on the \$11 million, 1 per cent, saving that the Government will make out of the \$29.8 million—the amount that the Minister is refusing to admit to. I indicate that the piece of paper that the Opposition has refers to \$11.2 million in the 1998-99 budget for this 1 per cent per annum towards the enterprise agreement, \$16.4 million in 1999-2000 and \$19.6 million in 2000-1.

Many rumours have been circulating, and I thought this one particularly incredible. However, I ask the Minister the direct question and he can tell me whether or not it is correct. Is speculation true that the Minister will cut this year's budget by shortening the school year, thereby reducing classroom tuition for South Australian children?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I will ask Mr Bronte Treloar to explain the budget figures.

**Mr Treloar:** The figure of \$11.2 million in 1998-99 has been described as 1 per cent per annum towards the enterprise agreement. Of the \$29.8 million saving for 1998-99 there was a requirement for a 1 per cent contribution to Treasury towards the cost of the enterprise agreement. That is not salary savings. The important issue is that the full cost of the enterprise agreement, when its final outcome is achieved by December 1998, will be funded over and above the budget by Treasury. This was the only contribution required by the department towards that ultimate cost.

**Ms WHITE:** That answer is in response to an earlier question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It is not up to the member to decide the question. The Minister or his staff will give the answer they wish.

**Ms WHITE:** I ask a supplementary question. I asked the Minister whether he was going to cut the budget by shortening the school year by a week. The Opposition has been informed that the Government plans to cut \$3 million from the budget by shortening the school year by one week, which includes a saving of \$260 000, because if all schools are closed for a week then the lights are not turned on. Is that correct?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I will ask Mr Ralph to respond to that question.

**Mr Ralph:** This is one of the matters that is under consideration as part of meeting budget targets. The Minister has asked that we look at a range of issues and put propositions to him as to how we will meet the requirements of the budget set. For some time now submissions have been to the department with respect to end of year arrangements, and that has been because of an outcome of the change to the four term school year, resulting in the end of school year being very close to the Christmas period. Both teachers and parents have raised with the department and the Minister the inconvenience that has been found with that arrangement. In previous years we have taken steps to reduce the student attendance by the last two days and used those days for professional development and as an opportunity for staff to round off the year's activities. It seemed that one of the

possibilities we should look at was using that last week in a different way.

We are considering ways in which that could be used for professional development, thereby reducing the number of occasions during the year when staff are required to leave their classroom and relieving teachers are engaged. The savings would come in that type of proposition from a reduction in the use of the number of temporary relieving teachers and other costs that would not need to be met during that period.

South Australia has a longer period of instruction in public schooling than do other States, and the Government schooling sector has significantly longer periods of instruction days than non-government schools in South Australia. It seemed that this was an area at which we could look and which would respond to community and teacher requests and gain better efficiencies in terms of training and development of teachers. Also, we could look at the possibilities of other savings to meet that target.

In that period leading up to the Christmas week, there are always a number of difficulties with families moving away to join other parts of their family for the Christmas period and, with the absence of students, staff have recommended that we consider it. It is one of the matters that is before us as a budget strategy.

**Mr HANNA:** It is either factored into this budget or it is not. What is the Minister's decision?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Mitchell is out of order.

**Ms WHITE:** The answer to that question obviously was 'Yes,' you are planning to close all schools for a week to save budget money of \$3 million, my information says. The Minister must respond to that. He cannot just say we have a budget before us and he does not know what is in it. The budget is before the Minister, and my information is that by closing every public school in the State we will save money. The Chief Executive made statements about how families want this. I know of the disruption caused in my district every time there is a student-free day and working parents must provide child care. It has been said that there is whole community support here. However, I do not think the community and parents will agree that cutting down the amount of tuition for students is a good thing to save the education budget. Is this the thin end of the wedge: every time you want to save money in education will you provide less schooling? It is absolutely outrageous.

**The CHAIRMAN:** This is the third time the honourable member has asked the same question. The Minister can choose to answer the question or not. He has addressed it twice.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** In any estimates of budgets the Treasurer has given all departments a saving factor to achieve. In the setting down of estimates there are ways to attack that—that is what a budget is all about: it is an estimate of how we will attack savings and spending within the department.

**Mr HANNA:** Don't you know how you will make the savings?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The week referred to by the honourable member is one possibility that we have listed in the budget as a way of achieving part of those savings. I agree with the honourable member: in terms of pupil free days I receive comments from parents, particularly in my district, who are most upset about another pupil free day.

**Mr HANNA:** And you want a whole week?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Mitchell is out of order.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** One of the options to reduce the number of pupil free days taken during the year (and let us remember that the number of days adds up to the same) is the possibility, at which are looking, of reducing the time of the final term in the week leading up to Christmas.

**Ms WHITE:** The Opposition has been informed that the Minister has approved a plan to use State funds set aside under a previous Commonwealth-State agreement for child care as part of the budget saving strategy. How much is being cut from the State's budget for child care and will this not impact on agreements with the Commonwealth in future?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The \$1 million that the Premier announced is new money. It is not being taken from anywhere else within the State budget. It is new money that the Premier decided to put towards children's services in recognition of the fact that the Commonwealth had cut funds to out of school hours care and to community child-care centres and there was a significant impact on the community. We wanted to address that area and help those centres in adjusting, as a one-off payment, to those Government funding cuts. To my knowledge the honourable member asked whether we were using Commonwealth funds.

**Ms WHITE:** No, I said State funds set aside as part of the Commonwealth-State agreement—your funds.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** To my knowledge that is not correct. I ask Dawn Davis to respond further.

**Ms Davis:** The funding that has been allocated under the package announced by the Premier is additional to the current appropriations being provided towards child-care funding.

**Ms WHITE:** I am talking not about the \$1 million that has been announced but about the current budgeted, set aside, State contribution to the Commonwealth-State child-care agreement. Are you going to acquit portion of that State recurrent contribution under the national child-care strategy? You seem to be saying that you are not. Is that correct?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I will have to check those figures. According to our budget we are acquitting \$500 000.

**Ms WHITE:** You are cutting off \$500 000 this year, next year and the year after?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** We were given a reduction in our budget due to State finances that we had to find. It has to be spread across all sectors within the department to find savings where we can in order to meet the task that the Treasurer gave us. The \$500 000 is an acquittal issue. I am advised that there will be no reduction in terms of the national child-care strategy. The \$500 000 is a savings task that the Director of Children's Services within the department has been asked to find. I am sure that the Director has ideas on ways in which this will be achieved.

**Ms WHITE:** So the Minister is saying to the people of South Australia that 'We are giving you an extra \$1 million, but we will not spend the \$500 000 in 1998-99, the \$500 000 in 1999-2000 and the \$500 000 in 2000-1 that we should be spending under the agreement which we have entered into with the Commonwealth'. I ask my original question: if you are going to be squibbing on your commitment, the State's commitment, to the National Child-Care Strategy, how will this impact on your agreement with the Commonwealth? The Minister cannot say that this \$1 million is new money on the one hand and on the other hand say we will cut an agreed amount of \$500 000 in this coming financial year.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The National Child-Care Strategy has been achieved. There is no reduction in that area.

The \$500 000 to which the honourable member is referring is a savings task which will come across all children's services administered by the department. It is no different from looking at a savings task in any other department or across schools or whatever. The task given to the Director, in terms of budget reductions, is for her to find \$500 000. The money that has been directed by the Premier is money that has come from his area, not from within the Department of Education, Training and Employment, and is \$1 million that he has put across from his Premier's Department towards recognising the impact that has been felt by the Commonwealth Government in that child-care, community centre and out of school hours care area.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I refer to Budget Paper 4 Volume 2, the operating statement, and particularly children's services output. It is my view there is no more important time in a child's life than from 0 to 8 years. It is a credit that we are doing so well in the area of early childhood education in this State. I am interested in how much the Federal Government pays towards family day care and how much the State Government budget pays towards family day care. How is that funding arrangement struck. Could the Minister explain the weighting of funding?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The Commonwealth's funding for family day care in South Australia is estimated at \$18.9 million for the forthcoming financial year. This figure fluctuates according to demand. Some \$14.4 million is Commonwealth Child-Care Assistance subsidy which the department pays directly to care providers who have cared for children from eligible families on low to middle incomes. Approximately \$4.5 million of this total is operational subsidy used by the department as sponsor to maintain quality and administer child-care assistance payments to care providers. All identified family day care staff are fully funded by the Commonwealth contribution.

The costs of care provider approval and training, complaints management, telephones, vehicles, accommodation and all but a small proportion of other operational expenditure is funded by the Commonwealth under the sponsorship agreement with the department. The State makes a relatively minor contribution in expenditure terms to the family day care program. For example, time spent by district coordinators, superintendents and senior State office staff on family day care matters is not funded by the Commonwealth. In some instances, in-kind support is provided by the department where family day care staff share office space with other departmental staff. The department's contribution in these cases amounts to no more than a proportion of the costs of space occupied by family day care staff.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** What are the total capital expenditure and running costs for kindergartens? The State runs a very high quality kindergarten service. How are the operating expenses and infrastructure valued and what is the total input?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The contribution from the South Australian Government to kindergarten and preschool operating expenses is currently estimated at a total of \$39.07 million per annum. Funding to the Catholic Education's preschools and affiliate preschools is included in that figure. The current allocation for major capital works in preschools is \$1.48 million including funds for new preschools to replace the existing facilities at Netherby and Ridley Grove. A further \$300 000 will be spent on smaller scale capital works in preschools during 1997-98.

A total of \$100 000 has been committed to upgrading outdoor areas of preschools on preschool sites. Approximately \$200 000 is committed to capital expenditure in preschools that is linked to centre assessment asset management plans. Those agreements between preschool management committees and the department specify different levels of contribution from management committees and the department to preservation of preschool assets. The agreements fix contributions from both the department and preschool committees for periods of up to five years. These estimates do not take into account community and parents' contributions through fees and fundraising. In preschools that are not on school sites, management committees raise funds to meet part of the cost of building maintenance utilities such as power, cleaning and equipment.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.10. Could the Minister detail the Government's commitment to raising levels of achievement for all children and, in particular, what the department is doing to improve the quality of care in child-care services?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** National standards have been developed for family day care and, as most members would know, were introduced during 1998. Extensive consultation was undertaken with parents, care providers and also the community. It was not possible to adopt the national standards in this State without a change to the Children's Services Act, however, to vary the number of children who could be cared for at any one time. We remember that that increased to a limit of seven children and four preschool age children instead of the previous three now allowed. An extensive self-audit process has been adopted for monitoring the standards with follow-up validation visits by departmental officers. All care providers, both existing and new to the system, must comply with the standards before they are approved as family day care providers.

National standards for outside school hours care have also been developed, and we introduced these services this year through a self-audit process. Their introduction also followed extensive consultation within the sector. The application of outside school hours care standards is reliant on voluntary compliance through meeting those standards and is a condition of use of the department's school sites for this program. Extensive work has taken place on review of the child-care centre regulations for South Australia. They are based on the national standards developed for centre-based child care and due for implementation at the beginning of 1999.

The curriculum document 'Foundation Areas of Learning' for years 3 to 5 children has been introduced as a framework for program planning in many child-care centres and is in use in many centres. 'Foundation Areas of Learning' for those children from age 0 to 3 is also in preparation and is about to be trialled in 34 centres. A specific 'foundations' document for family day care is also in progress and is keenly anticipated by care providers across the State. 'Foundation Areas of Learning' provides a curriculum framework which complements and develops further areas of the Commonwealth quality accreditation system for child-care centres. During the past year a great deal of energy has been devoted to raising those standards in child-care in this State. We are ahead of most other States in application and monitoring of nationally agreed standards, and there is a great deal of national interest in the 'Foundation Areas of Learning' framework.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I remind the member for Taylor that where a question is essentially the same I will allow only one



supplementary question. Not every member has had an opportunity to ask a question.

**Ms WHITE:** I return to this \$1 million towards child care from the Premier's fund. We have just heard the Minister's admission that there will be a cut of \$500 000 to the children's services area in this 1998-99 budget, so this gift of \$1 million is coming in from the one hand and partly going out on the other. I want to question the Minister about the \$600 000 or so going toward community child-care centres. While I have had a number of approaches from the private child-care sector—and I am a little surprised that the member for Waite, given his association with the private sector, finds that—

**The CHAIRMAN:** The honourable member will direct her questions to the Minister.

**Ms WHITE:** With the \$600 000 for the community child-care sector, there is no mention of any assistance to the private child-care sector. What was the reasoning behind that; and is the Minister aware of the discontent amongst the private child-care sector, who say to me they are finding things extremely difficult at the moment?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I am aware that no money was allocated towards the private child-care sector. I would have thought that, in the interests of equity in our community, the honourable member would recognise that most of those centres that are closing are in low socio-economic areas. The idea has been to try to support those people with children in those community care centres. I am aware of no private centres in danger of closing, but these centres are in danger of closing and some have closed. The whole reason behind the package announced by the Premier was to try to ensure that people in those areas who have been using those centres still had child care available to them. If the honourable member is suggesting that we should not have put the money there but that we should have put it into private child-care centres, she should say so. We have had quite significant feedback from parents sending children to those centres which now, given that they are viable, have the option of a one-off operational grant to release the pressure on them because of the reduction in Commonwealth funding. They are most appreciative of the grant that has been given by the Premier.

**Ms WHITE:** The Federal Minister implied that the rest of that \$1 million—approximately \$400 000—was coming from the out of school hours care budget in any case. Will the Minister comment on the Federal Minister's criticism of the Premier in relation to that \$1 million announcement? Those criticisms were that this was not new money and that the Government was simply reannouncing money that was already committed to the child-care budget.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I will say this for the last time: this is new money. The fact is that the reduction of Commonwealth funding or the out of school hours care program that the Commonwealth has axed has meant significant restructuring and significant concern among those communities that run out of school hours care programs on school sites. A number of delegations have come to meet with me about this and have expressed concern that they would have to close and not be able to continue providing that service to their communities. That service is desperately needed, because parents who are both working or single parent families where there is no option but to put children in out of hours school care were suddenly faced with the fact of their out of hours school centre closing, and the Premier has responded to that. We will not prevent all of them closing, but this will help a

rationalisation program to occur so that we can group in clusters those out of hours school care programs to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the community as they have been expressed to us.

I say again that this is new money and that the cuts that occurred from the Commonwealth had been indicated in the Federal budget. If the honourable member looks at the Federal budget she will see that the cuts were made to out of hours school care were coming through to us. As at May 1998 there were some 200 out of hours school care services in South Australia and 94 vocational care services which, prior to April 1998, were jointly funded by the State and Commonwealth. The total annual budget commitment was \$5.127 million. Of this contribution the Commonwealth provided \$3.75 million for out of school hours care, plus \$494 000 towards vacation care. The honourable member would be aware that, from 27 April 1998, Commonwealth operational subsidies were withdrawn, along with the vocational care's block grant. This has resulted in concerns about viability, particularly in small schools.

There is pressure on the State to continue funding those services which are not eligible for transfer to child-care assistance places, and that includes the 12 block vocational care services outside the Commonwealth guidelines for child-care assistance. Negotiations are continuing with the Commonwealth about the 24 additional block vacation care programs eligible for transfer to child-care assistance, subject to ongoing State funding to secure the administrative infrastructure for out of school hours care services.

**Ms WHITE:** It is misleading to say there is \$1 million in new money or extra money for child care when the Minister has admitted here today that \$500 000 will be cut from child care in this budget. Will the Minister provide now or on notice a list of all the child-care centres that have closed since 1996, when the current Federal Government implemented cuts to the child-care budget? I note that the Minister said that he was not aware of any private child-care centres that have closed. How many child-care workers have been displaced because of these cuts? If the Minister does have any information, will he also provide information regarding how many South Australian families have had to withdraw their children from child care because they can no longer afford the expense?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I will clarify one issue; the honourable member has mentioned private child-care places. Since the cuts no private child-care facilities have approached me to identify that they are in danger or have closed. Obviously, over the years some child-care centres close, but I am talking about closures as a result of the cuts that the Federal Government has made in 1998. I can give the honourable member a list of those centres that have undergone restructuring and amalgamation over the past 12 months. I will provide the additional information that she has requested on notice. A number of child-care centres have undergone restructuring: Para West and Yawarra child-care centres have amalgamated, as have the Mary Street and Oasis occasional care centres; Pennington and Port Adelaide, and the Noarlunga Children's Centre and Noarlunga Child Community Centre have also amalgamated. Several closed centres have been reopened by alternative sponsors, for example, Direk Community Child-Care Centre was leased to a private operator; and the Wesley Uniting Mission has taken on sponsorship of the Catherine Helen Spence Occasional Centre, the Enfield Polish Child-Care Centre and the Torrensville Child-Care Centre.

The Warradale Child-Care Centre has taken over the operation of Ascot Park. The Underdale Community Centre will be reopened under the management of the Lady Gowrie Child Centre. A number of centres have remained closed, including the Devon Park Community Child-Care Centre, the Yugoslav Child-Care Centre, the Cowandilla Children's Centre, The Parks Children's House and the North Adelaide Baptist Child-Care Centre.

Recent advice is that the Pennington facility will close on 26 June 1998. Officers from the Commonwealth department have worked with each of the above centres in an attempt to help them resolve their financial difficulties and to maintain their viability. Where a centre has closed and is under my control, a range of suitable uses for the building will be given consideration including the potential for lease or purchase by another service provider, including the private and community managed sectors.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to the Specific Targets/Objectives for 1998-99 (page 8.11, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2). The Minister's opening statement outlined his commitment to supporting parents as children's first teachers in the early years and said that the budget is allocating \$100 000 to *Growing and Learning in the Family*. Can you provide more detail about how you will promote that strategy in South Australia?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Today I announced that an amount of \$100 000 would be provided to support the new publication *Growing and Learning in the Family*. This is the latest evidence of our commitment to building better partnerships with parents in support of children's learning. I had a look through the document: it is very good. It takes parents through the developmental stages of their children, from the ages zero to five, and outlines the things that parents can do to aid the development of their children in not only social but physical skills and summarises the levels that their children should be achieving or what is to be expected from their child.

I think this document will be used extensively by the parents of young children, and being a parent I find it extremely helpful. It outlines the back-up services that are available to parents. As a young parent, and as all of us who have children know, you tend to have learner plates, especially with your first child, and you often ask yourself, 'Am I doing the right thing or not by the child?', and in most cases of course you are. This booklet reaffirms for parents the many challenges that are there in raising young children and the levels of achievement that they should be attaining. I commend the book to all people with young children: I think it is an excellent book.

#### **Additional Departmental Advisers:**

Ms J. Keightley, Chief Executive, SSABSA.

Mr A. Mercurio, Manager, Curriculum, SSABSA.

Mr R. Bywaters, Executive Coordinator, SSABSA.

Mr D. Whitmore, Manager, Business Services, SSABSA.

Dr N. Highett, Executive Director, Schools, Department of Education, Training and Employment.

Mr J. Dellit, Executive Director, Curriculum, Department of Education, Training and Employment.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Vol. 2 (page 8.11). How has SSABSA contributed to the increase in participation of students in the vocational education and training programs?

**Ms Keightley:** SSABSA conducted a research project called the SACE completion project, which looked at students and their reasons for leaving school. One of the recommendations was that we look at strategies to encourage young people to undertake vocational education and training courses while they are still at school. SSABSA was keen to ensure that, when young people did undertake these studies, they could gain status for those studies in their SACE credentials. After extensive consultation in September 1997, the SSABSA board endorsed a policy statement about SACE that enabled young people to study what we call VET curriculum and still get credit for SACE.

Our policy has two components: first, an endorsement of a strategy that was already occurring where the vocational education and training curriculum could be embedded under the objectives of a SACE or SSABSA accredited subject. That was the embedded model, and that had been operating in South Australia for several years. Secondly, the policy also took a quite significant step in as much as it said that the vocational education and training curriculum, as it stands alone, could now be counted towards SACE.

The SACE pattern has effectively eight units out of the 22, and that allows young people some kind of free choice; it is not prescribed by the pattern. Students can now undertake vocational education and training and count up to a maximum of eight of those vocational education and training units towards their SACE. That has been made retrospective. So some students who studied vocational education and training last year have also been able to complete their SACE at the beginning of this year, as the policy came in. It has been a very enabling and facilitating policy for what has been a major shift in the focus, and the Minister referred to this in his opening statement.

SSABSA is also working with curriculum writers who are working with us on our curriculum redevelopment to ensure that there are optimum opportunities for the embedding of the vocational education and training curriculum into SSABSA accredited subjects. We have looked at a number of the more traditional subjects to explore whether there is a possible stream that could incorporate vocational education and training. In addition to that, to help the policy have its maximum impact, we are working with our school sector partners, the State department as well as the non-government schools, to develop models of good practice.

There are illustrative pathways and packages of how you might combine SSABSA accredited subjects with vocational education and training subjects in a coherent package that will open up a pathway for young people into the training sector. Again, that has been very supportive of schools who want to meet the needs of that wide range of students who are in years 11 and 12.

SSABSA has moved to ensure that the results of those vocational education and training modules that students take will be incorporated into the SSABSA database, and they will be reported in a form on the SSABSA records of achievement. In addition to this, in about a week we will take on the first lot of vocational education and training modules. We believe that 550 such modules are being offered around schools in South Australia. As a result of that, we had to do some significant work to facilitate that.

The important thing is that all of this development has been done with the acknowledgment that SSABSA is only as good as the quality of the partnership between our organisation and our schooling sector partners. Therefore, this process has been very much supported by the school sectors. We have

worked through an acceptable pathway within the credentialing arrangements in a way that is implementable and feasible for the schools.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Vol. 2 (page 8.11). What initiatives is SSABSA taking to increase the participation and achievement in SACE of young indigenous students?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The participation rate of our indigenous young people in schools is a particularly important area. It is always a challenge, and one on which we are attempting to improve, particularly to have those young people complete their schooling through until year 12 because, as evidence suggests, young people who continue on through to that level have a much greater possibility of achieving employment within the State than those who drop out at 15 years, the minimum age at which children do not need to attend school.

**Ms Keightley:** SSABSA's commitment to improve the participation of young indigenous students in SACE started early in the 1990s. That culminated in the first step being taken in October 1995 with the launch of the Australian indigenous languages framework. We were able to take a national leadership role in this project with the Commonwealth supporting us in the development of a languages framework which can be used in a number of models to allow young people to learn an indigenous language. That framework was flexible enough to cater for all the communities around Australia.

SSABSA then moved from that success to establishing and approving an Aboriginal education strategy in December 1995. For the past 18 months we have been working significantly in this area. We appointed two project officer positions, and there are now four project officers doing that work. They have a significant workload in that they are required to work with the Aboriginal community to talk with young people and determine how we can encourage them to participate in SACE. This project has strong support from the indigenous community in this State. There is a reference group on which are represented all the peak Aboriginal organisations, and they actively participate in that group and support it. I would like to acknowledge their ongoing support.

One of the issues that emerged was that there was very little documentation about why young indigenous students were not getting to years 11 and 12. They certainly are in this State, but they were not getting into years 11 and 12. So, we commissioned a research project into the barriers that impeded young people from completing SACE. The contract was awarded to the Yungorendi First Nation Centre for Higher Education and Research at the Flinders University of South Australia, and the team consisted of five indigenous people. The quality of the data collected from young indigenous students was very high. The findings were presented personally to the SSABSA board, which indicated its commitment to face some of these issues and try to find solutions.

The issues that we presented to the board were classified into two areas. First, there were non-SACE issues, which SSABSA cannot take on board. They relate to issues of racism, poverty, parents' history of unemployment, parents' history of non-successful educational experience and poor health.

