

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Wednesday 14 June 2000****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chairman:**

The Hon. G.M. Gunn

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson
 Mr K. Hanna
 Mr R.J. McEwen
 Mr G. Scalzi
 Mr J.J. Snelling
 The Hon. R.B. Such

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Administered Items for Attorney-General's
 Department, \$46 069 000
 Department of Justice, \$529 272 000

Witness:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin, Attorney-General, Minister for
 Justice, Minister for Consumer Affairs.

The Hon. J.J. Doyle, Chief Justice, attended on behalf of
 the Courts Administration Authority.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr W. Cossey, State Courts Administrator.
 Ms K. Lennon, Chief Executive Officer, Department of
 Justice, Attorney-General's Department.
 Mr T. O'Rourke, Manager, Resources, Courts Administra-
 tion Authority.
 Mr M. Church, Manager, Finance, Courts Administration
 Authority.
 Ms L. Stapylton, Chief of Staff, Attorney-General's
 Department.
 Mr R. Bartlett, Ministerial Adviser, Attorney-General's
 Department.

The CHAIRMAN: As everyone is aware, these proceed-
 ings are relatively informal and the chair will be most tolerant
 in ensuring that everyone receives a fair go. If members have
 very extensive questions, as we had during the last budget
 estimates, I suggest that they be asked at the beginning of
 proceedings so that the minister has a chance, if he or she
 desires, to respond. Of course, ministers are not obliged to
 answer any questions if they so determine that course of
 action. I understand that a timetable has been agreed. Does
 the Attorney-General wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I do not have a long policy
 presentation. I will merely reflect on two issues, and the first
 is the structure of the justice portfolio. I think everyone would
 be now familiar with the structure of that portfolio where
 there is an umbrella, the Department of Justice, and within
 that we have retained, for various reasons, the independent

Courts Administration Authority, the police department,
 corrections, emergency services and the Attorney-General's
 Department; and, whilst there are good reasons for that, there
 is a high level of cooperation across the whole of the portfolio
 in relation to the way in which we operate, including in
 respect of budget issues.

The second point is more specific to the Courts Adminis-
 tration Authority. I usually remind members that there is a
 special relationship between the courts and the government.
 Courts are independent of political direction. The Courts
 Administration Authority is not an administrative unit of
 government and it is not a statutory authority to which I as
 minister can give directions, except in limited circumstances
 set out in the Courts Administration Authority Act, and those
 directions will always be in the public arena.

The budget process for the courts is developed in consulta-
 tion with the Attorney-General's Department. Ultimately, as
 Attorney-General, I have to approve the court's budget and
 then it has to be approved by way of the appropriation
 process at budget time. The Chief Justice attends at my
 invitation and with the concurrence of the committee. The
 practice, as I have indicated previously, is that questions will
 be addressed to me as the minister. It may be that I will refer
 them, in appropriate circumstances, to the Chief Justice or to
 Mr Cossey. It is a fairly open process and I do not intend to
 take all the questions and give all the answers. I intend to do
 as I usually do whereby officers, or in this case the Chief
 Justice, will be at liberty to answer relevant questions.

Mr ATKINSON: At 11 a.m. on Tuesday 14 September
 1993 the then Attorney-General (Hon. C.J. Sumner) appeared
 before Estimates Committee B. With a one hour break for
 lunch and 90 minutes for the evening meal, Mr Sumner
 answered members' questions until 10 p.m. He was not
 assisted by a junior minister, and he did not refuse to answer
 any questions or refuse to take them on notice. The Estimates
 Committee sat for a total of seven days. Today the Attorney-
 General will cease taking questions at about 4 p.m. The
 departments and agencies that were subject to scrutiny for
 8½ hours in 1993 will be subject to scrutiny for only four
 hours this year. We anticipate that questions about consultan-
 cies, executive salaries, mobile telephones, private-plated
 government cars, advertising, overseas travel and unused
 office space, asked on notice and partially answered in
 previous years, will not be answered this year. We also
 anticipated, Sir, and you have now confirmed, that the
 opposition will be forbidden to ask such questions on notice
 at the end of a budget line this year, and we shall have to try
 to move those questions up the list.

The CHAIRMAN: That is purely a decision of the chair;
 it has nothing to do with anyone else.

Mr ATKINSON: But you have told us, Sir, that you will
 not accept—

The CHAIRMAN: I said that it is most appropriate that
 the minister be given the chance to respond to one of those
 questions. It appears to me to be fair.

Mr ATKINSON: The minister has never had any
 immediate response to those questions in the past; he has
 always taken them on notice and you have told us that this
 year, for the purpose of shielding the government, you will
 not allow us to ask them on notice at the end.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it is wise for the
 honourable member to proceed with those comments—

Mr ATKINSON: True though they may be.

The CHAIRMAN: The chair wants to be very accommo-
 dating. It is not true at all.