However, there were some SACE related issues, and SSABSA is now working to address those. These SACE related issues referred to: the misinformation that existed about SACE—things that people believed you could not do

when in fact you can; the need to explore some more vocational education and training options—and I have already referred to the actions that we have taken in that regard; the need to promote SACE to Aboriginal students and their families; and the need to encourage parental involvement as well.

As a result, we now have a register of young indigenous people who have successfully completed SACE, and we are using that register to promote SACE studies. In fact, recently, one of the young indigenous people on that register worked with the SSABSA team at the Workskills Expo; this young male student had completed SACE and is now studying nursing. He was very willing to be a role model for the young people who came to look at SSABSA's stand at the Workskills Expo.

I would also like to report that we have been successful in gaining some Commonwealth funding for a project called 'A headstart to SACE'. We will look at embedding vocational education and training curriculum in the arts and recreation industry through the subject of music. The Commonwealth has supported us financially to work with the indigenous community in the following schools: Port Lincoln, Fremont, Elizabeth, Gepps Cross, Ceduna, Port Augusta, Leigh Creek, Caritas in Whyalla and St Joseph's in Port Lincoln. We will work with those schools to use the Oz Music vocational education and training modules, embedding them in SACE stage 1. We have been advised that this would be a way of encouraging young indigenous students to succeed with stage one SACE. As we know, once a student starts to be successful in stage one, they can be encouraged to go on to stage two. Those are the kinds of things we are doing at the moment—I must say with some success.

#### **Membership:**

Ms Breuer substituted for Mr Snelling.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer the Minister to page 1-50 of Budget Paper 5, the Capital Works Statement. I have been informed, I believe reliably, that the amount shown in the reconciliation of the 1997-98 capital program as \$9.379 million under the heading of 'Other' refers to capital assistance to non-government schools. Will the Minister confirm whether that is true and provide the full details of this commitment?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The \$9.379 million is capital assistance to non-government schools. It is listed in the Minister's lines, but the funding comes directly from the Commonwealth.

**Ms WHITE:** Given that the education budget is paying the interest, can the Minister explain how this amount of interest was funded, why this expenditure was not shown in the 1997-98 budget for capital expenditure and, indeed, why the decision to pay this was never announced? I do not remember its ever being announced.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I am advised that this area has always been one of the Minister's miscellaneous grant lines. It is no different this year from what it is in any other year under any other Minister, either Labor or Liberal.

**Ms WHITE:** I have a supplementary question. Has \$7.3 million been budgeted in 1998-99 for this purpose, and where is that shown in the budget papers? Why are the details not set out in the debt section of budget paper 5?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** In the capital works program 1997-98, appendix 2, the honourable member will find that \$7.3 million is identified under a subheading 'Education—Non-government Schools'.

**Ms WHITE:** Are you talking about this year's budget papers or last year's budget papers?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** It is last year's capital works program 1997-98, page 65 of financial information paper No.2. It is identified as 'Non-government schools-\$7.3 spending, capital works.' In this year's capital works statement, page 159, appendix 3, listed under 'Non-government schools', the honourable member will find \$7.373 million capital works.

**Ms WHITE:** And is the interest component being taken out of the education budget?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I am advised that there is no interest component.

**Ms WHITE:** Out of the education budget?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** No, this is a straight capital grant to non-government schools from the Commonwealth Government. There is no interest component.

**Ms WHITE:** So there is no allocation towards the non-government school interest then?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** That is a different question. In our policy platform running up to the 1997 election, the former Minister indicated that \$500 000 would be available to non-government schools as an interest subsidy on capital loans. That is totally different from what the honourable member was referring to in the \$7.373 million.

**Ms WHITE:** Obviously, there is some confusion on my part. What is that \$7.3 million?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The \$7.373 million is capital works funding to non-government schools directly from the Commonwealth.

**Ms WHITE:** You are saying that the interest payments on that are not coming from the education budget?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** That is correct: there is no interest payment on that \$7.373 million.

**Ms WHITE:** There is no interest payment for the interest free loans to non-government schools coming out of the education budget?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Absolutely; that is correct.

**Ms BREUER:** I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 165, subject 'Capping School Grants'. How much will the Government pay schools by way of operating grants in 1999; will the Minister confirm advice given by the Chief Executive to the AEU that capping school grants and School Card are expected to save the Government \$6.4 million in 1998-99; and how much will the capping of grants save the Government each year to the year 2001?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** As part of the saving component that must be achieved for the Treasurer, the capping of school grants is one tool that we are using in terms of achieving the savings component within the budget. Of course, that is in terms of back to school grants, in School Card and other school grants as the honourable member has correctly identified.

The figures for the capping of school grants is \$6.4 million in 1998-99; \$13 million in 1999-2000; and it rises to \$19.5 million in 2000-1, but I am advised to add that is for all goods and services of the total department. Those figures include the grants, but they also include all the goods and services that the department procures at the same time.

The School Card rates will be held at \$110 and \$170 respectively for the primary rate and the secondary rate, but I also remind the honourable member that this year has seen a 3.8 per cent increase in the amount of money allocated to School Card. That is about double the inflation for 1997, so School Card has received a bonus a year in advance.

I would also add that the base for the primary school support grant in 1997-98 was \$2 570, which was a 2 per cent increase over the previous year and the per capita rate is \$50.70, which was also a 2 per cent increase in the change for students. For secondary schools, the base for 1997-98 was \$13 260, which was a 2 per cent increase on the previous year and the per capita rate for a secondary school pupil is \$123.60, which was also a 2 per cent increase on the previous year.

The honourable member has area schools in her electorate and will probably be interested to know that the per capita base rates are the same as the foregoing, depending on primary or secondary students. In 1997-98 it was \$11 424, which was also a 2 per cent increase on the previous year's base, and the per capita rates for severely multiple disabled students was \$160, which was a 3.1 per cent increase in the per capita funding.

As I have said, in setting down a budget and looking to achieve the savings that we have been asked to effect, one of those areas was to cap school grants, and the figures that I have quoted are those which we will be attempting to achieve.

**Mr McEWEN:** Given the national debate and views in New South Wales and Victoria in relation to senior schooling, what is the Minister's view about R to 6, 7 to 10 and 11 to 13 as a three-tiered system?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** With amalgamations over the past eight or nine years, a number of schools have changed from being R to 7 and are going right through to R to 12. As a result we have had a middle school component coming into the system. It is also recognition of a change in development of children these days in that they seem to be maturing more quickly than did I and other members in this Chamber. We are now finding that year 11 and 12 students are substantially more mature in their outlook within the school, so a middle schooling system has come in in some places. I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to expand further.

**Mr Ralph:** The issue of future provision of the landscape has been a subject of discussion across the South Australian system for some time. We are preparing advice on future planning of the landscape of schooling provision. In that we are picking up the points raised by the honourable member with respect to the arrangements for different levels of schooling. For almost a decade we have been responding to local community and district wishes on the formation of different types of schooling provision. In discussions with the principals associations we have come to the view that we need to look at the longer term provision across all aspects of the State and within that we will be looking at matters relating to level provision and specialist schooling provision and at where schools will come together as a number have indicated in recent weeks.

**Mr McEWEN:** I refer to one of the specific objectives/targets for 1998-99 relating to connecting all schools and institutes to high quality data networks. Many of our rural remote exchanges cannot handle the switching and, if they can, access will often be at STD rates. How will we address the problem of information technology to remote students in that environment?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** This is one of the issues we have to address in terms of the Telecom cabling available through country areas and the sort of demands and access that is available for rural schools. I will ask Kevin Richardson, the Director of Executive Services in my department, to explain more fully because he has particular expertise in this area.

**Mr Richardson:** We are currently preparing a business case that has led to a tender to go to industry to deliver the high quality digital network. We are going to industry in an open way so we can explore all options to provide those services, which include satellite connection and microwave linking to schools other than the traditional terrestrial lines through exchanges. In remote areas some exchanges are a problem. We are looking at all solutions to ensure the connections to schools match the high quality digital service to which we are committed.

**Mr McEWEN:** Is that being linked to the RTIF funding? I appreciate that LEOS will be the long-term answer. We have \$26.5 million as a State with RTIF and it seems that it is not being well coordinated. Is there some mechanism by which your objectives can be factored into some of those submissions?

**Mr Richardson:** Yes. There is a cross-Government strategy to ensure that our business case dovetails in with the RTIF program. Last week I met in relation to the Eyre Peninsula RTIF program so that we can ensure that the strategy we have in place meets the requirements of our schools, students and institutes while complimenting what local communities are doing.

**Mr McEWEN:** I refer to another specific objective, which I do not believe is funded, relating to the establishment of at least one modern trade school, given that there is excess capacity in the TAFE sector. What does the Minister have in mind with a modern trade school?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I have indicated that there will be the establishment of at least one modern trade school to commence at the start of the year in 1999. Draft guidelines have been initiated that will aim to ensure that the school will build on some of the successes of the past technical high schools by combining theoretical and practical school and work-based learning. Since announcing this a number of members of industry have approached me and suggested that it is an excellent idea because, when the technical schools disappeared and the focus shifted to people gaining entrance to tertiary institutions, a significant number of young people who did not have either the ability or desire to move on to university did not have an area within the schooling system to be able to develop other skills that might lead them into significant trades.

This school will not be a reinvention of the technical high schools. Goodwood Technical School was the last one in our State. We will be looking at the most up to date methods used in industry. I am currently arranging a meeting with the Manager of General Motors-Holden's to discuss with him the sorts of skills and trades they need with the employees they are taking on. We have had discussions running with Mitsubishi along the same lines. This will ensure that when our young people move out of school and show a particular interest in the trades they can be accommodated through this trade school. The honourable member is correct in saying that there is excess space in TAFE campuses and this may be one link we may be able to use in establishing a modern trade school.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to the line of questioning I was on previously. We had an extraordinary morning, from my viewpoint, with some extraordinary admissions from the Minister. It was hard enough trying to drag a commitment out of the Minister—and I am not sure I got one—to provide program information on where the cuts in programs were. Then there was the admission by the Minister that \$11 million would be cut from this budget as a contribution

towards the enterprise agreement this year for the 1 per cent teachers' salary contribution, plus a \$16 million cut the next year and a \$19 million cut the year after that as a 1 per cent contribution. The Minister has not even entered into negotiations with the teachers and has already put those cuts into the budget figures there. This \$1 million new money for child care turns out to be a \$1.5 million cut to children's services over the next three years.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Will the member ask her question? I have allowed 45 seconds for her statement.

**Ms WHITE:** We have just had the Minister admit earlier today that he will cut his budget by cutting the school year by one week, cutting down the amount of time kids will go to school, and having 14 000 teachers out at teacher training all at one time. The Minister is not only cutting the budget but also cutting the school year. My question is: is it not true, and has the Minister informed councils of schools taking part in projects for school management, that the Government has decided to make schools pay the salaries of temporary relief teachers out of school funds in order to save \$1.2 million?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I will pick up a few of the comments made by the member for Taylor. The whole idea of this budget has been to minimise the impact on the classroom. We were given a savings task in the overall responsibility of the State budget. The Liberal Government is not one which will put money on the bankcard, so to speak, and spend more than we are earning. When the Treasurer gave us figures as to the savings task that was required over the next three years, it meant that each and every department has had to accept a certain level of savings.

I remind the member for Taylor that, in the last enterprise agreement, some \$166 million more was put into education than was previously the case. We are still spending in real terms, even after this budget, 9 per cent more than the last Labor Government budget in 1993-94. The honourable member can make faces or do whatever she likes, but those are the facts. She can go back and look in past budget papers and find that that is exactly correct. In terms of the \$1.2 million for temporary replacement teachers, that area of the budget has been overspent in the past and there is \$1.2 million that we are looking at, as part of our savings in the budget, but it will bring it back to the budget that has previously been there. It is not an additional cut to the budget. There has been an overspending in that area and we are bringing it back to budget.

**Ms WHITE:** So you are cutting the school year by a week to save money, and you are going to be cutting temporary relief teachers for schools and expecting them to pick up those salary costs to save money. Is it also true, and if so, has the Minister told councils of schools taking part in school management projects, that the Government will keep 50 per cent of all savings achieved from electricity, gas and water usage, this portion being estimated to be \$1.3 million a year?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I have had some very interesting discussions with schools as I move around, and one of the areas that they have indicated to me in which they would like a lot more flexibility is in that area of local management. I am sure that you, Sir, and the member for Taylor would be well aware that the Salisbury High School and the Salisbury East High School have approached me in terms of becoming a school autonomous to themselves, so they would not be answerable to the department. The fact is that we are setting up a working party which will look at local management issues. It will include representatives from the union, parent bodies, principal bodies and also departmental people who

will advise me on what possible applications there may be for local management. That model will be developed and the discussion will include the appropriate allocation of savings between the school and the system. No figure has been set at this stage.

In moving around schools, when I have discussed this with school councils and principals, I have said to them that the figure the member has quoted could be one figure. I have said that maybe it would be a 75-25 split, a 60-40 split or an 80-20 split—it could be anything. That is what the working party will advise me on. The 50-50 figure quoted by the honourable member is purely an indicative figure.

**Ms WHITE:** My next question involves the cuts being made to the TAFE institutes. I have been informed that the Minister intends to cut TAFE institutes by over \$3 million this year rising to \$9.5 million in three years. Does the Minister deny these cuts? We already have a lower than average participation in VET in South Australia than in other States. What effect will these cuts have in terms of the ANTA agreement for Commonwealth funding?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Yes, it is correct that we are looking for that level of savings from our TAFE system. I would remind the honourable member that delivery in terms of per student hour cost in South Australia from our TAFE system is the highest of any mainland State in Australia, at some \$13.80 per hour. The national average is \$9.90 per hour. We are looking to make efficiencies and savings within that area. TAFE SA will continue to pursue savings and productivity improvement opportunities through these particular areas. The corporate and support section will undertake a review. There will be a supply review with the view of the possible outsourcing of supplies in TAFE.

We are undertaking a review of physical resources with again the implementation of outsourcing. Systems changes and enhancements relates to management reports covering inputs and outputs on the desktop of every TAFE manager. Changes to program delivery modes will address the possible savings associated with on-line delivery. The rationalisation of programs and sites, relating to the Adelaide metropolitan area, does not justify multiple delivery sites for a number of programs. The amalgamation of the Regency and Para institutes has been a shared service between those centre arrangements and alliances between Torrens Valley and Murray institutes and the South-East and Onkaparinga institutes will produce savings over the next three years.

Finally, with respect to activity-based costing, work has already begun on the accurate allocation of all institute overheads against outputs of all institutes. The transparency of these new accounting managements will provide a focus for management decisions to improve productivity. I do not step away from the fact that we are asking TAFE institutes, as we are now under one department, to be part of our cost-saving program.

On the other side of this equation, that same document advises there is an investment on on-line delivery in TAFE of some \$7 million over two years. We are committing substantial funds to TAFE at the same time. As I announced earlier, we are also building the new Kadina TAFE complex at some \$5.285 million. We are meeting our obligations and, in terms of the ANTA agreement, we will meet the obligations that we have under the growth through efficiency. The enterprise agreement, as I am just advised, will also be funded for TAFE.

**Ms WHITE:** As a supplementary question: the Minister has now admitted that the TAFE institutes budget will be cut

by \$3 million in this coming budget, \$7.9 million in the following year and \$9.5 million in the year following that. These are huge cuts, yet the Minister put out a budget press release announcing increased funding of \$3.5 million to the VET sector. It does not wash. What impact will these cuts have on TAFE institutes? They are pretty large cuts; about the size of a whole TAFE institute is to go. What will be the impact, and what effect will they have on the ANTA agreement for growth funding into TAFE? Has the Government decided to forgo the Commonwealth growth funds for TAFE?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The straight answer to that is 'No'. We will achieve our plan for growth through efficiencies, and the challenge for achieving that growth will be of far greater importance in 1998. South Australia is committed to a target of 16.55 million annual hours of curriculum in 1998. This is a 7.1 per cent increase over the planned target for 1997. ANTA normalised the activity data for national comparisons and the calculation of the percentage increase as 8.75 per cent.

In developing the plan we are aware that much of this growth would have been achieved in 1997, thus reducing the size of the challenge for 1998 and, on the basis of preliminary data, that target of 16.55 million hours has already been exceeded in 1997. It would appear that the final ANTA scope delivery for 1997 will be 16.6 million hours. We are not walking away from any funding that is coming through from ANTA. We will achieve the growth through efficiencies, so this State will not lose any money at all through the ANTA agreement.

**Ms WHITE:** You are cutting TAFE to an extraordinary amount; you are closing down all schools in the State for a week to save money; and you are cutting money out of the education budgets in years to come before you even enter into negotiations with the teachers. It is absolutely outrageous. You are asking schools to pay for their own relief teachers. What else is hidden in this budget?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** That is a complete misrepresentation of the situation. This Government is here to administer a responsible budget. We were faced with the fact from the Treasurer that, to pay for wage increases not only for teachers but also for police, nurses and others in the Public Service, the money had to come from somewhere. We can raise taxes, which we have done in this budget, to try to alleviate the number of cuts that have to be made. The honourable member must also recognise that, as a result of the Federal court case over the tax on tobacco and alcohol, payments of some \$50 million that the State would normally have received have gone to the Commonwealth and have not yet been returned.

Also, the Commonwealth is still insisting on a \$24 million contribution from this State towards the so-called black hole that was identified in 1993, even though the Federal Government has a surplus budget at this stage. As a result of that, we as a Cabinet and a Government had to make a decision. Do we continue to spend in the way we were doing, adding money to the bank card and hoping we can pay for it in the future; or do we accept a responsible attitude of cutting our clothes according to our cloth? That involves identifying what we were spending and earning to produce a balanced budget.

I do not walk away from the fact that we were given a task to find cuts. The member for Taylor can enunciate all she likes, but the fact is that those cuts had to be achieved by each department—not only by the Education Department—and, in doing so, we have tried to be as sensitive as possible and to spread it across the whole department, rather than targeting

any one particular area. We have also tried to stay out of classrooms as much as we possibly can, and I think we can achieve that. Moreover, even after this budget, this State still spends more on education *per capita* than does any other mainland State, and we will also continue to have the best classroom sizes of any other mainland State in Australia.

This Government will not walk away from a hard issue when we have to face it. Yes, there are cuts; I do not walk away from that. We are trying to be as sensitive as we possibly can, but the cuts do have to be spread right across the whole sector. TAFE is included in that range of cuts; it is no different from Government schools, non-government schools or any other area in our budget.

**Ms WHITE:** Minister—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member is out of order. She has asked her questions, plus three supplementaries.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Consolidating the student free days to the last week of school before Christmas will be welcomed.

*Ms White interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member will direct her questions to the Minister.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.14 with respect to the new William Light R to 12 school formed following the closures of Netley and Camden Park Primary Schools. What action has the Minister taken to ensure that outstanding occupational health and safety issues at the old Plympton High School campus, now the William Light School, are resolved?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The union has raised with me issues of occupational health and safety at the William Light School. This school is the result of an amalgamation, and I have to say that the new site is particularly exciting. In 1997 the previous Minister announced that a new R to 12 school would be established on the former Plympton High School site, that Camden Primary School and Netley Primary School would close at the end of the 1997 school year, and that Plympton Primary School would remain as an R to 7 school with an enrolment ceiling of 350 students. Some \$1.795 million was committed for the construction of the R to 5 facilities, that is, the junior subschool, which formed stage 1 of the project. The new William Light R to 12 school opened on the former Plympton High School site on the first day of the 1998 school year.

Stage 1 of the redevelopment has been completed. Enrolments were higher than anticipated and extra staff were required to cater for this. Enrolments on day 1 were: R to 12, 603 students; and R to 7, 250 students. Enrolments and interest in enrolling are continuing to increase. Some \$3.6 million has now been approved for stage 2. This includes \$1.5 million to be spent in 1998-99. Stage 2 will include facilities for the middle school, the technology resource centre, the staff room and the tutorial centre. Temporary parking and safety measures have been established to assist with the management of the building site.

Options have recently been put to the City of West Torrens to improve long-term traffic management and drop-off arrangements. Some 19 shipping containers with equipment and resources from Camden and Netley schools have been removed from the site. A site management committee is meeting weekly to address site issues. The new school council has been established, and the council, staff and parents have worked together to ensure that the new William Light R to 12 school has begun well for students. The school

council and staff have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to the success of this complex and significant project.

Issues of occupational health and safety have been discussed at meetings with the AEU. They are also discussed at weekly site meetings and have been addressed by variations to the Stage 1 contract. For example, footpath access from Myer Avenue has now been provided. A master plan for the remainder of the site will be developed now that the budget has been finalised. The total project cost of this is some \$5.8 million.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.1. What efficiencies and savings can be identified as flowing directly from the formation of the Department of Education, Training and Employment?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** This has been a particularly successful amalgamation for DETAFE and the former DECS department and ministry. I have seen much anticipation amongst both our primary and secondary schoolteachers and our TAFE lecturers about the opportunities for this to go ahead, particularly the delivery of VET courses by TAFE into school systems. There has also been much anticipation of the opportunities to be gained from courses undertaken at schools being recognised within the TAFE system and, now that the university structure will come under this ministry, accreditation for TAFE courses in universities. The three sectors are working extremely well together, and it has been very successful thus far.

Gains have been achieved as a result of the formation of the department. The department has been structured to ensure that the advantages inherent in the creation of an agency with such broad responsibilities are maximised. It is now organised into five broad groups, which reflect the range of funder, purchaser and provider functions appropriate to its diverse roles. This integrated structure deliberately does not reflect the responsibilities of or boundaries between the former agencies. The review of organisational requirements is now in its final phase, and it is expected that a number of administrative positions will be declared excess to requirements.

Numerous departmental functions have already been merged. They include: the Office of the Chief Executive, International and Business Affairs, Audit, Strategic Planning, Legal Services, Communications and Marketing, Special Investigations, Financial Reporting, Accounting Services, Corporate Finance, Payroll, Corporate Information Technology Service and the Information Technology Help Desk. Mr Chairman, as you would recognise, a number of those areas were duplicated as each former department had those sections in it. One advantage of moving to one large department where economies of scale can be accessed is that you have one service, rather than two. The number of chief executives has been reduced from three to one. The three former agencies' most senior policy bodies comprised 22 members; they have now been replaced by an integrated set of policy and advisory forums with 14 members.

A review of the human resource functions and policies has commenced. It is expected that significant savings will be achieved by moving the entire department to a single human resource management system. A consultative forum has been established to support the structural changes. It is developed within a framework for efficient management and implementation of further change within the State office. The comprehensive framework provides guidelines for filling new positions while taking into account the employees' existing roles, and it ensures consistency and probity as positions and staff classifications change.

As I said, it is working extremely well, and I do not expect that to change. The savings we have been able to make by coming in as one department rather than two are significant. The Premier bringing together the two departments was an extremely good move, both in the field and within the department. The department has set a savings task of \$3 million, which is based on the expectation that 60 positions will be saved in the department's State office.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Budget Paper 1 (page 9) refers to a review and restructure of schools, with special reference to the closure or amalgamation of 30 schools. Will the Minister clarify the issues surrounding school reviews?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1997, 42 schools were closed, and four additional sites form part of the new Eastern Fleurieu School. This restructure is to be reviewed in 1998. Sixteen of these closed schools have remained as operational sites through amalgamation and restructure within a multi-campus school. A list of schools and closure dates is given as an attachment to this list, if it is required. In most of the recent school closures, the funds from the sale of property have been committed to upgrading adjacent schools such as occurred at William Light R to 12 School, Challa Gardens Primary School, Dawes Road High School and Hamilton Secondary College. Receipts from the sale of surplus properties totalled \$13.3 million to the end of June 1998. These receipts, as a significant source of funds, support the department's capital works program.

Under the previous Government, 46 schools were closed between January 1990 and December 1993. School closures that have occurred since January this year include the Cook Area School, which closed on 6 March 1998. I have approved the closure of the Kybybolite Primary School at the end of 1998. That decision was made as a result of the parents of that school writing to me and requesting that the school be closed, recognising that better educational opportunities are available at a larger school, as the number of students at Kybybolite has dropped to 28.

The 1989-99 budget indicated that the existing policy of review and restructure of schools, in consultation with the community to ensure curriculum opportunities are optimised and assets are managed effectively, will continue. I stated in the 1998-99 budget that around 30 closures or amalgamations would take place over the life of this Government. That is an estimate, and whether it becomes fact depends on what happens over the next three years.

We have already had other indications of schools which are meeting—and this is at the parents' instigation rather than any direction from me—that is, the Taperoo and Largs North Primary Schools, and a project is in development to consider the establishment of an R to 12 school on the Taperoo High School site. This would result in the closure of the Largs North and Taperoo Primary Schools. Of course, it is subject to the availability of funding. I have already spoken with the local member, the member for Hart, and also the school communities, who approached me asking whether I would consider this approach in terms of the long-term benefits for education in their area. We are working on that proposal.

Similarly, the school councils of Ethelton and Semaphore Park Primary Schools have been discussing possible consolidation on to one site. I have given approval to formally begin a review process because the school councils have initiated this process themselves. It is another example where changes in demographic patterns have impacted on school enrolments. For instance, in 1980, there were approximately 800 students

in both schools; in February 1998, there are just over 300 students. The local members, the members for Hart and Lee, fully support this restructure, as well.

**Ms WHITE:** We now know that, in addition to closing 30 schools and cutting up to 100 teachers, you have budgeted for a 1 per cent contribution towards the enterprise agreement this year. There is an \$11 million cut to the budget, increasing to \$19.6 million over three years. You will shut down every State school for a week, to cut the budget further. School councils will now have to pay for their own temporary relief teachers, to cut the budget further. The \$1 million that the Premier announced for child care is a net \$1.5 million saving that the Children's Services area has to find. Does the Minister now admit the Treasurer's statement that the recurrent funding in this coming budget year of \$29.8 million is not the true and total picture and that the real budget cut is \$48.6 million in 1998-99?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** No, I do not admit that at all. The fact is that the amount that will be cut in the 1998-99 budget is \$29.8 million. We have indicated that that amount will increase to \$47 million in the year 2000-1. Those are the figures that we have presented in the budget, and those are the figures by which I stand.

**Ms WHITE:** Does the Minister deny that there will be unfunded Government policy initiatives and a cost pressure of an additional \$10 million or so on top of that, making a total of \$48.6 million for this year? I am looking at a leaked budget strategy document from the Minister's department.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The figure to which the honourable member refers relates to internal reallocation within the department. The honourable member does not mention the \$5.2 million which we have identified from the enrolment benchmark agreement with the Commonwealth as potential loss in funding—again, protecting Government schools. I have said that as long as enrolments remain at 175 600, which is the benchmark, we will ensure that Government schools do not suffer as a result of that Commonwealth policy.

The honourable member also does not mention the \$3.5 million for on-loan delivery of vocational education, which is also contained in that document. Again, that is money that we are putting into that area. So, I do not agree that the amount of \$48.6 million which she cites is the cut: it is \$29.8 million. The \$48.6 million refers to reallocations within the whole department: it is not the amount of money that will be cut from the education budget.

**Ms WHITE:** I will ask further questions about that matter later. I now want to pick up on an interesting point raised by the member for Flinders during questions about child care. The Minister implied something which the member for Flinders picked up. She said that she thought that what the Minister said about shortening the school year of State Government schools by one week would be a good thing because pupil-free days taken throughout the school year would be consolidated for that purpose. I ask the Minister whether he intends to do that, so that, instead of having pupil-free days throughout the year, they will be consolidated into one week at Christmas? If that is to be the case, will 14 000 teachers undertaking professional development all in the same week or will there be an extra week in addition to this week of consolidated pupil-free days throughout the year?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** In order to ensure that the honourable member is completely clear on this issue, I will ask the Chief Executive to comment, as he has a very good handle on the details.



**Mr Ralph:** As the Committee is aware, the Government has set a budget target for the department, and we have explored a range of strategies that will best meet the target that we have been set. One idea which has been put forward by my officers and which the member for Taylor mentioned in her question involves the possibility of addressing a number of concerns that have been expressed over time about the way in which we manage the absence of teachers from the classroom and matters relating to professional development and continuity of programs for students.

In the first instance, let me correct any misunderstanding that could exist with respect to the possibility that 14 000 teachers would be engaged at the same time in a professional development activity, because that is not the intention of the recommendation put to me by my officers. Training and development requires teachers to leave their classroom. One of the unique features of our profession is that teaching is not a clerical duty where a document can be set aside until the next day, because children present on every school day. So, whenever the classroom teacher is absent, that is a loss to the students. Nevertheless, we regard the training and development of our staff as having a high priority.

As I mentioned in answer to a previous question, teachers and members of the community have expressed to us concerns about the productivity of the last week of the school year in State schools which is over and above that of other school systems and which abuts very closely, almost within a day or two, the Christmas break. Families say that they are unable to get away to spend time with their extended family at Christmas, and teachers and principals say that it is impossible for them to get away for the public Christmas break and the spiritual season.

So, my officers have looked at a range of issues that we are putting together in response to that budget target. Across the year, the teaching service has school holiday periods. I acknowledge that many teachers undertake training and development programs in their own time during school holidays. We want to add another flexible aspect to that proposal. My officers have recommended to me that if that week at the end of the year was added to the period across the year every member of staff would spend at least five days of their holidays on training and development. That would not necessarily occur during those five days, because they might be spent returning from Andamooka or the Far North West to be with their families. Rather, they could choose to do two days in the May vacation, two days in the September vacation and some time in the Christmas vacation. Therefore, they would not need to be away from their class for those five days of training and development: it would be spread across the year. I take the member for Mitchell's point that it would be difficult to organise it in any other way.

As indicated in our proposed recommendations, it would create a number of other savings. At the same time, I hasten to add that there are a number of other dimensions of this idea that need further consideration. It has been suggested that issues regarding child care will also be raised if this change is accepted by the Minister. We will pursue this idea further. There are many more aspects to be discussed with people in order to gauge their views, but my advice is that there are some very good ideas within it which would not detract from the learning program of children but which would actually add to the continuity and strength of teaching programs for those children and improve the training and development opportunities for our staff. I know that our teachers are concerned when they leave their classroom for a day. I am

sure that they would feel that there are some good ideas to discuss, but there is the need to discuss this proposal further.

**Ms WHITE:** My question has not been answered. The Minister and the member for Flinders implied that those student-free days would be consolidated into the school week which will be cut from the school year. Is that so, or will there still be the same number of student-free days plus an extra five days cut from the school year?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** This is a plan that has been put forward. It has not been signed off yet and it is a matter on which we will be consulting further. It is part of our budget, but it is one area on which we will be doing more work.

**Ms BREUER:** My question relates to my previous question in relation to the capping of school grants. How much in total did parents pay in school fees in 1998, and will the Minister freeze school fees at existing levels? In relation to my previous question, do you agree that parents will be asked to make up these savings and that this could result in fees increasing by 25 per cent to 30 per cent with one week per year less of school?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The maximum that a school can charge for a primary student is \$154. Any fee above that level is paid voluntarily by the parents. The maximum that can be charged for a secondary school student is \$205, and if any school decides to charge more than that it is an option for the parent to pay: it is not required of them to pay. Subsequently, these fees will be fixed for the next three years at \$154 and \$205. If any school decides to set a school fee over and above either of those figures, it is for their school council to decide and then for parents to decide whether they wish to pay the additional amount above these fees.

I will now give the honourable member the amounts that she requested. Parents' contributions were \$17.9 million in 1995-96. Because we received those statistics through school financial statements we do not have further figures, but to date 90 per cent of schools have submitted their financial return for the year 1996-97. The indications are that parent contributions were \$15.5 million; the 100 per cent, if we assume the same proportion, would rise to \$17.2 million.

In terms of the overall budget, when one looks at education, as you rightly said earlier, \$1.6 billion in State money is spent on education. The Government covers some 93 per cent of the State school budget by that funding, about 5 per cent comes from school fees and the remaining 2 per cent comes from parents and school councils' having fundraising activities.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, Capital Funding Statement. Could the Minister provide an update on the following school projects in the electorate of Waite: the stage 2 redevelopment of Mitcham Girls' High School and the building proposals for Colonel Light Gardens Primary School and Glen Osmond Primary School? Given that there has been no major development funding in the Waite electorate for the next financial year, are these projects likely to be reconsidered for the following financial year?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** In relation to Mitcham Girls' High School, the final documentation is now complete and preparation is well under way to proceed to tender for capital works there. It is anticipated that the outcome will provide a music, drama and performance area, modifications and upgrading of some existing accommodation, address the service requirements and provision of disabled access, including a lift and an additional new classroom accommodation. The school is contributing some \$100 000 towards the performance area to enable extra space and additional

features to be included to meet its specific requirements. A feasibility study has been prepared incorporating a second stage of redevelopment. The main aspects of that study are directed towards meeting residual deficiencies and, whilst this has not been included within the current announced program, the needs included are well supported. The project is expected to be completed in February 1999.

In terms of the Colonel Light Gardens Primary School, a feasibility study has been completed specifically attending to the needs of the school's administration area, canteen and facilities. The study has been developed in conjunction with school representatives in a cooperative and consultative manner. The progressing of the project will be assessed in the processes to be undertaken finalising the 1998-99 programmed maintenance-minor works program. The school has also been identified as requiring further development and has been nominated for possible inclusion in future capital works programs.

In relation to the Glen Osmond Primary School, the district property officer is liaising closely with the school, particularly regarding the following works: provision of a security system, and consideration is being given to a fire safety audit in line with this provision for which funding has already been approved via the 1997-98 budget; and the provision of a replacement telephone system for which funding has been approved via the 1997-98 budget. The actioning of those programs is being planned to happen concurrently to minimise the possible disruption to the school, and the progressing of further works will be assessed in the processes to be undertaken in finalising the 1998-99 programmed maintenance-minor works program.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.14. How is the Government addressing increasing concerns with respect to aggressive behaviour from both parents and students?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Occasionally, teachers must deal with students who have threatened them either verbally or, sometimes, physically. It is a situation where we have backed up, and will continue backing up, the teachers as much as we possibly can in support and/or counselling for them. The school discipline policy emphasises the following: first, student success and safety; secondly, it involves the whole community in defining school behaviour codes; and, thirdly, it determines appropriate responses to both responsible and irresponsible student behaviour.

The data for 1997 indicates that 26.69 per cent of suspensions and 30.43 per cent of exclusions were for threatened or actual violence. Compared with the 1996 data there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of suspensions relating to threatened or actual violence. However, in 1997 exclusions for threatened or actual violence increased slightly by 1.8 per cent compared with 1996 data.

This is a very serious issue, and the collection of critical incident reports by principals ensures that follow-up support is provided to schools and sites after an emergency. Some 13 violent incidents have so far been reported in 1998, four of which have been violence against teachers. If a violent incident occurs, principals are advised to call police immediately on 11444 for a patrol car to attend. Schools are expected to develop an effective working relationship with local police and to seek police support for incidents which require legal sanctions, for instance, restraining orders where necessary. In conjunction with the police and the Secondary Principals Association, advice was developed for principals on a range of issues for when schools need police support.

A training package for school personnel has been developed to prevent violence perpetrated by students against teachers. These materials comprise a video and CD-ROM, and will be launched in July this year. A working party on parents complaints and difficult conflicts will consider, as part of its work, the legal position regarding vexatious or potentially violent parents, including utilising the provisions of the Education Act and the Summary Offences Act. Liaison with the South Australian Police will be reviewed. The department has already produced guidelines to assist schools, for example, in managing threats of extreme violence against staff and measures are already in place to assist schools, namely: the school discipline policy; support services (including behaviour management teams, personnel counsellors and social workers); the occupational health and safety manual; liaising with other agencies; and the published best practice with school discipline implementation kit in promoting safe schools.

We have a very dedicated and excellent teaching staff in South Australia. The department does all that it can to ensure that those teachers are well supported when these sort of issues occur. We live now in a far more complex society than we did 15 or 20 years ago in that when young people come to school they not only come to learn but also bring some of the problems from possibly dysfunctional families or other circumstances in their outside lives. Often teachers have to deal with this before they can undertake some education with those children.

I have witnessed this even in my own district where, in one of the primary schools I visited about three years ago, a young fellow on a Monday morning was sitting in the time-out area, obviously upset. I spoke with the principal and asked her what was the problem. She said that this young fellow has a father who comes home on the weekends, gets somewhat inebriated and takes it out on the children in terms of physical violence, and on Monday morning they end up with a problem in the classroom. By Monday afternoon they usually have it sorted out and the young fellow continues on for the rest of the week. She said that it happens on a regular basis. So, teachers have to deal with additional problems. Violence in schools, unfortunately, is one of those, but my department stands behind teachers with support and recommends to the teachers that, because they are not trained to deal with physical violence *per se*, they call in the police on any occasion they believe it is necessary.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 2, page 5.18. Will the Minister advise how the \$800 000 allocated to the cross-State vocational education and training project, regional development through school-industry partnerships, using the key competencies and enterprise education, is to be spent and will any South Australian funds be expended for the benefit of Victorian schools?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The Commonwealth has allocated some \$800 000 for the project she refers to. No direct funding from South Australia is required whatsoever. Our success in gaining this project with Victoria recognises the leadership of this department both nationally and in enterprise education. The project, as a strategic element of the school to work program—a joint project between the Department of Education in Victoria, our department in South Australia and also the national industry education forum—has been established. The \$800 000 project has been placed in seven districts: three in South Australia, three in Victoria, and one in a cross-border district, namely, the Riverland and Mildura.

This program is about years 8, 9, and 10 students and their vocational learning focusing over an 18 month project. Collaboration between local education, business, Government and community interests to broaden the range of school-industry activities in the junior years is a key aspect. The cost is \$800 000: \$400 000 of that total amount is directly distributed to districts to develop programs that demonstrate school industry links, key competencies and enterprise. A regional focus must be within the programs. An amount of \$200 000 has been allocated out of the \$800 000 for infrastructure support, including a project officer in both Victoria and South Australia and fees to the national industry education forum to work with business or industries at the local level and to support the national management team.

The final \$200 000 is expended from materials development, publication and dissemination. Professional development for teachers and industry/business/community personnel is also included in the expenditure of \$200 000. Information dissemination was also included in that amount of money in the form of a national conference that will occur at the end of this project. It is one that shows particular flexibility in dealing across the border and an effort to be able to maximise the options for our students as they leave school in building those links between industry and school, again attempting to improve a match between the skills that industry requires when students come out of school and those that students can achieve while undertaking their studies.

**Mr HANNA:** I pick up on a theme from the question before last regarding issues of violence and conflict in schools. I hark back to the Minister's media release earlier this year about parents who impede teachers in some way and perhaps interfere in the running of the school from the viewpoint of the teachers or the principal and who might therefore be liable to a fine. The Minister said clearly that parents who infringe in that way will be liable to be prosecuted and fined. How will that work in practice? Will a teacher or principal call the police and tell the police that that parent has impeded the teacher or principal and expect that the parent will then be arrested or at least have their details taken so they can be charged with an offence? How will the fining system work?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** As the honourable member rightly stated, in my former media release I indicated that the final step that could be taken would be to fine the parents \$500. Before any conflict or complaint gets to that stage it is worked through with not only the principal of the school but usually with the district superintendent also to ensure that the parents' complaints or conflicts are given every possible chance to be resolved prior to the police being called in or to any court action that results in a fine.

The department has developed a brochure to outline procedures by which parents can pursue grievances and it was the subject of preliminary drafting and consultation in 1997. It was part of the work convened by Mr Chris Charlesworth of my department with representation from two parent bodies. Approval by the Chief Executive was given in April last year for funding for consultation and printing of some 10 000 pamphlets to go out to parents. A workshop was presented by the South Australian Centre for Leaders in Education, entitled 'Managing Advance Conflict'. It took place in November 1997. The workshop was attended by a range of participants from DETE groups, DETE officers and principals' associations.

A number of recommendations came out of the conference, including the development an information brochure

to assist clients to access grievance procedures. The Executive Director of Schools, Dr Neville Highett, has now constituted a working group convened by Naomi Arnold, the District Superintendent, to further explore, develop and implement the strategies identified at the workshop. The working group includes representatives from the principals' and preschool directors' associations, the Australian Education Union, SAASSO and SAASPC. Other matters being investigated by the department include the coordination of departmental procedures for dealing with complaints, training for principals and other front line staff, the legal position in relation to vexatious or potentially violent complainants, the use of community mediation services and a code of conduct for all of that.

In all of this, we have to ensure that, where a genuine complaint from a parent is there, the bureaucracy does not stamp on the parent so a genuine complaint can be heard. But if we find that parents either are non-accepting or go outside of what would be termed reasonable efforts to satisfy them in terms of either conflict or a complaint, and become I guess either verbally or physically violent towards the principal or teachers, that is what the fine is set to discourage. I do not believe that we have had to use it in any case at this stage, as we have been able to work through all the conflicts. Obviously, the honourable member would be aware of a matter that was in the paper only a couple of months ago where a restraining order had to be taken out on a certain parent because of his threatening actions towards school staff and also his intrusion onto school property without the permission of the principal when long discussions had been held with that particular person on what his actions should be when entering the school property.

**Mr HANNA:** My question was directed at quite a practical level. I thank the Minister for enlightening us as to those preliminary matters which I understand are in hand. What happens today if, say, a parent who has been through the prescribed grievance procedure, met with the principal and district superintendent, persists and comes along to a school today and wants to express a great deal of anger, perhaps at a teacher in the classroom or at the principal, and the teacher or the principal feels that this is becoming too much of a nuisance? Do you say it is appropriate for the teacher or the principal in that situation, if it happens right now, today, to phone the police, get them onto the premises and institute proceedings to fine that parent?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Yes, where principals or any teachers or staff of the school feel threatened, my advice to them is to immediately call the police. Depending on the type of threat, whether verbal, physical or whatever, it is up to the police to take further action. Each case is different. It would then become a matter for the courts and whether the school wants to take action against that particular parent. That is left to the principal to decide whether the action taken by the parent requires court action or whether the bringing of police onto the school property would deter the parent from any further action, as it probably would in most cases.

**Mr HANNA:** As the Minister would be aware, I have an interest in a range of legal issues. I am moving now from the criminal to the civil arena. I refer to the issue of unpaid school fees, the regulations for which were recently gazetted. I believe that the Minister announced on 7 June that those new regulations would allow schools, specifically school councils, to take parents to court to recover unpaid school fees. Is the Minister aware of legal opinion—not necessarily the Crown Solicitor's opinion but independent legal opin-

ion—that compulsory school fees can be properly characterised as a form of taxation, and that the Education Act does not permit the making of a regulation which imposes taxation, and has the Minister taken advice on that specific point?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** No, I have not received any information from Crown Law on that specific tax point, but the Act does allow the Minister and schools to charge a materials and service fee. The Act states that the Minister will provide the materials for the teaching of children—that is, the salaries of teachers, the infrastructure required and the materials for teachers in which to conduct that enterprise in terms of affording education to our young people. The Act also provides that a materials and services charge may be levied per student, that being for books, pencils, school excursions and all that manner of issues that obviously go on at each school.

The issue of enforcing payment of that particular school fee, as the honourable member would be aware, was recently tested in the court by a couple in the northern suburbs. We found, on investigation, that there was a technicality involving the establishment of schools, and that that had not been undertaken under the Act. It actually goes back to 1972 when this current Education Act was brought into being. It apparently went through Parliament in a matter of three days, I am told. Prior to the new Act, school councils were established. It was one area of the Act that was missed when the new Act in 1972 was passed. As a result of that, school councils were not established from that time up until this test case appeared.

I can assure the honourable member that all school councils are now established. Our information in terms of the recouping of school fees is beyond doubt if somebody does decide to take it to the court. In terms of the interpretation of whether that fee is a tax, I would need to seek further advice on that matter.

**Mr HANNA:** I have a supplementary question on this issue raised by the Minister of the so-called materials and services charge being for those specific items supplied by a school. If it is truly a charge for materials and services, ought not those items be set out in an account to parents rather than simply having a one line notice go out with the school newsletter, and has the Minister received advice on the question whether a failure to properly itemise those materials and services for a particular school might mean that legal action for recovery of fees would fail on the basis that the materials and services had not been specified?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** In the Act, materials and services are defined under part 9. It states:

It includes books, stationery, apparatus, equipment, facilities and organised activities.

In terms of the honourable member's question of the defining of what the school fee is for, I have seen a couple of schools that do actually define in a circular to parents what it is for. Paralowie, from memory, is one of those.

**Mr HANNA:** They all should.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** It may well be a good idea. I am quite happy to look into that for the honourable member. It then makes it quite clear to each parent as to exactly what they are paying for. I have no problem with that at all.

**Mr HANNA:** I return to the issue of what the Opposition perceives as a week being chopped off the school year. Earlier the Minister referred to savings based on fewer relief teachers being engaged to cover the permanent teachers going off to receive professional development and so on. There is

another issue there involving cost shifting in relation to the wages of relief teachers from the departmental budget, strictly speaking, to individual schools where relief teachers are required. Is that the case? If school councils or schools will have to provide funds for relief teachers out of their own budget, how will that be enforced, and will it be considered a service in respect of the materials and services fees?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I am advised that we might need to take that question on notice, but Mr Treloar may be able to provide the information the honourable member seeks about temporary relief teachers. We may have to take on notice the legal aspects of the honourable member's question.

**Mr Treloar:** The issue of savings referred to previously relates simply to the existing overruns on the TRT budget. So, we would be saying that there is a budget and that to stay within it would be the budget strategy. Shortening the school year by one week will save of the order of \$2 million in TRT costs for training and development. As for the legal aspect of that, the Minister will seek further advice on whether a school then pays for some extra TRT costs.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** From my discussion with Mr Ralph, I wish to add to what Mr Treloar has said. There is already an allocation to schools of TRT days.

**Mr Treloar:** Some 20 per cent of the TRT budget is a \$2 million a year allocation for TRTs to back up professional development.

**Mr HANNA:** That figure remains unchanged?

**Mr Treloar:** That is what we will save if this strategy is finally approved by the Minister.

**Mr HANNA:** Are you saving the overrun or are you saving the \$2 million that is currently set aside?

**Mr Treloar:** They are two issues. In one line we talk of the TRT budgets to schools, and that is the figure of \$1.2 million which was talked about and which is simply the overrun on existing budgets. Many schools stay within their budget allocations. Taking a system view of it, that is the overrun. The other side of it—that is, the savings derived from a shorter school year and this issue of training and development being done at a time when there is no requirement for TRTs—is a saving of \$2 million to \$2.1 million per annum. They are two different issues.

**Mr HANNA:** Will the Minister guarantee that school councils will not be paying for relief teachers whenever they are required—with or without the shorter year?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** It is unlikely that that would happen. I do not want to close the door on it, because school councils and principals have said to us that one of the areas of local management over which they would like some control themselves is TRT days. If I say, 'No, it can never be handed over to school councils' I will be on record as saying that, and I do not want to be, because the principals' associations with whom I met only this past week have indicated that they would like some flexibility in those TRT payments and in relation to local management. So, I cannot categorically say that school councils will not be paying for them, because that is one of the issues that will be discussed by the Local Management Working Party, in collaboration with the principals and the union.

**Ms WHITE:** But they cannot pay fees on it?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** No; TRT days cannot be moved across to school councils through the school fee. TRT days are an allocation from the department to the school itself, and the flexibility that is sought is within that allocation and how exactly that all works, but the funding for that cannot be

shifted across to school councils and therefore end up in school fees.

**Mr McEWEN:** That is good to hear, because school councils want to save on expenditure but do not want to inherit more responsibility for revenue. I return to the question of the maximum school fees of \$154 and \$205 and the fact that the expenditure will be itemised. How does a school deal with a student who pays only the maximum and not the voluntary component, yet where the itemised amounts are more than the maximum? Will that student be denied access to materials?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** No, the student will not lose out. Under the revised regulations, the maximum that can be charged is \$154 for a primary school student and \$205 for a secondary school student. Any payment above that is voluntary on the part of the parent. In addition to that, where parents are having some financial difficulties or indicate that they are not able to pay that fee up front, we have enabled them to negotiate with the principal to pay over three terms so that they pay by the end of the third term. The Act also provides that the principal may, subject to any directions of the Director-General of Education, on application by a parent or student on financial hardship or other grounds, waive payment of the whole or part of the charge. So, if a parent shows that they cannot afford it, there is provision to waive that payment.

**Mr McEWEN:** I doubt whether the voluntary payment would be made, because it is your choice as to whether you pay it. I can see it becoming an absolute minefield and creating all sorts of tensions within the school and the student community because some will choose to pay the voluntary component and others will not. I cannot see where this will end up, but I can see that it will pose all sorts of difficulties to the dynamics of a school.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I do not think it will create any problems at all. The present situation is no different from what has been operating for many years now. The school fees issue has not been raised in this sort of context before, but I am sure the honourable member would have noted the reaction of parents to some other parents' court case challenging the school fees. I have found that those parents were very supportive of paying the full fee, and I did not see any interviewed who were against it. When you look at it you find that, if the fee is spread over the 40 weeks of the school year, it is under \$4 per week for the full provision of primary school education and about \$5 per week for a secondary school student's complete education.

I think that that is extremely good value. With regard to whether a parent decides to pay more than the set \$154 or \$205, after discussions with parents I have found that the majority want to make a contribution towards their children's education. Also, one has to remember that no contribution is required by the parents of students who are on School Card and that those children do not suffer at all because of that.

**Mr McEWEN:** Has any consideration been given to pegging TAFE fees, keeping in mind that now in some courses they amount to many thousands of dollars? There is a feeling in the community that some of these courses are becoming elitist simply because access is being denied to many students because they cannot afford the fees.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** TAFE fees have been frozen for 1998, and they will be up for review at the end of this year for 1999. The general service fee was introduced in 1984 under a Labor Government to recover a contribution to the cost of student services in TAFE institutes, and it is reviewed

annually. The rate increases in 1996 were as follows: subjects totalling more than 10 hours, \$63; subjects totalling 10 hours or less, \$13; the enrichment education hourly rate, 38¢ per hour; and the fee-for-service hourly rate, 38¢ per hour. Fees did not increase in 1997 or 1998.

The administration fee was introduced in 1991, again under a Labor Government, at the rate of 21¢ per student hour to recover part of the operating costs of TAFE institutes, and it is reviewed annually. It was increased in 1996 to 51¢ per hour to a maximum of \$445. The fee was not increased in 1997, nor has it been increased in 1998.

The apprentice materials fee was introduced in 1991 to recover from apprentices a standard contribution towards the cost of materials consumed in off-the-job training in TAFE institutes, and it is reviewed annually. It was increased from \$84 in 1995 to \$91 in 1996. Again, the fee was not increased in 1997, and it has not been increased in 1998.

The materials fees are determined by institute directors to recover the costs of educational resources consumed in courses and/or purchased on behalf of students. The level of fees is reviewed annually. The variations in fees are determined by institute directors, and movements normally reflect the approved Government policy in relation to adjusting for inflation. The total revenue in 1997 from those fees amounted to \$21.61 million, broken down as follows: the general service fee, \$2.8 million; the administration fee, \$3.47 million; and the materials fee, \$15.34 million.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I am extremely excited about the Urrbrae High School and TAFE project redevelopment, which, of course, is in my electorate. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.1. Will the Minister brief the Committee on the current status of that project?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Exceptional projects will take place, and some have already started. The Urrbrae High School facilitates students from all over the State and not only from within the catchment area of Urrbrae. In fact, students from farms, rural areas and other metropolitan areas where students have an interest in agriculture have access to the Urrbrae Agricultural High School. It is of a particularly high standard, and the students who come out of there with an agricultural background and qualifications in that area are well sought after for employment on farms and in research activities with the Primary Industries Department. Many move across the road, so to speak, to continue their education with an agricultural science degree at the Waite Campus of Adelaide University. This school is not restricted to people in the area but is accessed by people from all over the State.

On 16 September last year Cabinet gave approval for the Urrbrae project to go to tender. It was based on a budget of some \$16.85 million, with \$250 000 set aside for the project from DECStech funding, to bring the total to \$17.1 million. On 3 November 1997, tenders were called for three packages. The results have undergone a comprehensive budget management review. The final tender proposal has been endorsed by me and is a combination of approval by Cabinet of additional expenditure of funds from alternative sources and a reduction in the project scope, which is as follows: additional expenditure of \$100 000 on a State tree centre contribution which was brought forward; TAFE sector provision of \$300 000; the contribution from school funds of \$100 000; and from DECStech 2001, \$250 000. That makes a total of \$750 000. The scope reduction of \$390 000 is in the building fit-out in some site works and furniture.

The redevelopment of the Urrbrae Agricultural High School will provide refurbished accommodation for a total

value of some \$6.2 million. The development of facilities for the Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE, Brookway Park School of Horticulture, will cost about \$10.8 million; and the development of the State tree centre for the Department of Primary Industries and Resources amounts to some \$600 000. So the total project costs are \$17.6 million in completion. As the honourable member has said, it is an exciting project; there is no doubt about that. It will benefit those students and also people in the area. The new buildings for students will include an eight lab science block; a canteen-cafeteria-staffroom block; a turf study centre for TAFE; a natural resource management centre for TAFE; a horticultural centre for TAFE; a machinery building centre for TAFE; and an administration and resource centre block.

These facilities will provide for Brookway Park TAFE to be successfully relocated. The programs will enable joint teaching of TAFE and high school students to take place and to utilise the skills and talent of teachers and lecturers for the benefit of all students. In conjunction with these developments, there will be appropriate infrastructure and site works, including parking spaces; a new sealed roadway connecting Cross and Fullarton Roads; landscaping of key areas; and wiring for all services, including information technology.

There is no doubt that this will become a world-class facility with the upgrade of existing teaching areas and the expansion of facilities in the educational programs. A major initiative for both institutions is in the development of joint vocational education training programs in the specialised area. The new department incorporates two former departments, and this is just another example of how extremely good cooperation can take place between two departments in providing vocational education and training courses for young people. I commend the previous two departments and the officers of the new single department for their work on this project. It has been somewhat of a complex one from time to time, and it is one which has now been settled on.

**An honourable member:** It's long overdue.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** As the honourable member said, it is long overdue but it has now been settled on. The Urrbrae High School and its partner in the Waite Institute across the road will provide an agricultural education resources now which will be second to none anywhere in the world.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The success of Waite has been fantastic, and I know the member for Waite is jubilant. Many of the services at the Waite campus used to be at Roseworthy. I am concerned about the future of Roseworthy, and I know the member for Light probably is, too. Is the future of Roseworthy assured? What is happening? I was concerned when the wine making courses left Roseworthy.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** That has concerned me as well. The Roseworthy Agricultural College—as it was previously; now it is the Roseworthy campus of the Adelaide University—has a long history. Being a neighbour of it for some 40 years, I have seen much of that history over my fence. It concerned me when the oenology and wine marketing courses were taken away from Roseworthy and put onto the Waite campus. It was agreed between the University of Adelaide and the wine industry to relocate those facilities to the Waite campus. However, as a result of that, the number of students on the Roseworthy campus has now diminished substantially. We have been undertaking discussions with Prof. Malcolm Oades, the Director of the Waite Institute, to ascertain what other areas students can be sited on the Roseworthy campus. We are looking at the provision on the Roseworthy Campus of some agricultural courses that are currently provided

through TAFE. We are also looking at expanding the number of conferences for farmers that are held at Roseworthy to ensure that access is still available to farmers.

The animal science section of the University of Adelaide on the Waite campus is to be transferred to the Roseworthy campus. The research piggery which was at Northfield has now been relocated to Roseworthy and a new research piggery has been built there.

I have received a number of letters from farmers within my area and other areas of the State, and also from the Roseworthy old collegians expressing their concern about the changes that have occurred at Roseworthy. They have all had the opportunity to put in a submission to Prof. Oades and to a committee that is looking at Roseworthy in order to highlight their concerns and also to highlight what areas, in terms of practical agriculture, they believe should be taught at Roseworthy. That committee has looked at those submissions, and I have a meeting with Prof. Oades next week to discuss the alternatives for Roseworthy to ensure that it continues as a primary and important part of agricultural education in this State.

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

**Ms BREUER:** My question relates to school closures (Budget Paper 3—page 165). The Opposition understands that the budget savings target of \$29.8 million for 1998-99 includes \$2 million from school closures. Given that any school that closes at the end of this year will provide only six months worth of savings, how many schools will have to close to achieve this target of \$2 million, and when will the Minister announce which schools are under review?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The member for Giles is correct in saying that the amount stated in the budget for this financial year is \$2 million. I am sure that she would understand that each school is different. Larger schools with higher teacher numbers will have greater infrastructure costs. So, obviously when those schools close there will be larger savings than if a small rural school with only one or two teachers were to close. I cannot give the honourable member the amount involved because of that variation, and I cannot provide a list of schools because there is no list.

A number of parents and school councils have approached us and said, 'Our school has a capacity for 300 to 500 students, but we have only 150 or 200; we think we might be able to get better educational opportunities by amalgamating with another school.' That sort of an approach has been completely unsolicited. Parents are recognising that in terms of educational outcomes for their children a certain size of school can offer a far wider curriculum choice, so the students are the beneficiaries.

I agree that the savings go to Government as well but, in fact, in respect of all the closures that took place last year I have not received any comment from any school to say that it is not happy with its current situation. It is possible that not everyone complains to me, but if I can refer particularly to the Challa Gardens school, where a number of Croydon students went, the reports I have received from that school—and we have made sure that we have tracked this one so that parents are satisfied, not that we have done anything more at that school than at any other—are that the parents are extremely happy with the educational outcomes.

**Ms BREUER:** As the Minister would know, the subject of school closures is very dear to my heart as I have experienced a number of them in my electorate. One of the issues

involved is the review process. I was part of a review team over an 18-month period in Whyalla. Does the department maintain a group of officers responsible for school reviews; what are the criteria for listing schools for review; and which schools are to be reviewed this year?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Dr Neville Highett is the Director who covers this area, and Mr Mike Dellit covers operations of schools and liaises with district superintendents in terms of which reviews will be undertaken. To the best of my knowledge, unless Dr Highett has other information, no reviews have been commenced or are planned to commence. As the honourable member would know, there is an amendment to the Education Act before the Lower House at the moment by way of a private member's Bill, and the Government has indicated that it will not move on any reviews until that amendment passes the House.

In respect of the schools that I cited this morning—Taperoo, Ethelton, Semaphore Park, Largs Bay and Kybybolite—the parents and school councils have approached us; we have not instigated the review. In answer to the honourable member's question—and this has been the case for about 10 years, since we have been looking at these matters—the district superintendent takes over the review process and consults with school councils, parents and principals of the cluster of schools in a review. Regarding the criteria for a review, foremost in our mind is how we can improve educational outcomes for our students. Challa Gardens and Croydon are classic examples.

The second point I would like to make is that demographics change. As the honourable member would acknowledge in respect of the area covered by her electorate, populations change. For instance, as suburbs such as Seaford grow, after 25 years they may well have a population that is much older in demographic profile. So, we looked at demographics in terms of Croydon and Croydon Park. There were places for just over 3 000 students, but there were 1 300 students in that cluster of schools with no likelihood of an upturn in student numbers.

A brochure entitled 'Guidelines for school reviewing and restructure' was distributed to schools and work sites in April 1996. School communities have expressed the need for a more detailed document to assist them in the review and restructure process. The existing processes and practices are currently being reviewed. As I said, the honourable member would be aware of the amendment that is before the Parliament. A document has been prepared which covers in detail the initiation of school reviews, the consultation process and how this might be conducted, the decision making processes, and presentation of recommendations. This information is being prepared using current departmental policies and practices and the experience of departmental officers in managing previous school reviews. The information is practical and in handbook format for the use of all members of the school community.

**Ms BREUER:** My question relates to Budget Paper 3—page 165. Which schools sold part of their property in 1997-98 to finance upgrading projects and what are the details; how much was received from the sale of school land in 1997-98, and which properties were sold; what is the forecast revenue in 1998-99 from the sale of school properties; and will the Minister provide a schedule of properties which will be offered for sale to achieve that target?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** It is estimated that \$13.5 million will be achieved from the sale of school properties in 1997-98, and in 1998-99 we estimate some \$13 million will

be achieved through the sale of school properties. Members must remember that once a school or land owned by the department is declared surplus, it is then transferred to the Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs which is then in full control of the sale of the property. We still monitor the property in terms of security and keeping the property in a reasonable state, but the sale process is then undertaken by the Department for Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs. In terms of control of the sale process, it is up to that department at that stage as the building has been transferred to them. We have the final say on the sale price, of course, but in terms of movement and how quickly it moves it is that department.

I seek leave to insert into *Hansard* a list of the sale of surplus land and property for 1997-98.

Leave granted.

Sale of Surplus Land and Property 1997-98

	Estimate 1997-98
	\$
Adelaide Girls H.S. Parcel 1	598 617
Adelaide Girls H.S. Parcel 2	1 000 000
Belair JPS	237 918
Conyngnam St (blocks)	2 459 911
Conyngnam St (CS Land Swap)	500 000
Findon P.S. Parcel 1	622 877
Findon P.S. Parcel 2	1 600 000
Gawler H.S. (easement)	400
Marion H.S.	2 179 521
Marion H.S.—Furniture	3 850
Osmond Terrace—Buildings	100 000
Nailsworth H.S.—Land & Buildings & Oval	99 597
Paradise P.S. (easement)	6 000
Plympton H.S. (part)	1 927 808
Redhill P.S.	23 150
Thebarton S.S. (part)	207 663
Tonsley Park P.S. Parcel 2	429 727
Edwardstown P.S.	33 390
Marion P.S.	157 076
Mt Barker H.S.	3 000
West Lakes H.S.	560 641
Millswood (Wiltja)	175 105
Mulga Street, Mt Gambier (balance)	19 818
Seacliff JPS (part)	450 000
Expected Total 1997-98	13 396 069
N.B. Expected receipts from sale of Goodwood Orphanage are not included.	

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I also seek leave to insert into *Hansard* a list of surplus land comprising about 12 sites that has been identified for sale in 1998-99.

Leave granted.

Surplus Land and Property 1998-99

Marden H.S.—Tennis
South Road P.S.
Sturt P.S.
Camden P.S.
Christies Beach West H.S.
Croydon P.S.
Croydon Park P.S.
Mawson H.S. (balance)
Netley P.S.
Corn Point R.S.
Seaton Park P.S.
Tanunda P.S.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** In relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.22 which deals with trends, what is the proportion of enrolments in non-government schools in South Australia, what has the trend been and how does that compare with other States?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** There has been a change in enrolments between Government and non-government schools over some period of time and I would have to say that

this is not peculiar to South Australia: this has been occurring in each and every State of Australia. One of the reasons is that a number of non-government low fee paying schools have been operating within South Australia in the past 10 years. It is now much more affordable for parents who previously may have wished to have their children undertake education in a religious school and who were not able to afford it some time ago. So, I believe that is one of the reasons why the shift is occurring.

In 1997, the percentage of full-time enrolments in South Australia in non-government schools in the mid-year census was 28.8 per cent of the total student population in South Australia. Over the past 10 years there has been a small increase in total State enrolments. This has amounted to approximately 8 000 students, so obviously the proportion of students in the non-government sector in South Australia has increased. This is consistent with the national trend, but is actually below the Australian average. The Australian average is 29.7 per cent and across Australia the number of full-time students in the non-government sector increased between 1996 and 1997 in all States and Territories except Tasmania.

In 1997 the Australian Capital Territory had the highest percentage of non-government school students at 35.3 per cent, and Victoria at 33.7 per cent and New South Wales at 29 per cent all had a higher percentage of enrolments in the non-government sector than does South Australia for the same period. The trend of an increase in percentage in enrolments in non-government sector is the same if full-time equivalent enrolments are used—and that is 28.5 per cent—but it is slightly lower if you take that way of accounting for the figures due to the high proportion of part-time students in Government schools. The most recent data available for interstate comparison is as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. If we go back to the 1970s, in South Australia the proportion of students in non-government schools remained fairly stable. It increased to only 14.6 per cent in 1978. The most significant growth that occurred in the non-government sector was in the 1980s when total enrolments in the State decreased steadily and the proportion of students in the non-government sector rose to 23 per cent in 1988.

The statistical summary I tabled earlier provides the details of enrolments in Government and non-government schools since 1985 and that statistical summary incorporates that table if members wish to see the change that has occurred in Government and non-government schools in that time.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, portfolio outcomes and strategies, page 8.9, which refers to moves towards a greater degree of self-management for schools and institutions within the system. I have seen visible evidence of this in my own electorate as I have visited schools, and the 'can do, hands on approach to business' used by school management teams has been most impressive. Will the Minister provide details of how local management will be implemented, and can the Minister give an assurance that the benefits of the public education system will be maintained?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckley:** As I said earlier today when this matter was raised, school principals, school councils and parents continually lobby me to say that they would like to have a greater control over the budget of their school. Some quite interesting examples are currently occurring of the sorts of savings that people might make as a result of taking over the operations themselves. Reynella Primary School has been looking at what energy savings it can make. They have found

that by adopting a certain range of procedures—such as switching off lights when they leave classrooms, turning off heaters and ensuring the maximum amount of natural light is coming into their classroom—they have been able to save 52 per cent of their energy bill. Currently, 32 sites are in the energy trial and the savings are around about 5 per cent in per kilowatt hour usage which amounts to 17 per cent in dollar terms. Further, Port Wakefield Primary School, for example, has cumulative savings from 1992 to 1996 of 25 per cent; Christies Beach, 38 per cent; Reynella East, 51 per cent; Ethelton, 27 per cent; Hackham West, 13 per cent; and Belair Primary School, 37 per cent. As members can see there are significant savings.

As I said earlier, we advised school principals just the other day that within the next couple of weeks I will be setting up a working party which will recommend how a local management trial should be operated. The working party will report to me by the end of September this year. My department's position is to seek support for local management framework that will cover all schools and, as appropriate, children's services sites. If we decide to go down the track of local management (and we will wait to see what are the recommendations of the working party), any outcome will be purely voluntary on a school's part, so there will be no mandatory requirement to go down that path. The level of school funding they would receive, were they to take on local management or not, would not change. There would be no disbenefits or cost to the school for not being involved in the scheme.

Two areas I will not take out of the department, namely, the curriculum and some areas of staffing. There has to be some flexibility. Members would be aware that we have choice in terms of principals and deputy principals for schools and I see that being maintained, with some flexibility in that area. I will not let the department let go of those two areas. The flexible initiatives funding of some \$18 million, introduced over the past four years, has been extremely popular. Principals have been able to make their own decisions on how they will spend that money—whether they use it for staff development, to purchase temporary replacement teachers or for additional SSO hours for further development or support in their classes.

A number of areas have been doing trials on this already before we have set anything formal in place, particularly in the Fleurieu schools and in the Peachey Road trials, which all focus on aspects of local management. The honourable member would be aware of a project currently being developed in his district between Unley, Urrbrae and Mitcham Girls High Schools. The purpose of the project is to establish, implement, review and document the structures and procedures by which the three schools will be allocated more direct and flexible management responsibility for their educational resources in order to deliver better educational outcomes for their respective school communities.

The move towards this devolution will involve a maintenance of the schools' systems and within that system the decision-making process will occur where the service is provided, but the system will retain control in those two aforementioned areas. In meeting with the school principals' association representatives last week, I found they were pleased to have the working party set up. I indicated that it was not my desire to go down the track Victoria has currently taken with local management and they were particularly pleased with that as the view held in some areas of the school community was that this Government might have been



looking at that. That is not my view, but I believe that savings can be made from local management. Depending on the outcome of this working party, a large proportion of those savings will be retained by the school community to spend how they want in order to improve the educational outcomes in their school.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, the capital funding statement on investments, and to the issue of The Orphanage Teachers Centre, which has been subject to considerable discussion in my area. How will the Department for Education, Training and Employment use the proceeds from the sale of The Orphanage Teachers Centre?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The sale of The Orphanage Teachers Centre yielded some \$6 million. This was made up of \$2.5 million for the open space (which included the driveway, bridge and car park) and \$3.5 million for the main buildings (that is, the refectory and land). The proceeds of the sale will fund the development of the Education Development Centre at Hindmarsh. The centre will have four main components: first, the training and development unit (currently located at The Orphanage Teachers Centre and at Palmer Place in North Adelaide). This will be housed in three floors of new accommodation in the southern end of the Hindmarsh Town Hall building. Secondly, the library and information service has been formed by consolidating a number of out of school departmental library services. The service will be located in the Plane building adjacent to the town hall. Thirdly, the Technology School of the Future will be relocated from Technology Park to the northern portion of the Hindmarsh Town Hall building.

The Technology School of the Future is an excellent school. If any member gets the opportunity to go out and look at what is being done in that area I advise them to grab it with both hands because the work being done by our teachers in that school and the sorts of technology and concepts they are exposing our students to is nothing short of fantastic. Students come away highly charged and enthusiastic in terms of what they might be able to do. Fourthly, the curriculum resources unit, currently located on several sites, will be located at the Education Development Centre and housed in one unit of about 1 200 square metres of leased accommodation in a new building to be developed by the City of Charles Sturt. The centre will support the directions of the department into the twenty-first century by achieving strong economic, educational and operational benefits by locating these groups on to one site. Each will be able to maintain and improve current services to meet departmental needs. The digital precinct already has many private enterprise tenants engaged in information technology, multi-media and communications. The council is encouraging this mix of technology related activities, which will benefit the educational sections to a marked extent.

The cooperation we have had between the City of Charles Sturt, the department and the Government has been excellent. They are very keen on forwarding this project and making it a centre of excellence within their council. It will be one that will ensure that teachers have a first-class facility in which to conduct conferences and sales of educational booklets and the type of material that we currently have in a fairly cramped area. That will enhance education in this State, without any doubt.

**Ms WHITE:** The 1996 enterprise agreement included significant undertakings by the Government to conduct reviews and increase expenditure for specific purposes, in

addition to the scheduled salary increases. One of the issues I am particularly concerned about, as are schools, is the certainty or uncertainty on whether programs such as the early assistance action plans and special assistance to children with disabilities will be continued past 1998 into 1999 and after that. Will the Minister tell the Committee whether the 1998-99 budget includes funding amounts for the continuation of special programs such as the \$9.25 million allocation for students with disabilities and the \$18 million allocation for flexible resourcing?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The \$9.25 million and the \$18 million is in the budget for 1998.

**Ms WHITE:** What about 1999?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The new enterprise agreement negotiations start on 1 July 1998 and those issues are part of a new enterprise agreement. We have allocated funding for it in the 1998-99 budget, but naturally they are both flexible initiatives within the enterprise agreement.

**Ms WHITE:** As a supplementary question, school principals have to plan next year whether they will be able to continue those programs, based on whether they continue to have the staff currently available to them under those programs. Are you saying that there is no certainty about whether those programs will continue because they are subject to the outcome of the enterprise agreement, or are you saying that those programs will continue?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** They are a factor of the enterprise agreement. Obviously, the sooner we can settle the enterprise agreement, the sooner there will be certainty about those programs. As I said, we have allocated that money in the budget to ensure that those programs continue, but they are also a part of the enterprise agreement and will be subject to negotiation in that agreement. As I said, the sooner we can come to an agreement, and I hope that is fairly quick, the sooner we will have certainty.

**Ms WHITE:** Will the Minister confirm that an audit is currently being conducted of children receiving special education assistance, and that that audit is being done to identify a cut in special education teachers? I have had a number of approaches to my office by parents of disabled children. In fact, I had an approach yesterday by the parent of a severely disabled child who has been informed that the classification of her child has dropped significantly, and with that it is anticipated that that child will receive fewer resources in terms of support. Will you confirm that, first, an audit is going on, and, secondly, that you are looking to identify cuts to special education teachers?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** No, there is no formal audit in progress, but there is an ongoing and regular review in terms of the needs of those special children. Obviously, if a child has either regressed or progressed, we need to be in touch with that and need to adjust the resources concurrently to that child. I may need to get more information for the honourable member on that. There is no formal process, but an ongoing review of individual students does occur in terms of assessing their needs within a school.

I have been advised that there is also support for students with disabilities in terms of salaries. Four full-time equivalent salaries have been allocated to disability services and behaviour support services—that is, one full-time equivalent per group of districts—to develop and implement programs to support students with a complex and challenging behaviour. It has taken some time to implement because the positions had to be advertised. As a result of that, we are now moving on that.

**Ms WHITE:** I signal to the Minister that there is some distress about the downgrading of the classification of some disabled students.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** If the honourable member would provide me with specific instances, I will be happy to take that up for her.

**Ms WHITE:** I refer to the enrolment benchmark adjustment. On 18 February, in answer to my question about cuts from the Federal Government of the order of \$34 million over coming years due to this new way of calculating Federal moneys to the State with respect to student numbers, the Minister told the House that he had clawed back the EBA from \$3.6 million to \$2.6 million. The Minister said, 'We will make up the shortfall'. I refer members to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 and the un-numbered page following page 8.30, which shows that the per capita grants to non-government schools increased by just \$1.514 million, from \$151 440 000 to \$152 954 000. Given that the non-government schools received an additional \$1.5 million, how did the State lose \$5.2 million?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** As the honourable member would be aware, I, the previous Minister and all State Ministers indicated to Federal Minister Kemp that we were not in agreement with the enrolment benchmark adjustment scheme. In the 1998-99 financial year, an amount of \$5.225 million is provided to cover what we consider will be that additional drift to the non-government schools. As I said earlier, and also in the Parliament in answer to one of your questions or that of another member, this Government will ensure that over the next three years the amount of funding going to Government schools for as long as enrolments are maintained will be continued. So, those amounts that are in the budget ensure that funding to schools is continued in the same way for the same number of students. Mr Treloar may be able to provide a little more detail.

**Mr Treloar:** The amount shown for non-government schools in the budget papers is a preliminary amount. The actual amount for 1998-99 will be based on the actual outcome for 1997-98 plus a Treasury inflation allowance on goods and services of 1 per cent, plus a provision of 25 per cent of agreed salary movements up until December, including the existing enterprise agreement, plus a provision for growth in non-government school numbers—and those numbers were not known in time for the budget papers.

As I understand it, we are looking at an estimate of about \$2.8 million for the projected increase in numbers which will be known through the July census, less the \$1.2 million for the funding reduction to non-government schools. Simply put, the amount included in the papers is a preliminary amount subject to the actual calculations for which Treasury provides an additional appropriation. That has been the case over the past few years.

**Ms WHITE:** As a supplementary question, that still does not quite add up. The point of my question is that we have been told that, because of this enrolment drift to non-government schools, that is the funding following those students, but in the budget papers you have the Federal Government cutting the Government schools by \$5.2 million or whatever figure it turns out to be, but the transfer to the non-government schools is something considerably less than that—just \$1.5 million according to the budget papers. Even allowing for the sorts of things you are talking about, they do not equate to the same amount. Can we conclude that the money is going not directly to the non-government schools but outside the State? The State is losing that money completely.

I am asking you to reconcile the difference between the amount going to the Government schools of \$5.2 million or whatever figure you come up with and the budgeted \$1.5 million to the non-government schools. That is a big difference.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I think the honourable member is asking whether, if the proportion of Federal Government and State funds for education is split 70-30, we will get the same amount of educational funds in South Australia. She is saying that we lost \$5.2 million and that \$1.5 million is going to the non-government schools, and she is asking whether the State has then lost \$3.5 million. I ask Mr Treloar to explain.

**Mr Treloar:** I do not believe that has occurred. We will have to provide a reconciliation for the honourable member before the end of this session.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.11. In what country areas is there an under supply of teachers, and what is being done to ensure that all country students have access to the broadest curriculum possible?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Teacher supply in the staffing of country schools has been discussed of late. Each year approximately 5 000 applications are lodged with my department seeking employment as a teacher. Of that pool, approximately 1 600 applicants seek temporary relief teaching only and, of the remaining 3 400 applicants, only about 20 per cent declare themselves to be available for country teaching. In 1997-98, the department undertook a vigorous recruitment campaign which saw 349 teachers made permanent with the department. The vast majority of these were in country locations.

In the main, the department is able to fill permanent and long-term contract vacancies in the country through the school choice and central placement exercises. In 1998, only one known vacancy remained unfilled at the commencement of the school year. In the recruitment drive certain teaching fields were identified as experiencing particular shortages. Those included mathematics, science, technology and agriculture, and these will be a priority recruitment for 1998-99.

The major difficulty in staffing country schools emerges with short-term vacancies. At the start of the school year the pool of available teachers is relatively deep, but the pool diminishes quickly after the start of the school year when staff decide to take leave and need to be replaced. Many schools have difficulty in attracting temporary replacement teachers to fill day by day vacancies. When I visited the West Coast a couple of weeks ago with the honourable member, a school at Wudinna indicated to me that, due to sickness or those types of things that occur normally in a community, they had particular difficulty in attracting temporary replacement teachers on a particular day to fill those vacancies, because of the shortage of supply in those areas.

A number of strategies have been discussed with principals to address the issue. They include the pooling of TRT days to buy a contract teacher, increasing the time of a permanent teacher, changes in time for a contract teacher and sharing part time contract teachers across various schools. The information sessions with graduating students highlight possibilities for career opportunities by basing themselves in country locations. So, they can score more points by going to the country and teaching for a period of time than by applying for a metropolitan location. We have been looking at a range of incentives to attract teachers to the country.

Some 73 schools currently attract that country incentives leave, which is paid under the following formula: leave with

pay is granted after continuing service in a designated school or in two schools which together attract 5.5 or more isolation placement points. In these cases, one term's leave with pay is granted after six years of continuous service; two terms' leave with pay after eight years; and one year's leave with pay after 10 years continuous service—so that is a significant incentive.

Many schools in South Australia attract locality allowances due to the cost of living expenses and car depreciation. These locality allowances vary according to the economic disadvantage for particular locations as determined by the Commissioner for Public Employment. They currently range from \$319 to \$5 339. Enhanced placement and complexity points enable country teachers to be competitive in the placement process in a time frame equivalent to the previous four year guarantee. Enhanced placement and complexity points provide a significant advantage for country teachers; there are also enhanced rights of placement for some teachers in specific locations.

Teachers appointed to Aboriginal Anangu schools are entitled to one term study leave with pay after two years of service. An allowance in lieu of removal costs is paid to teachers who complete seven years in schools which attract two or more isolation points, and this can continue up to their tenth year. There is one additional salary increment for teachers who remain for more than four years in schools that attract two isolation points.

A number of incentives also apply to principals and deputy principals in Aboriginal and Anangu schools, including a four week induction program, an allowance of up to \$2 000 after three years of service, one term paid training and development leave after three years, and a guaranteed placement in a principal or deputy principal position within 150 kilometres of Adelaide for a period of two years. Country teachers can also access non-metropolitan allowances, and staff in some designated locations can also access return travel to Adelaide through award provisions. Country incentives for preschool staff have not as yet been discussed, and no incentives are provided for non-teaching staff.

Provisions in the first enterprise agreement and current negotiations on country incentives have led to agreement on providing removal expenses for contract teachers appointed to country schools. Also, a total review of country incentives will occur, and that will incorporate all previous information that has been gathered throughout the sector and hopefully identify some new ways of applying a range of incentives to attract teachers to the country.

I turn to areas where agreement has not yet been reached. Country incentives for principals and deputy principals have been proposed in line with teachers and are subject to agreement on the implementation date of 1991. Area principals and the union wish to have it backdated to 1997. At a meeting with the Area Principals Association just this week I indicated that I will be approving the 1991 date. The union is not satisfied with the department's definition of a graduate as it applies to the allocation of additional staffing support of .1. The department has defined a graduate as someone who graduated in 1997 and who has not been employed on a contractual basis with the department since graduation. Discussions are continuing on those two points.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.14. What security and smoke detection measures were in place at the Port Augusta and Norwood-Morialta campuses, and how effective were they in dealing with the recent fires?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** There are a few relevant points here. In January 1997 the former Minister (Hon. Rob Lucas) announced a commitment to spend some \$4 million on fire and intruder detection devices in the following two years, that is, in 1997 and 1998. Some \$3.4 million has been spent on this program to date and a minimum of \$600 000 will be allocated in the 1998-99 program maintenance and minor works program. Some 179 sites have been completed or commenced under this funding arrangement, with intruder and fire detection devices installed, bringing to 370 the total number of sites with intruder detection devices installed.

The 1999 alarm program will target the next group of high risk sites and will be framed using the following criteria to identify high risk: the number of incidents at the site over the previous two years; the current level of activity which may indicate that the site has become a target for unlawful activity; a report by the site manager on events and behaviour noted at the site; and the potential risk from changes in local culture in the area.

We also use closed circuit television, and cameras are installed at five sites. These cameras are movement sensor activated when incidents are occurring and are directly monitored at the Police Security Services Division's control room. The Norwood/Morialta High School dual campus has intruder detection and fire detection devices installed at both sites, and they operated very successfully during the recent fire. In fact, the firefighters were there very quickly and were able to limit damage to the technology centre. However, while they were fighting that fire we assume that whoever lit it must have decided that, while the firefighters were fighting the technology centre fire, they would light another one. So, the damage in that fire was obviously restricted also.

All sites in Port Augusta have intruder detection installed. Four of the nine sites have fire detection devices fitted and an additional two sites are currently having them installed. Both campuses of the Port Augusta High School—Stirling and Seaview—will be designated for the installation of fire detection devices in this year's program maintenance and minor works program. Fortunately, the day on which the fire occurred at Port Augusta was a pupil free day and staff were on site when the boiler blew up and were able to alert the fire services.

To complement the alarm program a number of local management strategies have been implemented. These include the use of mobile security patrols, the introduction of School Watch programs, improved security lighting, the ETSA night sight program (which is an initiative between ETSA and the department), fencing and barricades to deny access and to direct people away from sensitive areas, close cooperation with members of the South Australian Police Force and the development of security strategies with site managers.

Earlier this year I visited one of our primary schools which had instigated Taxi Watch. This program is proving to be successful and allows taxi drivers who are close to a school to enter the school property and drive around in order to ensure that there is a presence there, and if they see anything untoward they take no action but immediately report it to the police. We have taken this additional step to ensure that we keep a presence in our schools as much as possible so as to reduce the amount of damage that is caused to local school property.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to the Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.10. I note reference to providing 17 speech pathology positions for children with special needs under 'Specific

Objectives/Targets for 1998-99'. Will the Minister provide more detail on what the Government has done to improve the provision of speech pathology services for children and students with communication difficulties?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** This is a particularly important area. When I speak to teachers as I move around the schools I find that there is an increasing number of students with speech difficulties and those sorts of problems. In last year's budget the previous Minister announced that we would be looking to provide an additional 17 speech pathology positions for children with special needs. We have made a substantial and ongoing commitment to improve speech pathology. In 1995 three positions were allocated for services in preschools to reduce the waiting list and to provide services to more children.

Later in 1995 a further three positions were provided to assist children receiving departmental speech pathology support in transition from preschool to school, allowing a continuation of the support to be provided in preschool for up to the first two terms of school: 0.3 positions of this allocation was to early childhood speech pathology services and 2.7 positions to schooling speech pathology services.

In 1996 a further 5.7 positions (or \$300 000 of recurrent spending) were provided, with 2.8 positions allocated to early childhood and speech pathology services and 2.9 positions to schooling speech pathology services. With these allocations the early childhood speech pathology service has increased from 8.9 to 15 positions, or a 68.5 per cent increase; and schooling speech pathology services from 25 to 30 positions, or a 20 per cent increase.

A one-off allocation of \$300 000 was made for the 1996-97 financial year which provided for the continuation of the collaborative Crippled Children's Association/Department for Education, Training and Employment speech and language programs in preschools, a reduction in the waiting list for schools and an additional manager/speech pathology position within the new departmental structure.

This one-off allocation was repeated in the 1997-98 financial year, resulting in a continuation of the earlier projects and new initiatives such as the development of a training package for preschool staff, assisting children with communication difficulties, establishing several pilot speech and language programs in preschools, investigating the efficacy of different support models, and a resource position to address issues for speech pathology staff in providing support to Aboriginal children and students. This allocation is now recurrent.

The most recent initiative of this Government in relation to speech pathology in the department is an allocation of \$1 million of recurrent funding. This allocation has seen the appointment of 11 new speech pathology staff, that is, three in early childhood and eight in schooling, at the beginning of the 1998 school year, with a further six schooling positions to be in place by July this year. These increases will bring the early childhood complement to 18 full-time equivalents, or a 102 per cent increase since 1994, and a schooling complement to 45, which is an 80 per cent increase in the number of speech pathologists supplied by the department since 1994.

This is a vastly expanded speech pathology service. Previously, parents often had to see private speech pathologists for the help of their children, and there was a significant waiting list. The commitment of this Government, and under the previous Minister also, has been clearly defined to try to assist parents who have children with speech problems, as shown by the percentage increases which have occurred.

**Mr HANNA:** On many occasions, the Olsen Government has given explicit support for the Prime Minister's plans to introduce a GST. Has the Minister or any of the departments or agencies under his portfolio undertaken an analysis of the impact of the introduction of a GST at the likely rate of 10 per cent, or at any other rate, on the cost of delivering State Government goods and services?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** It is a hypothetical question, because we do not know what the Federal Government's tax package will be. There are indications that a GST may be included in that package, but we really do not know. We have not undertaken any assessment of an impact of the GST basically because we really do not know, first, whether there will be one and, secondly, at what level the percentage of GST would be applied.

**Mr HANNA:** Has there been any estimation regarding whether the number of goods and services purchased by the department would increase if there was a GST?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** No, we have not undertaken that. At this stage, we have no idea whether that GST would apply to all goods and services or whether some would be exempt. It would take much time and many resources to undertake a program of looking across the whole of the department to see what increased costs there might be—if there are increased costs—so that has not been done. We will just have to wait and see what happens when the Federal Government releases its tax package. We will then have some indication as to what implications it has for the department.

**Mr HANNA:** Given that the Federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister's tax package is likely to be announced in this coming financial year, and if there is to be a GST of general application, will the Minister support that GST's applying to the materials and services charge of schools?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** It is a hypothetical question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The question is hypothetical.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** We have no idea what the GST will look like. We will just have to wait and see what that will look like when the Federal Government brings it down.

**Ms WHITE:** During the election, the Liberals promised a Computers Plus scheme to add \$10 million on top of the \$75 million over the five years in the DECStech 2001 document. On 24 February, the Minister distributed \$5.6 million under the Computers Plus scheme to schools—an average of \$7 700 per school to purchase whatever they wanted in that category. Given that the Computers Plus scheme was not in the budget, how was the election promise funded? Were those funds DECStech funds?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The Computers Plus scheme has been greeted favourably within our school system, and it has, once again, given schools the flexibility to decide where they spend their money. The \$10.6 million has been funded out of the DECStech money, but that was because there was considerable slippage in that money. The Treasurer said that we had to use that slippage before he would allocate us the further \$10.6 million. In answer to the honourable member's question, it has come out of there, but the additional \$10.6 million is available to us once that slippage has been expended.

**Ms WHITE:** This new accrual accounting format requires one to do some detective work; I thought that is where it come from. I refer to the capital works program, Budget Paper 5, Capital Works (page 1-4). This shows that works were budgeted to cost \$167 million in 1997-98, and that includes new and ongoing works. The estimated expenditure, though, is only \$136 million—a shortfall of \$31 million. The

schedule also shows that the proposed budget for 1998-99 is \$118 million, a reduction on last year's expenditure budget of \$49 million. Budget Paper 5 (page 1-5) states that the program reflects an increase in TAFE capital works and a decrease in education works. Will the Minister confirm that TAFE capital works will be funded by the Commonwealth, and provide a breakdown of the \$118 million capital expenditure figure in the 1998-99 budget between TAFE and Education?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I defer to Mr Treloar, as he has the figures at hand.

**Mr Treloar:** The department's capital works program, with the estimated expenditure for 1997-98, is \$128.935 million, made up of the former DECS' component of \$105.8 million and the VET component of \$23.1 million. The budget for 1998-99 is \$110.1 million and, with the former DECS component, \$84.174 million, with the VET component an increase to \$25.942 million.

**Ms WHITE:** Why was the capital budget in 1997-98 underspent by \$31 million? Given the Premier's stated commitment to drive new employment through the capital works program, what will the Minister do to ensure that next year's program is carried out and not underspent, with more slippage involved?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Part of that question I will defer again to Mr Treloar, and I will pick up the second half.

**Mr Treloar:** The 1997-98 departmental capital works program will not be underspent. It will be in accordance with the estimates.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** When determining that we will spend what we say we will spend, there is always an element of weather and other factors; for example, I refer to the TAFE development in Light Square, where the transfer of titles, and so on, has taken longer than we expected, through no fault of the department but through the time it has taken for them to move through the system. There have always been elements that can cause slippage in a capital works expenditure budget. That is recognised by anybody who undertakes capital works, whether they be in the private or public sector.

**Mr Treloar:** The 1997-98 capital works statement for education includes universities in the \$167 million figure. The figures I gave were purely the department's figures, which are a component of those figures. Universities' expenditure was included in one and not the other. That is the significant difference to which the honourable member was referring regarding the decrease from \$167 million to \$136 million. That involves education in a global sense, including universities. The advice I gave related to our department, which will not be underspent in its 1997-98 capital budget.

**Ms WHITE:** Will you provide a breakdown of education versus TAFE capital works? According to the Budget Papers, the Minister intends to close 30 schools over the next three years. How many new schools are programmed to be built in that period?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** In the budget we say approximately 30 schools. That figure was arrived at from looking at the previous experience of both Labor and Liberal Governments. If you look at the history, it works out to about 10 school closures or amalgamations per year—and that is where that figure has come from. We might achieve that, we might not: it depends on the reviews that are undertaken whether there are enhanced educational opportunities for students as a result of amalgamations and/or closures.

The number of new schools that are being built relates particularly to demand, looking at the demographics and where growth areas occur within the State. For instance, Seaford R-12 school is currently undergoing stage 2 of its construction. I am aware that Playford school is to be built over the next couple of years, and Mawson Lakes is another school which is on the forward program of the budget estimates. All those schools are being built in areas of population growth. Where that growth occurs, it is normal that there are young people moving into new houses and having children who are of primary or secondary school age. We do not have any further information at this stage.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 2, page 5-18. Will the Minister inform us of the progress of the DECStech 2001 program?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The DECStech 2001 program has been extremely successful if you compare the year 1993-94 when \$360 000 was expended on computers in schools with the \$75 million DECStech 2001 program over five years and, as the member for Taylor indicated, the Computer Plus program of \$10.6 million. This raises the commitment of this Government to put information technology and computers into schools to \$85.6 million until the year 2001. Changes in technology have occurred at a fairly rapid pace. We have achieved the following up to this point. Over 9 000 subsidised computers have gone into schools, the average subsidy being \$750; and software specifically targeted to student use in the curriculum (such as Kid Pix Studio, Hyper Studio, World Book Encyclopaedia, and reductions to the purchase price of both Microsoft and Clarice suite of products totalling 60 per cent off the original price) has been put into computers in schools.

There have been training and development grants to schools for our teachers and leaders to further develop their schools and support the embedding of these schools into the curriculum. Cash grants have been made to schools to support the provision of expensive peripherals such as digital scanners, digital cameras, software printers and consumables. There have been further cash grants so that schools can make location decisions about their computing facilities. For example, the need for extra power points and furniture has also occurred, and those grants will further complement funds gained from other areas such as the annual furniture grant. Technical support has come from 13 district support officers in both country and metropolitan areas.

As I move around the schools I see that some schools are close to their 1:5 ratio that we set for the year 2001. The majority of schools probably have a ratio of about 1:11 or 1:12 and are moving forward at a fairly rapid pace. School councils and parents must remember that computers do not have to be purchased. A three year lease scheme operates, and that is cheaper in the short term as far as cash flow is concerned rather than schools purchasing outright. Once that lease expires at the end of three years, an upgrade in technology would obviously occur when the next lease is undertaken. There are significant advantages in doing this. There are 7 686 machines currently leased by South Australian Government schools. The lease is interest free, so there is a significant advantage in undertaking that action.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I call the member for Gordon. The Chair notes his previous experience and expertise in TAFE.

**Mr McEWEN:** I am delighted to see from this morning's *Hansard* that the Minister used the word 'alliance' when he spoke of the South-East-Onkaparinga relationship. I thought for a moment he used the word 'amalgamation'—my

committee would have been most upset about that. We heard this morning that the budget cut for this year is \$3.5 million; for next year, \$7.9 million; and for the year after, \$9.5 million. In the light of that, what are the implications in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of TAFE?

**Additional Departmental Advisers:**

Mr D. Carter, Executive Director, TAFE SA.

Dr G. Wood, Executive Director, Vocational Education.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The figures that have been nominated in the budget in terms of reductions to TAFE are there in the belief that we can achieve more efficiencies in TAFE than are currently the case. As I said earlier, the cost of the delivery of student hours throughout the South Australian system of TAFE is the most expensive of the mainland States. That is of concern. It means that we are not performing as well as other States. There are factors that must be taken into account. You cannot just compare: you must compare apples with apples. Distance factors must be taken into account when comparing South Australia with the national average. It may be that we cannot get our costs down to the national average and still provide the excellent service and delivery that occurs through our TAFE sector. I am not suggesting that we must get it down to \$9.90, but I believe that efficiencies can be gained in our system. The figures that are stated in the budget are the efficiencies that we are looking for.

**Mr McEWEN:** I note from the statistics document you handed out this morning that the annual curriculum hours under 'TAFE SA core' reduces from in excess of \$14.2 million in 1997 to less than \$12.5 million in 1998. Can you explain why we have such a significant reduction in TAFE SA core annual curriculum hours?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I ask Mr Carter to answer that question.

**Mr Carter:** The complication in the current financial year relates to the different funding arrangements with respect to VET in South Australia and how TAFE SA acquires its funds. Some of those funds are provided by the Government direct to TAFE SA and a considerable amount of other funds must come through contestable arrangements. All the new apprenticeship courses now come through user choice arrangements, so at the beginning of the year we do not know what proportion will be going to TAFE SA and what proportion will be going to other providers.

In addition, the open training market provides an increasing amount of dollars through competition and, again, TAFE SA competes for that proportion of funds with other providers. Our best estimate at this stage in terms of our 1998 performance is that TAFE SA will increase its total hours compared with 1997 after those factors are taken into consideration plus the fee for service work that TAFE SA does so well.

**Mr McEWEN:** In relation to the University of South Australia-DETAFA one-off extraordinary payment back to University of South Australia of \$2 million, could we be enlightened as to why that is occurring?

**Mr Carter:** I am not aware of the details of those figures, but my understanding would be that that relates to the repayment of financing arrangements with the University of South Australia for the construction of the facility at North Terrace.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The two computer programs which were listed have been successful, but we have had some complaints from various country suppliers of computers in the first contracts. Are we able to do anything for the future to assist our country suppliers of computers?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** There were three preferred tenderers and suppliers which came out of the DECStech 2001 project. They formed a consortium in terms of purchasing. One of the factors in local purchasing of computers was the 24-hour service to those computers. It is fine in the metropolitan area and even within your electorate, Sir, as to the availability of those people who are computer technicians and who can actually repair a computer when it breaks down.

But, on the West Coast or in the Far North or in more isolated regions of South Australia, that service could not be guaranteed by a local supplier. That was one of the major reasons for accepting the tenders of the three that formed the consortium in the DECStech 2001 project. In terms of economies of scale of purchasing, when there is the purchase of thousands of computers, the purchasing power of a local supplier is often quite different where the major consortium is buying a large number of computers compared with company X, the local supplier in a town, and the numbers of computers to which it may have purchasing power access.

The Government stands by its commitment to small business in South Australia, and the \$10.6 million allocated to the Computer Plus scheme has allowed the flexibility for schools to purchase from their local suppliers of computer technology. I am very aware that that has occurred in many cases. The \$5 million cash injection to which the member for Taylor alluded earlier could be used for a range of programs. It could be used for the purchase of laptop computers, the purchase of software or the purchase of cabling for schools, and all of that could be purchased via the local supplier rather than through the consortium. They could go back to the consortium if they wished to, but they have the choice of using a local supplier. So, that has been a successful program.

**Mr McEWEN:** Notwithstanding that there is enormous buying power for the three large buyers, when a local TAFE could still purchase locally at \$300 less per computer—and the recommendation by TAFE SA is that the purchase be made locally—why would it be overturned by Supply SA in relation to an initial contract for 25 computers and another contract for between 40 and 50 computers. I might add that written correspondence of that matter is being investigated by Minister Matthew. So, I do not believe that the large ones give you better buying power.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I thank the member for that knowledge and I will be interested in Minister Matthew's answer to the local member.

**Mr HANNA:** My first question relates to the Marion corridor review project, which deals with secondary schools and primary schools. Obviously a certain amount of money was set aside ultimately to come from the proceeds of the sale of school sites, which was to be redistributed to improve and upgrade the schools involved in the Marion corridor review project. So far, which schools have benefited and by how much from that project, and how much money is allocated in the coming financial year from Marion corridor review project funds, and where will those funds be directed?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The honourable member would recognise that the Hamilton Secondary College, which is in his electorate, is one of the schools that benefit from this amalgamation and money being spent in the Marion Road corridor. The schools that closed at the end of the 1996

school year were Sturt Primary School, South Road Primary School and Marion High School. From the beginning of the 1998 school year the following structures apply: Daws Road High School, which caters for years 7 to 12 plus; Hamilton Secondary College, which caters for years 7 to 12 plus and adult re-entry; Marion Primary School, which caters for years R to 6; and, Clovelly Park Primary School, which also caters for years R to 6.

The Government has committed over \$5 million to upgrade facilities in these four schools. The middle schooling programs at Daws Road High School and Hamilton Secondary College reflect those described in the educational brief that looks at young adolescents. The member for Mitchell and I were down at Hamilton Secondary College only a few weeks ago and the range of facilities available, not only for those intellectually disabled students but also for other students in that college, are second to none. You walk in and feel that you are not on a school campus but rather on a university campus with its layout and grounds. If I were a student it would be an absolute joy to go to that school each day because it does not look like a typical school—the facilities are excellent.

**Mr HANNA:** It is very well run.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Yes, it is very well run. The new flexible teaching areas have been upgraded to accommodate that middle schooling cohort at both Daws Road High School and Hamilton Secondary College. The impact of the R to 6 structure is currently being reviewed by the schools to see what impact it has. Staff have undertaken extensive training to implement appropriate methodology, and further training and development is planned throughout 1998. This year, for the first time, 52 year 7 students enrolled in the middle school program in Hamilton Secondary College. When the member for Mitchell and I were there, the school principal expressed the opinion that that has worked extremely well, and the year 7 students have slotted in well to the middle school program.

**Mr HANNA:** By way of supplementary question, a couple of key points were overlooked in the Minister's answer. First, the Minister referred to the \$5 million (an amount announced over two years ago) to be ploughed back into the schools in that area. Has that amount been spent and, if not, why not? Secondly, I do not believe there was any mention of the Clovelly Park Primary School, which was involved in the review project and is desperately in need of a major upgrade. The Minister has been kind enough to pay particular attention to Clovelly Park Primary School. Will he inform me of the state of that budget request?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The best way to handle this is to get a reconciliation statement for the honourable member prior to the end of today on the \$5 million and advise him how it was spent. We will read it into *Hansard* later. There is a budget of \$712 000 for the redevelopment of Clovelly Park. Pre-tender estimates at this stage exceed this figure, and the department's approval to call tenders was provided on a test market. The tenders closed on 29 May, and early indications are that tenders have been favourable and the project will be achievable within the \$712 000 budget, so we will be able to go ahead with that redevelopment.

**Ms BREUER:** How much has user choice changed the way VET is delivered in South Australia? How much funding was provided this year, and how much will be provided next year for general tender programs? Of that funding, how much will go to TAFE SA and how much will go to private

providers? How does this funding compare with what is going directly to TAFE SA?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The user choice market has changed things in South Australia in that from 1 January this year private providers who are accredited can deliver courses of education in South Australia, whereas previously it was specifically the monopoly of TAFE SA. Dr Jeff Wood, the Executive Director of Vocational Education and Training, is here and I ask him to address the issues raised by the member for Giles.

**Dr Wood:** User choice has been implemented since the beginning of 1998, and since 1 January 1998 the department has received 80 registrations of interest for user choice funding arrangements from registered training organisations, including TAFE institutes. As at 1 June, 78 funding agreements have been signed between registered training organisations and the department.

In order to assist with the cash flow to registered training organisations, many of which are themselves small businesses, an administrative system based on projected student numbers and imprest payments combined with accountability through auditable returns is used. The predicted student numbers to date are: for all apprentices, 1 436; and, for all traineeships, 7 857. That makes a total of 9 293 students. The total value of all funding agreements signed to date is \$20.451 million and, at this stage, only the imprest payments and the first term's payments have been made, and that totals \$4.99 million. We intend to conduct an independent evaluation of the success of user choice in the second half of the year. Part of the question related to how much of that will go to TAFE and how much will go to private providers. I cannot answer that right now, but I should have the information by the end of the day.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to specific objectives/targets for 1998-99, at page 8.16. Will the Minister advise what developments in training for the fishing and related industries have occurred in the past year, and what plans does the Government have for this area in the future, including the role of the institute of TAFE at Port Lincoln?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The aquaculture industry in South Australia is growing at quite a prodigious rate at this stage. In terms of education and skills training for people employed in this industry, it is a particularly important role that the vocational education training sector has to undertake. That sector in the fishing, seafood and related industries has expanded significantly over the past two years. There are two primary sources of delivery for training in the fishing industry: the Australian Fisheries Academy and the Spencer Institute of TAFE. The Australian Fisheries Academy commenced operations on 1 July 1997. The academy is an independent industry-based training provider located at the campus of Douglas Mawson Institute of TAFE at Port Adelaide under a formal lease arrangement.

The major part of the academy's operations during the 1997-98 financial year involved the delivery of vocational education and training in maritime studies, which was funded under a formal funding arrangement between the academy and me. The 1997-98 funding agreement contracted the academy to deliver 41 791 curriculum hours at a cost per curriculum hour of \$7.82. During 1997 the academy also taught trainees, now known as new apprentices, in commercial fishing—that is, wild catch—and mariculture. On the basis of the academy's 1997-98 performance, negotiations with respect to the 1998-99 funding agreement have been concluded.

The new funding agreement significantly expands the training program to include seafood and post harvest training as well as maritime studies. The total amount of funding provided under the 1998-99 agreement is \$519 715 in return for 67 060 hours of accredited training. This reduces the unit price per curriculum hour from \$7.82 in 1997-98 to \$7.75 in 1998-99. Two further traineeships in the seafood area are also to be offered by the academy this year pending approval by the Accreditation and Registration Council.

The Spencer Institute of TAFE at Port Lincoln, which I visited when I was on the West Coast with the local member, impressed me particularly. The Spencer Institute will offer in excess of 90 000 hours of accredited training in aquaculture this year in the following categories: the Diploma of Aquaculture, Certificate 4 Aquaculture, Certificate 3 Aquaculture, and Short-term Non-award Modules. This represents approximately 50 per cent of the total offering to the aquaculture industry for 1998 and will be achieved at an average delivery cost of just \$6.50 per hour.

The Spencer Institute offers aquaculture in three different modes of delivery: face to face attendance at Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, Port Victoria and Kadina; open learning packages developed to support external delivery of the program; and on-line interactive mode available via the Internet. In excess of 90 per cent of aquaculture graduates of the Spencer Institute gain employment. Some 25 per cent of all graduates from the Diploma of Aquaculture have entered the Bachelor of Natural Resources at Flinders University of South Australia, a number receiving the Dean's commendation, which indicates that they performed in the top 10 percentile.

Close cooperative working arrangements have been developed with the Marine Science Centre of Flinders University at Port Lincoln, and the Diploma in Aquaculture has attracted international enrolments. The Spencer Institute of TAFE is currently negotiating joint development and/or delivery of aquaculture programs with a number of interstate providers. I am pleased to say that the Certificate in Fisheries Compliance was recently developed by the Port Lincoln campus of the Spencer Institute in association with the fisheries section of the Department of Primary Industries. This course has received considerable attention nationally, and the matter of delivery to other States is being discussed.

In my visit to the Spencer Institute at Port Lincoln, I was particularly impressed with its aquaculture centre, which is working with Flinders University. They are attracting internationally renowned maritime scientists to that centre, so the benefit then to students undertaking the diploma is that they can work alongside international maritime scientists and gain experience from them at the same time as undertaking their diploma. It is a particularly successful course, as is the Australian Fisheries Academy, which I have also visited and, likewise, I was very impressed with the courses that it is delivering.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** With respect to the specific objectives/targets for 1998-99, at page 8.12, how do the strategic alliances between rural and metropolitan TAFE institutes improve regional TAFE services and programs?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** These alliances are particularly valuable because a range of services are available in the metropolitan area that are not always available within the country. So an alliance between the institutes is of great value. Strategic alliances have been established between the Onkaparinga and South-East institutes, as the member for Gordon was pleased to hear, and I can assure him that that

alliance will continue. There has also been an alliance between the Torrens Valley and the Murray Institute—the Murray Institute being in both my electorate and also yours, Mr Chairman.

With the strategic alliance of the Murray and Torrens Valley institutes, a cooperative program of delivery is leading to a better range of programs available to the communities served by the two institutes, and a more efficient use of resources is occurring. Specific cooperative delivery activities include the following: teaching programs; an information technology program; natural resources; business studies; horse studies; horticulture; community services; and textiles, clothing and footwear. These programs are now delivered across both institutes, an initiative which broadens considerably the professional expertise available to students from the north-eastern suburbs, the Barossa Valley, the Mid North and the Riverland. A business plan for the alliance is now being developed.

The South-East Institute and the Onkaparinga Institute of TAFE are working together to create efficiencies and increased business by rationalising corporate functions and establishing a larger and more flexible human resource pool by cooperating in the delivery of services and providing opportunities for research and development. The efficiency and productivity improvements associated with current initiatives pursued as joint projects are likely to become evident in the next 18 months. These joint projects include strategic planning processes; a single human resource management resource; a single quality system; shared information technology training resources and infrastructure; assessment of programs which can be delivered using one set of resources across both institutes; and a coordinated approach to organisational development.

In addition to the alliances between the rural and metropolitan institutes, TAFE SA has also entered into arrangements with universities which enable students to articulate to a degree course via a TAFE award, which can be provided in the local region. That gives a particular advantage to young people in rural areas whose families may not be able to afford to send them to boarding facilities in Adelaide. This measure is saving considerable costs to families because students can undertake a degree course while still living at home. An example is the Diploma in Aquaculture available through the Spencer Institute of TAFE. This articulates with the Bachelor of Technology in Aquaculture offered by Flinders University. When I was at Port Lincoln, a number of students indicated that they would move on to that Bachelor of Technology, and they would be able to stay in Port Lincoln to do so, rather than having to travel to Adelaide to undertake their studies.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.13. What assistance does small business get from the State Government for staff training and development?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** Through the department, the South Australian Government provides substantial support for training and skills development to small businesses in South Australia. Small business is the employment engine room of the South Australian economy. In 1996-97 there were some 71 200 small businesses in South Australia, accounting for 97 per cent of all businesses in this State. Small business employs some 245 600 South Australians, of whom 58 200 persons are self employed. The number of people employed in small business—that is, excluding employers and persons owning or operating a non-employing business—has increased by 17.2 per cent since 1993,



compared with a rise of 2.3 per cent for medium and large businesses over the same period.

The support provided to small business includes the Small Business Employer Incentives Scheme, which provides financial incentives of up to \$4 000, payable over two years to a small business not paying payroll tax, to take on an apprentice or trainee. This program has allocated 1 000 places to small businesses over the 1997-98 financial year. I know that that scheme was oversubscribed, that the 1 000 positions were taken up and that there was a waiting list for that scheme. Additional funding for the scheme of \$6 million over the next two years was announced by the Premier on 26 May, as part of the Government's employment statement. Some 40 per cent of the funding, or \$2.4 million, will be allocated to regional South Australia, and 60 per cent, or \$3.6 million, will go to the metropolitan area. In addition, all businesses which accept the Small Business Employer Incentive Scheme will be offered an opportunity to receive up to 20 hours of subsidised human resource advice under the new Human Resource Advisory Service.

A small business operations traineeship has been developed in response to the flexibility provided by the new vocational education training system. The traineeship is innovative in that it is undertaken completely on the job. The Training Contracts Branch of my department provides funding support of up to \$1 280 per trainee to registered training organisations that deliver training and support to full-time, on-the-job trainees; monitor their progress; and assess the achievement of required competencies. The South Australian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry promotes and supports the small business operations traineeship.

In South Australia there is a network of group training companies, most of which are supported through Government funding of \$1.8 million. This funding is made up of \$900 000 of State Government funds, matched dollar for dollar by the Commonwealth, and funding provided through the Australian National Training Authority. Group training companies employ apprentices and trainees and manage their placement and training activities with host employers. Apprentices are actively rotated through a variety of workplaces and thus provide a valuable service to small businesses, which otherwise would not be in a position to employ an apprentice full-time.

One of the advantages of that scheme is that, where for instance a builder might take on an apprentice in a certain area—for example, a plasterer or tiler—that apprentice is able to be moved among various occupations within the building industry. So, the apprentice gains skills not only in the trades of tiling or plastering but also in other areas of the building industry. It allows a small business to take on somebody where otherwise they would not have been able to employ them for the full 12 months of the year. It is a significantly successful scheme, and has attracted a lot of interest.

Today I have also announced that the State Government will provide small business with a training ticket, valued at \$500. Under the Ticket to Training program, eligible small businesses will be able to negotiate with a registered training organisation for up to \$500 worth of accredited training. The type of training, where it is delivered and the number of people who participate will be determined through negotiation between the eligible small business and the registered training provider. In any given year, a small business will be eligible to receive one payment of \$500 under the Ticket to Training program. Guidelines will be developed to ensure

that duplication with other Government programs does not occur.

**The CHAIRMAN:** When will the new Tanunda Primary School open and when will construction on the new special education unit begin?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I know that you have been extremely interested in this project. I was taken over the new Tanunda school by one of the school councillors only two weekends ago, and although it was not quite finished at that stage it was very close to completion and will be an excellent facility for those people in Tanunda. The new school is due to start operations in the third term of this year. As you would be aware, we had a problem in the number of people who indicated that they were willing to place their students in the special education unit that was to be attached to the Tanunda school. When that unit was first discussed, the parents of about 18 or 19 students indicated that this unit must be built yet, when I asked for registrations of interest as to which students might be attending, only three put their names down.

Subsequently, due to some of your good work and the information that was disseminated to parents to allay their fears that this unit would be less than any other unit to which their children are currently being sent, we now have about 12 definite initial enrolments and additional enrolments for the year 2000. We are now calling tenders for the building of that unit, and I expect it to be ready for the start of the 1999 year or very soon thereafter. The primary school is practically complete, and I think it will commence in term three. I am advised that construction of the special unit will commence in August this year, so we look forward to that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is great news, Minister.

**Ms WHITE:** Does this budget honour the following five election promises made by the Government last year? The first promise was to introduce a requirement for 70 to 90 minutes of minimum contact time each day for literacy development. Has that been met and, if so, where is it funded in this budget? The second promise was the school league table to allow parents to compare schools. Has that been established and, if so, how much will that cost in this budget and how is that information to be distributed? The third promise was to force all children in years 8 to 10 to complete 20 hours community service. Has that been funded in the 1998-99 budget and, if so, what service is to be undertaken? The fourth promise was that \$600 000 was to be available this year for the expansion of formal sporting programs. What are the details of that? Finally, when will the Education Act be amended to change the composition of panels selecting school principals?

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** On the issue of the 70 to 90 minutes, we are reviewing that at this stage. It is my belief that we are fairly close to achieving that already but a review is being conducted into how we would ensure that that election promise is met. On the issue of the schools league table which compares schools, to my knowledge we are not doing anything about that. I am not quite sure where you get the election promise of a schools league table.

**Ms WHITE:** In the election document.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** That's interesting. It has not been used, anyway. I am aware of a league table which operates in England and which compares schools and lists them in order of excellence. I am not in favour of that situation at all. What we have suggested—and it might be what the honourable member is referring to in that document—is that we compare like schools with like so that, for instance, Unley High School might be compared with a

school of a similar socioeconomic standing. Similarly, you might compare one in Elizabeth to one in Christies Beach. Therefore, we would be comparing like with like rather than undertaking a schools league table. I do not agree with that and I believe that nothing can be gained from that. I ask Mr Ralph to comment.

**Mr Ralph:** I want to move away from use of a term like 'league table', but for schools to compare their standards with like schools is a matter to which we have been giving consideration. We have asked Dr John Keeves and Professor Richard Teese, two distinguished academics in educational measurement, to look at this issue. I have examined the targets that are set in Scotland and have found that it has quite a different methodology than that used in England.

Scotland has set targets for schools that take account of the enrolment of the school, the socioeconomic situation of the school and what can reasonably be expected in terms of improvement at the school. This matter was discussed during the time of the previous Minister with the Principals Association, which indicated that, with caution, there would be some possibility of looking at the comparison of achievements of schools such as Highgate and Mitcham, which are serving similar communities, but not adopting the English approach which lists schools, irrespective of their socioeconomic situation or the community that they serve. That is a matter that we are considering, as expressed in the election commitment. We are moving carefully in this area, but we believe that it will bring benefits if it is managed very carefully.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** In relation to the eight to 10 hours community service, we did have that in our policy document and we will be working towards that over the term of this Government. No time frame was put down for that to be implemented but we will be working towards it, and I think it will be of great benefit to students and the community alike.

Regarding the \$600 000 expansion in sporting programs about which the member for Taylor has inquired, the review of formal sporting competitions in South Australian schools was completed in December 1995. Since that time the positions at the West Beach Sports Unit have been filled and a project manager of sport has been appointed. A departmental Sports Management Committee has been established to oversee sport in years R-12 with departmental representation from the school sport associations.

In September 1997 the then Minister approved the following funding initiatives: \$242 107 for a secondary school sports grants scheme which was paid to schools in May 1998; \$260 000 to support SAPSASA districts, the time allocations provided to district convenors from the beginning of 1998; \$63 158 supplied to country zones; \$31 138 additional administrative support for the West Beach Sports Unit to support increased programs and workload arising from the further implementation of the review recommendations; and \$10 000 to support the participation of very isolated schools in a formal sport program. The first initiative of this is planned for September 1998. If you add that up I think it totals \$606 403 at current costs.

The initiatives are being implemented during the 1998 school year and information is being sent to schools outlining the process to put those initiatives in place. I will hand back to Mr Denis Ralph, who can give a few more details on the 70 to 90 minutes of literacy training for students.

**Mr Ralph:** Literacy is one of the twin pillars of education development: it sets the foundations for future learning. It is so important that we believe that there needs to be much

greater clarity and more time dedicated to the achievement of literacy in South Australia. To that end, the Government has set a target of 70 to 90 minutes literacy time, and we are working towards the implementation of that commitment. I have consulted Professor Peter Hill of the University of Melbourne, who has undertaken a great deal of in-depth work with respect to this matter. The findings of Peter Hill are very instructive to us about putting in the right foundations in literacy. In the first instance, I have asked Prof. Hill to work in the district of the southern suburbs, with the District Superintendent, Wendy Johnson, and the principals of the schools surrounding the Clarendon area, to look at ways we can best implement this initiative.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** The issue of changing the composition of panels that select school principals is part of the review of the Education Act. I have chosen Ms Chris Harrison to be the lead person from within the department to undertake the review of the Act. We estimate that all sectors will be consulted over the review of that Act, with the view of bringing it into the Parliament in the May/June session of next year. As the honourable member would have seen, we have also allowed \$500 000 within the budget this year for other policy initiatives that were announced by the Government leading up to the 1997 election; \$1 million in 1999-2000; and \$2 million in 2000-1, to ensure that those policies initiatives we announced are undertaken.

#### **Membership:**

Ms Key substituted for Ms Breuer.

Mr Clarke substituted for Mr Hanna.

The Hon. M.D. Rann substituted for Ms White.

#### **Additional witness:**

The Hon. Joan Hall, Minister for Youth, Minister for Employment.

#### **Additional Departmental Advisers:**

Mr J. Halsey, Executive Director, Employment SA.

Ms C. Tuncks, Director, Employment SA.

Mr T. Flynn, Manager, Youth SA.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, I invite you to make an opening statement.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** Mr Chairman, I thank you for the invitation to make some opening remarks in relation to the portfolio areas of employment and youth today. As my ministerial colleague the Hon. Malcolm Buckby outlined earlier this morning, the new Department of Education, Training and Employment allows for a clear focus on the needs and inter-relationships between young people, education, training and employment. The employment and youth affairs group has been formed within the organisational structure of the department, with specific responsibility for supporting the Government's employment and youth strategies. This group has responsibility for the management of a budget of \$32.4 million for Employment Services and \$2.2 million for Youth Affairs, within the total departmental budget of \$1.65 billion.

As I have said on many occasions, and in many places, employment and improving employment opportunities for all South Australians is a serious and complex business, which is fundamental to the wellbeing of us all. The levels of unemployment in South Australia are unacceptably high, to me, to the Government and throughout the community. The Government acknowledges this and, as the Premier said in the

employment statement released during budget week, creating more jobs is the Government's number one priority. As it is our number one priority, we believe it is an issue that demands a constructive, coordinated and cooperative approach across the Government and across the ministry. The Premier and the Deputy Premier, as Minister for Industry and Trade, play particularly key roles, with both personal commitment and leadership perspectives in coordinating our strategy to generate more employment opportunities and to get more South Australians into work.

The Premier's Partnership for Jobs forum, as has been well demonstrated, has a most diverse membership, including employers, unions and the social services sector. It was significantly involved in developing the content and direction of the employment statement. The industry and trade portfolio is responsible for working with and responding to the needs of industry and negotiating assistance for business where appropriate.

It is about helping small, medium and large private sector businesses to grow and to increase employment opportunities across our State. Ultimately, it is the whole of Government that is responsible for getting the right economic and social climate in our State to improve our economic performance and increase employment opportunities. The employment portfolio provides a focus for directly assisting unemployed people into employment and training programs and for improving employment opportunities in local communities and businesses. It involves specific programs for young people, the mature aged and people with disabilities whilst at the same time meeting the requirements of businesses, specific industry sectors, the community and regional South Australia.

Most reasonable people understand that expanding employment is a complex undertaking at a time when fundamental structural changes are sweeping through all the economies of the world. South Australia is not, has not been and will not be exempt from these changes. As members of this Committee would know only too well, Governments and industry have not always reacted as quickly as they should to the changes that impact on this State. This Government is redefining our manufacturing base into modern, sophisticated and efficient industries that will generate long-term jobs for the future. This is the only and most responsible approach available to us.

Our work has seen enormous growth in the information industry sector whilst also seeing expansion by automotive component manufacturers and the attraction of businesses such as Sheridan's moving more manufacturing operations into this State. In addition, the investment focus of the Department of Industry and Trade has already secured more than 1 300 jobs in call centres for businesses such as Teletech, Bankers Trust and Westpac. As I said, these changes are sweeping across the world. We cannot ignore them and we cannot pretend that they do not impact on us. As we all know, there are many other influences on employment levels which, put simply, the State Government—I mean any State government—cannot directly control or even influence in some instances.

Whilst employment growth is a responsibility shared across all levels of Government, the Federal Government ultimately has the primary responsibility for assisting unemployed Australians, for setting the best economic environment and for developing effective and supportive industry policy. The impact of the Asian financial crisis, international unease with currency fluctuations and the

continuing emerging situation with the Japanese economy are also uncontrollable factors that will influence our future. With all these unknowns and the many factors over which South Australia as one of the smaller States has limited influence, there are no easy or quick fix solutions for unemployment. If there were, we would have all used them years ago. Indeed, the Opposition would have used them when it was last in office.

So many of the policies advocated by some are the ideas of yesterday: they did not work then, and they do not work now. Factually, South Australia has had unemployment levels above the national average for the past 30 years. Trying to buy our way out of it has in the past only put us into further difficulty and presented us with enormous debts with which we are still having to deal. However, we are optimistically facing the future, because with these challenges come many exciting and new opportunities, and this is where our attention and focus lies. We do not move from our goal of doing all we can responsibly and realistically within our sphere of influence to improve the employment situation in South Australia.

When we came to office four years ago, we inherited a set of employment and economic indicators that should have rung alarm bells long before we took over. I will not go through the details here as there is plenty of evidence on the public record to more than demonstrate my point. No responsible politician should pretend or build up false hope that our problems can be solved simply by the stroke of some magic economic pen. It would be cruel and destructive to do so. Rather, it is important that as a Government we concentrate our efforts on the key essentials for economic and employment growth, which is exactly what we are doing.

Much has been achieved over recent years by this Government, including: creating an environment that has resulted in new investment of more than \$2.2 billion and 20 000 new private sector jobs; major infrastructure projects such as the Mount Barker Road, the Adelaide Airport and the Southern Expressway, which is progressing daily; the rise of over 700 IT companies with a 15 per cent annual employment growth rate; 13 000 people in employment through training programs; and more than 4 600 young people in public sector traineeships with 70 per cent subsequently finding work or going on to further training.

The 1998-99 budget contains a comprehensive mix of employment programs and initiatives totalling nearly \$100 million over three years designed to maintain the momentum of building better employment options for South Australia. These include more traineeships in the public and private sector, more community at work grants, and new support for mature-aged unemployed seeking to establish their own small business.

The employment statement represents the most significant employment package in this State's history. It gives a serious commitment to building on successful State Government employment programs and seeking out the innovative twenty-first century solutions to our problems. It also recognises the real importance of targeting capital works, infrastructure projects and resource development to our ultimate gain of employment growth.

The employment statement is a package of which I am proud. It is a responsible yet caring blueprint that will provide positive results and will help more South Australians into work. In this statement the Premier and the Government have clearly demonstrated our strong determination to focus on the many opportunities that lie ahead for South Australians. I

look forward to elaborating on the initiatives contained in the employment statement for members and to providing further details as required. A significant amount of our employment focus is on creating more opportunities for and directly assisting young South Australians to successfully make that all important first step into the work force. But, young South Australians are also an important consideration right across and in all portfolios of Government. As the Minister for Youth I have the responsibility to represent, promote and encourage the views of young people as they relate to our Government.

One of the great strengths of the new departmental arrangements brought in by the Government after the last election is the placement of the youth portfolio with Children's Services, Education, Training and Employment. We now have a situation where a very significant number of the immediate and most important requirements of young people are truly working together in a most cooperative manner. Of the 98 000 or so 15 year olds to 19 year olds in this State, more than nine out of every 10 are in employment, training, education or a combination of these activities. This needs to be understood, promoted and acknowledged, and there are programs within the youth portfolio to help with this.

There is a range of policy and program fronts to see that a positive 'can do, can achieve and do care' image of youth is communicated and understood. Like my generation, Mr Chairman, the generation before me and generations back as far as time, young people like a challenge to the system, they like to experiment, they like to live life to the full and they like to push themselves—and often everyone else—to the limits—and so they should in a responsible way. We should be recognising their achievements and ensuring that they can be as creative, innovative and successful as their talent and determination will permit.

Aside from the various programs operated in the youth portfolio, on which I welcome questions, a quality assurance system for the youth sector is presently being developed. The fundamental purpose of this is to ensure that the services required and made available to our young people meet agreed standards and are more likely to produce better results for them. I am very pleased to report significant support for the quality assurance system from the youth sector and I take this opportunity to thank all who have participated in developing it. I look forward to taking questions from members in relation to the programs and expenditures of my portfolio areas.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Leader of the Opposition has intimated that he will make an opening statement.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Today I hope we will hear some real answers given and see some degree of responsibility taken for South Australia's poor and fast deteriorating unemployment situation. I must say that I am surprised to see more than 30 advisers here today: there are more advisers here than at the strategic arms limitation talks—and you even have a senior Minister here to hold your hand. But, we get used to that and at least you have turned up.

On Tuesday, the Premier said that the Minister for Employment did not need to be in the Cabinet because the Deputy Premier has responsibility for job creation. However, when asked a question about jobs last night, the Deputy Premier said that the responsibility for employment and unemployment did not fall within his portfolio. So, the Premier says, 'Don't worry, Joan Hall is not in control', even though she is not in—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Sorry, that the Minister was not in control, because the Deputy Premier was in Cabinet, and he is senior. The Deputy Premier says that he is not—Ingo is not in charge, according to the Deputy Premier. So, again, there is no doubt that there is confusion in the State about where the buck stops on employment.

As the Minister would be aware, on 17 May last year the Premier committed the Government to bring down South Australia's unemployment rate to the national average by the year 2000. Today, South Australia's unemployment rate is 10.4 per cent, compared with the national rate of 8.1 per cent. Our rate of unemployment in South Australia is now 2.3 percentage points above the national rate, which is the largest gap since October 1981, when the Liberals were last in office.

Since the Liberals came to office in 1993—and people will remember that we were promised 20 000 jobs per year—the number of jobs has shrunk by 1 100, and this compares to national job growth over the same period of 779 200, or 10 per cent. People have given up the search for work and, consequently, the participation rate in South Australia is the lowest since August 1985. South Australia has a high hidden rate of unemployment, and if our participation rate were the same as that of the nation, our recorded unemployment would be 15 per cent.

Since the beginning of this financial year, the Government has lost South Australians a whopping 25 600 jobs, which is a fall of 3.8 per cent—that is over 2 300 jobs per month. This is despite the fact that the Government's budget for 1997-98 predicted jobs growth of 1.5 per cent. The Government has fallen foul of that target completely. That is last year's budget—one that we were expected to believe last year.

We heard the Minister talking about how cruel it would be to raise people's expectations about an overnight stroke of the pen. What about the cruelty of the claims made before the last election about jobs, when they were inflated, when the budget was falsified, when the figures were fixed—and of course now we understand that the ABS is no longer to be relied upon by this Government. I have read with some puzzlement the various press releases which the Minister has put out in relation to the monthly ABS figures, as I believe that she needs to take a reality check.

It seems that whenever the monthly figures improve, it is because the Government's policies are working, and whenever they get worse, it is either because of seasonal factors—even though the Minister is using seasonally adjusted figures—or because we are following the national trends, when in fact we are setting the national trend. It is quite clear, from various press statements, that either the Minister or her advisers do not understand what is meant by the words 'seasonally adjusted'. To say that it is a monthly fluctuation, when we have had eight months of losses in employment, I find quite simply staggering.

I am sure that the Minister has examined the ABS trend data, which remove the month-to-month volatility, and would agree that they give the true picture—which is that for every single month that the honourable member has been Minister for Employment, jobs have been lost, and lost at an average of more than 3 000 per month. I am not saying that the Minister is responsible: I am just pointing out the extraordinary cruelty of her announcements claiming credit when it goes wrong but claiming innocence when it does not.

My first question is: does the Minister agree that trend ABS labour force survey statistics for May reveal little good

news for South Australia? There was a further drop in the number of employed persons—the eighth consecutive monthly fall. Total South Australian employment is now at its lowest level in almost four years. The work force participation rate also continued to fall, with the May trend rate the lowest since June 1985. The continuing decline in the State's participation rate reflects the ongoing lack of confidence in the local jobs market. That is what the officials said—not me, not you, but what the official survey said. Does the Minister agree or dispute this prediction for the jobs market in South Australia from the ABS labour force trend survey?

**The Hon. J. Hall:** I say from the outset that I am pleased to accept questions from the Leader of the Opposition, but I find it pretty difficult to accept his indignation. As he well knows, he was the employment Minister for some time. He gets quite touchy when you remind him of some of the figures produced during his time as employment Minister. This Government believes that the employment situation across the country, particularly in South Australia, is just too important for him and some of his colleagues to constantly play politics with. He can muck around with the statistics as much as he likes, but some of the statistics that are readily presented to this Chamber from his time are such that, if I were him, I would not be getting stuck into this Government. Less than three weeks ago we put down an Employment Statement that was very real and significant and as a Government we are proud of it.

**Mr CLARKE:** Are you going to answer the question?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The Minister can answer the question however she wishes.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** It is easy to take questions from the Leader, but his indignation is getting more and more difficult to take. Outlined in the employment package some weeks ago now was \$100 million, which we are proud of. It is over three years, and over two years in other cases. It gives real hope for employment opportunities. We are not saying that it will solve all of our difficulties, but the initiatives we have been involved in since this Government came to office have been real. I do not think one person in South Australia would dispute that we had some slightly difficult economic circumstances to pick up from. We knew that it would be hard, we are accepting the challenge and we are doing something about it.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** By way of supplementary question, I refer to the statement I have just read out, namely, that there was a further drop in the number of employment persons, little good news in South Australia, the eighth consecutive monthly fall, and that the total South Australian employment is now at its lowest level in almost four years. The work force participation rate continued to fall with the May trend rate the lowest since June 1985. The continuing decline in the State's participation rate reflects the ongoing lack of confidence in the local jobs market. The Minister describes that as playing politics, as righteous indignation and various other things. I make the Minister aware that the statement I have just read out, which she attacked me for making, is from the DEETYA labour market review for the current jobs figures. Does she now discount similar advice from her own departmental officials? That was not me speaking—it was the department, a direct quote.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** I thank the Leader for his supplementary question. He is selective in what he likes to quote from some of these documents because, for obvious reasons, some of the better figures coming out that do build confidence—

**Mr CLARKE:** These are the ABS trend figures.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. J. Hall:** They are the sorts of figures the Leader does not want anybody to know about. I remind him of some of the ABS data, covering areas of the general economic indicators that are showing improving trends. I remind him of one:

The State final demand is up 1.2 per cent in the December quarter and up 4.8 per cent over the past 12 months.

The Leader makes no reference to that because it is good for South Australia. It builds confidence and he is not about doing anything other than knocking and being negative. The new capital expenditure also recorded in the ABS material is up 37.7 per cent from the 1996-97 figures to \$2.58 billion. Again, we do not hear the Leader saying that, and that is because it is good for this State. We could talk about increased exports, but he does not want to know about that. South Australia has more firms—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Ross Smith is out of order.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** Opposition members can interject all they like about jobs, but one difficulty any Government in this country is currently experiencing is ensuring that it gets its base right; that it gets its economic factors right; and that it gets its economic development and climate right to create jobs. Opposition members appear to have had some memory lapse. I know that the Leader does not like to be reminded of this, but I will remind the former Deputy Leader of some of the things that were achieved under his present Leader when he was the Employment Minister. The honourable member may not like it but, just for the record, I will remind him.

The number of unemployed South Australians grew by 35 000. The figures increased from 49 000 to 84 000, when the Leader was the Minister for Employment. There are additional figures that I might be inclined to drop at various times, but the hypocrisy of what is going on with this group of people—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. J. Hall:** —is quite extraordinary, and rather than constantly knocking what the Government is doing it ought to be looking at the benefits that are contained in the Employment Statement.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** The Minister wants to compare records. The fact is that our rate of unemployment in South Australia is now 2.3 percentage points above the national rate, and that is the largest gap since October 1981. If the employment record is judged against the national rate, it is now the largest since October 1981. The Minister can spout out as many statistics as she likes, but she cannot back away from the fact that she and her monthly statements are denying reality. Does the Minister agree that, if we assume no further deterioration in the participation rate, and, based on budget job projections, which are, in anyone's view, optimistic, the unemployment rate in South Australia will rise to 11 per cent by the end of the next financial year? Perhaps the Minister might want to check with her papers.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will rule that as the Leader's second question. It was not supplementary to the first question; it is a second question.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** In that case I will also ask what is the Government's official prediction in terms of the unemployment rate for the coming financial year?

**The Hon. J. Hall:** As I mentioned earlier, the Leader gets incredibly selective with what he says. He constantly talks about the last figures, which I acknowledge were 10.4 per cent. However, they are a little less than one set of rates during his tenure as Minister when it reached 11.8 per cent. He neglects to mention that fact. It is extraordinary that, with all of the diatribe that we hear, the Leader makes no mention of the growth in employment that has taken place over the past decade. At the moment nearly 640 000 people are employed in this State.

That fact is something you would never hear from the Leader of the Opposition because he does not like those sorts of figures being put around. I do not think that anyone ever thought that improving employment figures and achieving goals would be easy, but what makes it particularly galling for anyone, and probably for the majority of South Australians, is the constant negativity that this Leader and many of his members continue with, which makes it very difficult. No-one has said that it will be easy. We have made it a top priority.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. J. Hall:** I believe that the Employment Statement is a very substantial commitment and the beginning of the road back for South Australians.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Given that the latest figures show that the present gap between our unemployment rate and that of the nation is at its highest for 17 years, and given that the Minister has not answered the question about the Government's prediction of the unemployment rate for the coming financial year—which obviously she is not prepared to chance her arm on, let alone use her official briefings (I am told it is just there)—and given that the latest figures show that it is the highest gap for 17 years, what assumptions have been made in terms of participation rate and growth in employment to meet the Premier's promise of bringing down the unemployment rate in South Australia to the national rate by the year 2000? It is your boss who has made the prediction: national rate by the year 2000. What I am asking is: how will that be achieved? Give us a positive story.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** Obviously the Government is committed to the goal that the Premier has outlined. We acknowledge that it will be difficult because there are a number of additional factors that have taken place across the world that the Leader well knows about since that prediction was made. I am not about making projections and predictions as an individual Minister of the Government. I support what the Premier said, and we will make every attempt to hit that target. Ideally, if we do, we would probably like to do better, but there are economic circumstances currently affecting this country that make it very difficult to predict what will happen in six months, let alone in 18 months. It is a fine objective; we are working towards it, but I would like to think that we can do better.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer the Minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 at page 8.12, and specifically the point concerning traineeships across Government. What action is the Government directly taking to use the public sector as a vehicle to provide training and employment opportunities for young South Australians, and what level of success is it enjoying from these activities?

**The Hon. J. Hall:** The member for Flinders has taken a very active interest in the whole area of traineeships, as I well know from the correspondence that constantly comes into the office. The State Government believes that there is a wealth

of experience and knowledge in our public sector. It is a very valuable training ground for all of the first time entrants into the work force. The strong commitment of the Government at the moment will ensure that our public sector is young, vibrant and optimistic, and it is very important that they do not take their working credentials from those sitting on my right.

As I said earlier, the Employment Statement has committed the Government for the next two years to expand its highly successful and, I would say, nationally recognised youth training scheme to offer public sector trainees to 2 400 South Australians. As I said before, it is a most significant commitment because quite often these commitments are made for just 12 months in advance. Significantly, it adds to the already large numbers (4 600) that have been employed under this very successful scheme since January 1994.

This is not only a huge injection of young people into the ranks of the public sector but it utilises and allows them to take advantage of the skills base that exists, and allows them to work with some of our highly skilled public servants who still operate in these areas. The youth traineeships offer all young South Australians that important first start. It is from this first start that evidence is showing that more than 70 per cent of the young people who participate in this program go on to gain employment and, for those who do not gain employment, many of them are returning to full-time study.

When the Premier outlined his employment statement a couple of weeks ago he committed the Government to recruiting an additional 600 graduates. That commitment to put the graduates into the public sector is over three years, so it adds to the 2 400, making a total of 3 000. The Premier said that it was about keeping our best and brightest in this State, but it also has another very significant flow-on effect; that is, to achieve the target set down by the State Government of 9.5 per cent under 25 by September next year. Putting that number of young people into the public sector will make a significant difference, since they will have enormous advantages with the experience they gain.

At the end of the last financial year, the public sector had approximately 7 per cent of young people under the age of 25 in its employment, so the very significant commitment that the Premier has made will gain an enormous advantage from the inclusion of the young trainees and graduates into the scheme. I have said on a previous occasion how pleased I am that in my own portfolio area Employment SA has approximately 50 per cent of its staff under the age of 25. With the large number of graduates and non-graduates having just come in to work on this program, that is most significant and is something that a number of other departments will be working quite hard to match. I look forward to reporting to the member for Flinders in future months some of the activities and achievements of the Young Trainee program, particularly as it relates to her area.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I would like to report to the Minister that my third trainee starts on Monday with private enterprise in a full-time job. I refer the Minister to Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 8.23, specifically the point concerning the transfer of employment programs. I understand that this is referring to the Youth Trainee Scheme administered by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, which volume 1, page 1.23 indicates is being moved to the Department of Education, Training and Employment. What is the role of this unit and why is this move being made?

**The Hon. J. Hall:** The Youth Trainee Scheme is being talked about across Government and, I am very pleased to

say, being supported by all levels of Government. The fact that we have now made the commitment for the next two years is good, because it shows that the focus we are putting on this area is relevant and important to the ongoing development of the public sector. The honourable member is correct: this trainee scheme, which used to be involved with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, will be transferred to the Employment and Youth Affairs Group inside the Department of Education, Training and Employment. It is one of many small but very significant reforms that have flowed from the creation of the 10 larger departments.

That restructuring is starting to have an enormous benefit across Government. The fact that this unit is moving over to the Department of Education, Training and Employment is very good because it shows that the commitment we are making has this ripple effect. It has been extremely well administered by the team at the OCPE and, during the time of its operation, has obviously had to work very closely with Employment SA and what used to be DETAFE. Employment SA has previously provided additional financial assistance to support the employment of special groups and trainees and, on many occasions, has acted as a host public sector employer to allow quasi and non-government organisations (such as, say, Athletics SA and the SACA) to take advantage of the scheme. There has already been a very constructive and cooperative ongoing working relationship.

One aspect is that it has required the organisational unit within the OCPE to meet the requirements of both of the agencies. So, as we were working very hard earlier this year to meet the commitments and deadlines it became increasingly obvious that the working relationship could be improved in a particularly efficient way by moving the two together, because they shared similar aims and objectives and it seemed to be logical to move them into the same group. As the honourable member would know, the core functions of the OCPE are to effectively manage the public sector and ensure the public sector can meet the needs and requirements of the Government. It is not an agency with an emphasis of putting people through employment programs and getting them into jobs at the end, but the Employment and Youth Affairs Group optimistically and enthusiastically most certainly is. It seemed like a natural alignment of functions and activities. The great success of the individuals involved in the program is in no mean part due to the leadership of John Stock and Raelene Briggs and their committed team of people. Meeting their targets by 30 April this year was very significant, and I honestly believe that the new alignment will provide increased efficiency and, one would argue, increased enthusiasm for their new target of 2 400 people over the next two years.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I refer the Minister to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.17, and specifically the allocation to employment services. Young unemployed people and other unemployed people more generally who live in rural areas have previously been significantly disadvantaged and overlooked in the level of assistance provided to them. What is the Government doing to ensure that employment assistance is available to people, including young people, in rural and regional areas?

**The Hon. J. Hall:** The members for Flinders and Gordon and the Chairman would be particularly interested in some aspects to the response to this question. I am sure the Chairman and members of the Committee know that every employment program is applicable statewide, but the Government directs a number of programs specifically into

rural and regional South Australia. As of 30 April the program we have already talked about showed that 508 young people under the age of 22 in rural South Australia had been placed in traineeships under 23 different categories. This is quite a departure from days gone by, when they used to be placed just in areas of clerical activity. Some examples that might be of interest include 14 library assistants, 15 trainees now working in aquaculture, 16 plant operators, 23 Aboriginal education workers and six dental assistants. Those categories that I have outlined are quite different from the categories available even three years ago.

Another measure that is specifically targeted to regional South Australia is the 40 per cent of the Small Business Employer Incentive Scheme—commonly called SBEIS—that is targeted to rural areas and young people. They have been very actively encouraged to apply for traineeships or apprenticeships under this program. It is certainly proving to be very popular across the State, and the department is receiving a number of inquiries through the rural development boards, particularly those located in the country. The IT Skills Advantage program will provide \$140 000 over 1998-99, and again this has particular relevance to the regions. During the past financial year, young people on Eyre Peninsula received instructions in web site authoring and an introduction to e-commerce, and I am sure the member for Flinders knew all about that.

The other area in which there has been specific targeting of young people in regional South Australia is the UpSkill area. As the honourable member would know, UpSkill SA has Government contracts that provide more than 30 000 hours of training for young people. Obviously, that includes people in rural South Australia. Another area is the 60 per cent of the community-at-work programs that are targeted to rural areas for which a budget amount of \$400 000 for 1998-99 has been provided. Again, this is another opportunity for young people in regional and rural South Australia.

KickStart for Youth is another major initiative, with \$600 000 being allocated this year. The honourable member might like to know that KickStart for Youth is operating through the regional development boards, and 13 of the 14 now operating in South Australia are in regional South Australia.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Is the Minister aware that South Australian unemployed 15 to 19 year olds are without a job for two months longer than the national average for the same age group, that the average duration of unemployment for South Australian 20 to 24 year olds is 49.2 weeks (which is more than nine weeks longer than the national average), that 25.1 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds seeking work have been out of work for over a year (compared with 14.9 per cent nationally), that there are 58 unemployed people for every job advertised in South Australia, that South Australia is the only mainland State to have made no inroad into unemployment in the year to January 1998 and that South Australia has in fact gone backward even more quickly since that time? Is the Minister aware of those figures?

**The Hon. J. Hall:** Yes, I am aware of those figures. It is worth saying that the sort of inference and the sort of snide way in which the Leader is directing these questions is pretty offensive. I understand that Estimates Committees are the time when members are entitled—and I believe obliged—to seek information. This Government is absolutely committed to growing employment. One of the reasons why we take it seriously and put it up as a top priority is that we must get the basic economic fundamentals right for quality investment and

growth in this State. That includes things that the Leader and his colleagues do not like to hear. It includes things such as debt reduction. We want to restore the AAA credit rating. We want fair, efficient and flexible employment practices. We want quality infrastructure. We want a low-cost business environment and we want working partnerships with the private sector.

The other area that we are getting right in South Australia—and, again, the Leader does not want to know about this, but I will make him listen to it—relates to what the Minister for Education has talked about this afternoon and earlier today, namely, world-class employment preparation. I have not listened to all of what my colleague has said this afternoon, but I have no doubt that he has articulately and eloquently talked about the magnificent education system that we have in South Australia.

Taking optimistic and futuristic options in education is very important not just for young people in South Australia but also for their families and for all who come after them. After we get that right, we, in the area of Employment SA, will make damn sure that we have targeted, well-designed and well-resourced employment programs in this State. I could go on and talk about all the individual ones again—and I am very happy to do so—because I happen to believe that the Employment Statement was a very good one, as I have said *ad nauseam*—and I know it irritates the Leader.

The other aspect that is very important to any Government is ensuring that we stay ahead of the game. It is very important to stay ahead of the markets through best practice work force strategy planning. Everyone would acknowledge that the work that has been done in the information industry and planning for future advances in this State is very real and we are starting to see some benefits—

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. J. Hall:** Because you lot put us there. I believe that the IT industry and the advances we have made are very real—and again the Opposition does not like to hear about those things. However, we are now looking at very specific areas of tourism, food preparation, the wine industry, the retirement sectors and a whole range of areas. Whether or not the Leader likes it, the difficult challenges that this Government is facing are in no mean part left over from his term when he was a Minister sitting around the Cabinet table. He had his hands on top and his legs underneath, and sometimes some of us wonder where his brain was.

I believe that, rather than constantly being so negative, the Leader ought at least to acknowledge that the difficult times that this State has experienced since about 1991-92 are in no small part due to the actions of his Government of which he was a very senior Minister.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Let us talk about something positive. The Minister keeps saying that she wants to talk *ad nauseam* about the Premier's Employment Statement. I am glad the Minister wants to talk about it because I want her to answer questions about it. The Premier's Employment Statement said that it contained almost \$100 million in initiatives. From what I can see, most of it is existing programs—and it even involves cuts to labour market programs such as Kickstart and Kickstart for Youth—and a cut of \$1 million for the latter—and the only new initiatives are minor pilot programs worth only \$500 000. Indeed, it seems that the \$100 million actually involves a cut from last year's expenditure on the then \$100 million plus Employment Statement. I ask the Minister—if the Minister would like to give me the courtesy of listening—how much new money is

involved in terms of State Government sponsored job creation—new money.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** I will have Mr Halsey and Ms Tuncks provide the detail to some of the questions that the Leader has asked. In terms of the Employment Statement, I remind the Leader that there have been no cuts to Kickstart or Kickstart for Youth. He will be given the absolute detail on the finances of that in a moment. Substantial new money has been provided, and that is a pretty important thing to understand in fairly difficult and tight economic times. There is new money of nearly \$40 million. I would claim unambiguously that there is nearly \$40 million new money.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J. Hall:** The trouble is you guys don't like the programs.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Minister, I suggest that you do not respond to interjections.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** I am sorry Mr Chairman; I shan't respond to interjections. I put on the record that I refute the allegation, accusation or claim made by the Leader that there have been cuts in Kickstart and Kickstart for Youth. That is typical of him. Whenever this Government does anything positive, he likes to knock it down, absolutely.

**Mr Halsey:** In relation to the Employment SA programs—and there are 18 of them—in 1998-99, \$10 million worth of programs are scheduled, and for 1997-98, \$5.85 million worth of programs were scheduled. This is in round figures. There has been a \$4 million increase for one financial year. The small business employer incentive scheme has been increased to a \$10 million program over three years. I will provide a couple of other examples of expansions. The sum of \$100 000 extra has been scheduled for the Community at Work Program. There has been an increase of \$250 000 for the special initiatives program, and that is targeted particularly at people who are having difficulty entering the labour market. The amount allocated for the small business incentive program has risen to \$4 million in 1998-99. That program was fully subscribed in two to three months, because in South Australia about 168 000 people work in about 78 000 small businesses involving three to five people each. Small businesses have significantly valued the opportunity to take on trainees and to move ahead in creating employment opportunities.

Of course, in the small business area we are targeting funding at the IT area, which has seen a phenomenal growth. About 11 000 people work in IT, in over 700 small businesses, with an employment growth of 15 per cent, and an annual revenue growth of about 28 per cent. Last year it wrote about \$1 billion worth of revenue. Those kinds of things are factored into the increases. The last area is important as it is an example of staying ahead of the game, to use the Minister's words. An additional \$500 000 is targeted at innovative pilot projects that will be used to generate additional employment. In summary, in the new financial year an additional \$4 million is contained in the SA employment programs to kick them off.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Given the Government's claims regarding the success of the public sector traineeships program, why is the annual number of places to be offered over the next two years some 200 fewer than the target capacity in 1996-97? Why has the Government not expanded the program to the level of 2 500 places *per annum* as proposed in September 1996, by the Minister's eminent senior Minister, Bob Such, her predecessor in the job?



**The Hon. J. Hall:** As I have said on a number of occasions, one of the differences this time is that this is a two year commitment. In the past, we have been unsure of the Commonwealth's financial contribution, and the decisions have tended to be made on a 12 monthly basis, sometimes waiting for the commitment to be given by the Commonwealth. On this occasion, because of the significant changes that have taken place through the Job Network, it was the decision of the Government to give a commitment for two years. We would have liked to give a commitment for three years but, because we do not know what the Opposition is going to do on the sale of ETSA, we thought that we would chance it and make a two year commitment.

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Ross Smith is out of order.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** That might cause a summary assessment in terms of some of the employment programs. However, the two year commitment with the 2 400 traineeships cannot be taken in isolation, because added to that are the 600 graduates who will go straight into the public sector and the 1 500 trainees who have been factored into the SBEIS program. Again, the Leader has taken one figure in isolation. What he has failed to do—and that is not unusual—is add to it the 600 graduates who will join the public sector and the 1 500 trainees who will go into the SBEIS program.

*Mr Clarke interjecting:*

**The Hon. J. Hall:** As the former Deputy Leader well knows, they are not replacements at all.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** I have a supplementary question. By way of assisting the Minister to read the budget, the subprogram 'Resources—Kickstart for Youth 1997-98' was allocated \$1 637 000. That is in the budget papers. This year, 1998-99, \$600 000 has been allocated for Kickstart for Youth. If I am wrong, change the budget papers! I can give the Minister a copy of the budget papers if it would be helpful in order to expedite progress.

**The Hon. J. Hall:** I am told that the Leader has taken one of the figures separately. The combination is \$1 million for Kickstart and \$600 000 for Kickstart for Youth, making in total \$1.6 million.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** By way of clarification, I point out that last year's budget says 'Kickstart for Youth, \$1 637 000'. This year's budget says 'Kickstart for Youth, \$600 000'. You have made a mistake; just admit it and sort it out. Give the kids the money.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**The Hon. J. Hall:** I am advised that it is possible that there is an error in the budget papers. I will take it on notice and ensure that we get a correction and a position for the Leader, but it is the belief of the department that there has not been a reduction in the funding.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would be pleased to finish the Committee in a spirit of cooperation. Earlier in the day, the Minister indicated that he would address some matters towards the end of proceedings and I am aware that members would like to put some questions on notice.

**Ms KEY:** The answers to the following questions will require detailed information from ministerial advisers. That is why we seek to put these questions on notice. Regarding all departments and agencies for which the Minister has responsibility, the Opposition would like a list of all consultancies let during 1997-98 with an indication of whether tenders or expressions of interest were called for each

consultancy; and, if not, why not; and the terms of reference and the cost of each consultancy.

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? What was the cost for the financial years 1996-97 and 1997-98 of all services provided by EDS including the cost of processing data, installation and/or maintenance of equipment, including the cost of new equipment either purchased or leased through EDS and all other payments related to the Government's contract to outsource information technology to EDS?

During 1996-97 and 1997-98 were there any disputes with EDS concerning the availability, level or timeliness of services provided under the whole of Government contract with EDS; if so, what were the details and how were they resolved? What are the names and titles of all executives with salary and benefit packages exceeding the annual value of \$100 000; which executives have contracts which entitle them to bonus payments; and what are the details of all bonuses paid during 1997-98? What are the names and titles of staff who have been issued with or have access to Government credit cards? For what purpose was each of those cards issued, and what was the expenditure on each card for 1997-98?

What are the names and titles of all officers who have been issued with Government-owned mobile telephones; what arrangements may apply for the payment of mobile telephone accounts; and what restrictions apply to the use of Government mobile telephones for private purposes? What was the total number and cost of separation packages finalised in the financial years 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98? 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? 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 of each of these for those financial years?

#### Membership:

Mr Hanna substituted for Mr Clarke.

Ms White substituted for Mr Rann.

**Mr HANNA:** It is something of a highlight of the day when we come to concerns relating to schools in the electorate of Mitchell. Will the Minister announce the establishment of a performing arts focus school in the coming financial year; what additional funding might such a school receive; will it be Seaview High School; and, if not, why not? Regarding the special education teacher who visits Ballara Kindergarten, will sufficient funding be provided for that teacher to attend on three days per week as she has in past years? If so, why cannot one to one tuition for each hearing impaired child be maintained during the coming financial year?

The Minister would be aware of the disabled children and young people who attend the Minda site for vacation care and the problems caused by changes to Commonwealth funding arrangements. What has the Minister done to ensure that those young people will continue to have vacation care available for them, particularly those children aged five to 15 who come under his province and also those aged up to 20 years?

**Ms KEY:** My first question is in relation to the Ministerial Council of Young South Australians. I ask this question as the spokesperson on youth affairs but also as an ex-chair of a ministerial advisory committee on youth affairs. I refer to the Minister's budget release of 28 May 1998 captioned '\$1 million in youth initiatives', and I note from the media release that there is an allocation of \$180 000 to promote youth participation on Government boards. Unfortunately, despite the announcement with regard to the Ministerial Council of Young South Australians, even under the previous Minister for Youth Affairs, Dorothy Kotz, no council has been in existence. Will the Minister confirm whether this initiative will be going ahead and whether it is still part of the Government's current plan for delivering what was the 1993 promise to establish a Ministerial Advisory Council of Young South Australians?

I say this also in the context of the media release that I received yesterday from Dr Kemp on consultation with young people and committees that are in place for young people. Dr Kemp has announced the de-funding of the Australian Youth Policy and Action Coalition (AYPAC), which is a representative network of more than 750 000 young people from all sorts of groups, such as Christian groups, Guides, St Vincent de Paul, Scouts, Australian Rural Youth, YMCA and a number of other groups. Apparently, it has been in existence since 1991.

Dr Kemp has announced a substitute organisation which will be a youth round table and which will involve 50 members and have meetings twice a year. I ask these two questions in conjunction, because I would like the Minister to take on notice the concern of the Opposition about this announcement. I also ask the Minister how this move will impact on South Australia and our voice on a national level? Again, I speak from experience as a South Australian representative on a national Government youth body, where it was important to have young people representing South Australia—being seen as the 10 per cent State. I would be interested to get an answer on this matter.

I have concerns about these two issues because, unless we are clear about what consultation we will have in South Australia—and I certainly compliment the Minister and her advisers on some of the initiatives that have been taken up—real consultation and coordination of youth services will be very difficult without a proper framework, so I would be keen to hear the Minister's answers on those issues.

In the budget, and also in the Liberal Party's 1997 election policy 'Focus on Youth', a number of initiatives were announced, including the commitment to continue to support the community youth sector by providing core funding to the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia. Will core funding continue to be provided to enable the Youth Affairs Council to achieve its objectives in line with its constitution? Will the Government renew the YACSA triennial funding agreement for the years 1998 to 2001, currently due to expire on 30 June 1998 and, if not, why not? Will the Minister outline her working relationship with YACSA?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the honourable member have many more questions?

**Ms KEY:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** How many more?

**Ms KEY:** I have cut them down.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Will you please read them in without the comment—because we will run over time. The Minister also has something to place on the record.

**Ms KEY:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, section 8, page 8.15, in relation to employment services—and I also link this to the Focus on Youth Statement. Under the Cabinet guidelines, each component of the youth employment strategy announced in December 1996 is required to undergo an independent evaluation following the first 12 months of operation. What are the detailed outcomes of the evaluation in the following program areas: Job Shop, Community at Work, regional labour exchanges, group training programs and the Employee Information Scheme? Why did the Government pre-empt the detailed evaluation of each program by deciding to retain, expand or discontinue these programs in the 1998 budget employment statement? What progress has been made on the Government's commitment to the development of employment impact statements to assist Government agencies to identify apprentice trainees and graduate employment opportunities arising from State Government contracts with industry? I will not ask the question on Kickstart, because we have heard about that today.

The next question I wish to place on notice relates to the new apprenticeship scheme—and this may fall under the auspices of Minister Buckby—and I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 8.1 and 8.12. Could the appropriate Minister supply further details on the budget allocation in this area, targets for the number of apprenticeships and a break-down of the type of apprenticeships anticipated in 1998-99, as compared with 1997-98?

My final question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, section 8, pages 8.1 and 8.8, the Employment and Youth Group, responsible for the Government's employment and youth strategies, which include the operations of several agencies and sections, including Youth SA and Employment SA. What role does Youth SA play as the lead youth agency across Government in South Australia? What processes and mechanisms does the Government use to consult with youth agencies, youth and workers with young people in South Australia? How will the Ministry act to improve coordination of youth issues across relevant Government departments—for example, Human Services, Attorney-General's, Recreation and Sport? How will the new senior executive position of Executive Director of Employment and Youth Affairs ensure coordination of the employment and youth affairs policy at the whole-of-Government level? What outcomes is the Government expecting from the creation of this new senior executive position?

**Ms WHITE:** In relation to School Card, does the statement by the Treasurer that School Card payments would remain the same for three years mean that School Card is pegged even if schools increase fees to counteract the freeze on school operating grants and the increasing cost of operating computers? How many students are receiving School Card this year? Can the Minister explain the announcement that school fare concessions will be means tested from year 2000, and how many students will be affected by that?

In relation to teacher supply and demand, and with reference to a document titled 'Teacher supply and demand to 2003' by Mr Bob Jackson to the former Minister (Hon. Dorothy Kotz), what strategies have been developed since last November, when the Minister announced the establishment of a teachers recruitment strategy task force? What are the Government predictions for student numbers to the year 2003, and what retention rates have been factored into those calculations? Will South Australia face a teacher shortage,

and when? What are the Government's predictions for the total number of additional teachers that will be required each year to the year 2003, and what strategy will be adopted to attract suitably qualified teachers to South Australia?

In relation to the DECStech 2001, how much of the \$15 million set aside for DECStech in 1997-98 has been distributed to schools? Why is the 1998 program still being developed in June 1998, when the school year is half complete? When will the 1999 school year program funded in this budget be announced?

In relation to 'Computers Plus', are the contractual arrangements under which schools received a subsidy subject to purchasing from the preferred supplier (Protech) still in place and, if so, what are the current recommended computers and what are the contract prices? Many schools say they simply will never be able to afford to reach the target of one computer for every five students, so how will this be addressed in the schools that are finding it most difficult to achieve that goal in view of the Government's decision to freeze operating grants?

What is the Government doing to translate the supply of computers into curriculum and how is student in the area of IT being monitored? What is the breakdown of spending this year under DECStech 2001 between computers, training, cabling and other costs? How are teacher training programs now being managed? Is all training school based? What guidelines are being applied and how are the funds allocated?

A cut is indicated in this budget of \$900 000, representing a 20 per cent cut over three years to the school swimming program. Will the Minister explain exactly the implications of that and specifically what that is? I understand that in 1996 \$1.3 million was allocated for swimming to non-Government schools. The Minister may have had an approach on this. I understand that that money is no longer tagged for swimming for non-Government schools specifically and is being used by non-Government schools for other purposes. Is the Minister concerned about the drop in appropriate swimming tuition for students in non-Government schools and will he clarify the funding situation and requirements of accounting for the funding in the non-Government sector?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister Buckby, I understand that you have some material arising from questions that have been asked today.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** I will read into the record those answers to questions that were raised earlier in the day by the member for Taylor. She asked that we provide a list of child care centres that have closed since 1996. I advise the committee that the following community-based child care centres have closed since that date: in September 1996, the Katherine Helen Spence Child Care Centre was closed but it has now reopened under a new operator; in April 1997 the Cowandilla Children's Centre closed; in March 1977 the Davoren Park Community Child Care Centre closed; in May 1996 the Direk Child Care Centre closed but it has now reopened under a new operator; in June 1997 the Enfield Polish Child Care Centre closed but it has now reopened under a new operator; in February 1998 the North Adelaide Baptist Child Care Centre closed; in June 1996 The Parks Community Child Care Centre closed; in March 1998 the University of South Australia Underdale Campus closed (it is to be reopened under a new operator in July this year); and in March 1997 the Yugoslav Child Care Centre closed.

The following centres have amalgamated: the Mary Street Child Care Centre with the Oasis Occasional Care Centre; the Noarlunga Children's Centre with the Noarlunga Community

Child Care Centre; the Para Hills West Child Care Centre with Yawarra Child Care Centre; the Ascot Park Child Care Centre with Warradale Child Care Centre; the Pennington Child Care Centre with Port Adelaide Central Mission Child Care Centre; and the Port Adelaide Central Mission recently announced that the Pennington Centre would close at the end of this month. Torrensville, Enfield and Catherine Helen Spence Centres have amalgamated with the Athol Park Child Care Centre under the auspices of the Wesley Mission.

The member for Taylor also asked: how many child care workers have had to be displaced because of child care funding cuts? I provide the following additional information for members, following my earlier remarks. It is not possible to quantify the extent of staff reduction in centres since Commonwealth funding changes were introduced. The Commonwealth child care census collects staffing information, but 1996 and 1997 information is not yet available. The 1995 Commonwealth child care census data showed that 1 995 paid staff were employed in child care centres in South Australia. South Australian centres have effectively controlled costs in the face of Commonwealth funding changes, fee increases in the State have been less than in other States, and South Australia is no longer the State with the highest average fees in centres. Staffing costs represent at least 80 per cent of centre operating expenses, and centres have had to absorb the impact of funding changes by streamlining staffing arrangements.

Research from organisations such as the National Association of Community Based Children's Services, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union and the SA Child Care Coalition has tried to assess the impact of funding changes. The NACBCS survey of September 1997 found that 49 per cent of responding services had reduced staffing following the withdrawal of the operational subsidy. In answer to the member for Taylor's question relating to how many families have withdrawn their children from care as a result of Commonwealth child-care funding cuts, such factors as affordability and the influence of parents' decisions must be taken into account.

Peak organisations and interest groups in South Australia have conducted surveys that attempt to assess the impact of Commonwealth funding cuts on parents and services. The National Association of Community Based Children's Services (NACBCS) survey released in September 1997 estimated that an average of nine families in each responding South Australian centre have left care during 1997, and an average of seven families in South Australian centres had reduced hours in the same period. The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union survey of 549 South Australian families in 42 South Australian community child-care centres was released in May 1998.

The union has coverage of child-care workers in this State. The union's survey indicates that 15 per cent of the 84 respondents said that they had withdrawn their children from care because fees were too high; 94 per cent of respondents were women; and 18 per cent of respondents, from a total number of 99, said that they had been forced to stop work or reduce hours of work as a result of recent child-care fee increases—89 per cent of respondents in this category were women. Unpublished Commonwealth data provides the most conservative estimates of the impact of centre utilisation since the operational subsidy was withdrawn.

Assessment of utilisation rates in the South Australian community in private centres between July and December 1997 showed an average utilisation level of 73 per cent in

private centres. The average utilisation level in community centres in December 1997 was 82 per cent, compared with pre-July utilisation of 84 per cent—an average decline of 2 per cent in six months. While it is difficult to pinpoint the precise numbers of children, strong anecdotal evidence from peak organisations and services in South Australia suggests that there has been a marked downward trend in utilisation across the entire child-care sector since the 1996 and 1997 Federal budgets.

I now provide the Committee with some information regarding a question from the member for Giles on the breakdown of User Choice payments to TAFE and non-TAFE training providers. The 1998 payments for both interest payments and first-term payments are as follows: TAFE, \$1.618 million; and non-TAFE, \$3.378 million. That makes a total of \$4.996 million. I ask the Committee to note that TAFE institutes have had some delays in providing the information necessary for them to receive their first-term payments. The figures I have given will therefore rise in the case of TAFE, and the proportion of funding going to TAFE will rise in turn. Mr Bronte Treloar has two sets of figures in relation to questions asked by the member for Mitchell.

**Mr Treloar:** In relation to a question from the member for Mitchell about the Marion Road corridor, I provide the following information: sale proceeds from the South Road Primary School, \$6 million; Tonsley Park Primary School, \$5 million; and Marion High School, \$2.2 million. That makes a total of \$3.3 million. The sale of Sturt Primary School is still under negotiation. Expenditure to date totals \$4.6 million. Completed projects at Hamilton Secondary total \$2.8 million; Daws Road Secondary, \$1.8 million; the expenditure plan, as discussed earlier, at Clovelly Park Primary School, \$7 million; Marion Primary School, \$7 million. That makes a total of \$6 million, which is against the commitment of \$5 million back to schools. That does not include the minor works at the primary schools of Ascot Park, Clapham, Colonel Light Gardens, Edwardstown and Forbes.

**The Hon. M.R. Buckby:** This has been a fairly long day and a substantial amount of work goes into preparing information for Estimates by the staff in my department and also the staff under Minister Hall. I would put on record our sincere appreciation for the work of all the officers in our departments and in our ministerial offices. This is a serious business of having a look at the 1998-99 budget. It is one where we try seriously to prepare as much information as we can in order to provide it to the Opposition with the detail that it requires.

I sincerely say to all my staff and to those of Minister Hall: thank you for an excellent job in preparing all this information to enable us to address the questions on this year's budget. I also invite you, Mr Chairman, and all members—Government, Independent and Opposition—and the staff that are here today to some drinks down in my office after the completion of this Committee.

**Ms WHITE:** Mr Chairman, I would like to thank you for your indulgence and cooperation today. I also thank both Minister Buckby and Minister Hall and their associated staff. Ministers usually get more upset with me, so I thank you both for your indulgence.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I thank both Ministers. It is the first time for you both, so congratulations to you both. It has been a long but very successful day. I thank you also for taking all those questions on notice. I thank the members for their cooperation and diligence throughout the day. We have got on fairly well without much hardship. It has been a very constructive day. I would particularly thank the advisers whom we could not do without. We certainly appreciate the work they do and the work done prior to this day. Special thanks go to *Hansard* for whom we make it very difficult—it is a very long day for them—and also to the table staff with me here today. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the votes completed.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 6.8 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Tuesday 23 June at 11 a.m.