Mr ATKINSON: Of the four hour scrutiny permitted the committee, at least one hour will be occupied by dorothy dix questions from government backbenchers. In other words, the Attorney-General's ministerial staff have written questions for the two Liberal backbenchers and the one Independent on the committee—and I notice the Independent nods—to ask their own minister, and the minister will have long written replies to these questions that he will then read out. I concede that Mr Sumner was good at this, too, but he was playing with more than eight hours. The estimates committees this year will sit for a total of five days.

Will the Attorney detail all advertising and promotional activities and campaigns undertaken by the Courts Administration Authority for 1999-2000 and the cost of each? In particular, I would like to know the cost of the 'paying through the nose' advertising campaign. I asked this question on notice in April but it has not yet been answered.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I am tempted to respond to the five minute loss of time that the honourable member has taken to try to make some political points about the lack of time. I suspect that if the questions were sharpened we would get many more into the four hours or thereabouts during which I might be answering questions. The fact of the matter is that this is the justice portfolio. This portfolio now has two ministers. Mr Sumner did not have a justice portfolio; he had more limited responsibility. Nevertheless, his responsibility was extensive, and we were delighted to be able to put 8½ hours of questions to my predecessor during the budget estimates.

Regarding the questions which the honourable member may wish to put on notice or which we may wish to take on notice, there is the facility in the parliament (the Assembly and the Council) to put those questions on notice outside the estimates committee. So, there is no denying the opportunity to have these issues raised and answered. Regarding the publicity campaigns, I will ask Mr Cossey, the State Courts Administrator, to respond.

Mr Cossey: The Pay Through the Nose Campaign was introduced specifically to inform the community about changes to legislation associated with enforcement of fines. The campaign commenced with quite significant market research in which focus groups and telephone surveys were used. That research informed the creative people about the sort of campaign that would be needed. The campaign was then introduced and it has since been evaluated in terms of its reach into the community.

The media campaign had a budget of \$726 000, 70 per cent of which was accounted for by production costs and air time for the television commercial and associated radio and print media commercials (a total of \$506 677) and the remaining money was involved in market research and ancillary activities.

The honourable member asked me to comment on whether there were any other campaigns. There were no community awareness campaigns as such. The Courts Administration Authority produces a variety of brochures to inform people of the activities of the courts. My recollection is that the budget for the production of those materials is about \$30 000 per annum. Those are the only campaigns as such. Obviously, there are some community relations activities—such as the opening of the Sir Samuel Way building during Law Week on a Saturday for public tours—but the cost of those is in the hundreds of dollars.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: In the judgment of both the courts and the government, the new fines enforcement system

needed to be properly publicised. It involved a radical change in the system. If there had not been a significant campaign, I suspect that we would have been the subject of considerable criticism, particularly through members' offices as their constituents complained about not knowing how the system was operating.

Mr ATKINSON: I, too, congratulate the department on the campaign: its research into just whom it had to frighten the life out of was most effective. Will the minister list all consultancies let during 1999-2000 indicating to whom the consultancy was awarded; whether tenders or expressions of interest were called for each consultancy (if not, why not); the reasons for, and the cost of, each consultancy; which consultants submitted reports during 1999-2000; what was the date on which each report was received by the government; and was the report made public? I expect these questions to be taken on notice, but the Attorney may want to exercise his new found right to respond immediately.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: We expected a question on consultancies, so we are prepared. The total cost of consultancies in the courts was \$203 176, consisting of: the GST, \$68 627; financial, \$16 000; information technology, \$4 944; penalty management, \$60 441; and operational, \$53 164. The corporations in each area are: GST—Mitchell Business Solutions, \$45 324; DMR Consulting, \$22 503; and Ernst & Young, \$800; financial—Ernst & Young, \$16 000; information technology—JIS Services, \$4 294; and Computer Training Specialists, \$650; penalty management—KPMG, \$25 254; DAIS, \$12 844; advisory planning, \$12 000 (the review of the Aboriginal Justice Officer pilot program); and B.W. Johns, \$10 343; operational—ABS, \$6 000; and Clear Thinking, \$47 164. Some of those consultants did not have to report, but where reports are involved I will take the question on notice.

Mr ATKINSON: Sir, it is splendid that your ruling has made the estimates committee such an interesting place to be. Normally, these questions would be asked and answered on notice and published conventionally within two weeks of the rising of the estimates committees, unlike questions on notice which may or may not be answered. Last year, many of our questions on notice were answered on Christmas Eve, as I recall.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Some of those questions were particularly complex.

Mr ATKINSON: My next question is for the Chief Justice. Would the inherent powers of our courts be sufficient to give the Sheriff and his officers authority to undertake reasonable searches of people entering court buildings, and does the Chief Justice regard it as reasonable for the orifices of lawyers appearing in cases before our courts to be searched by Sheriff's officers as proposed under the Attorney's legislation?

The Hon. the Chief Justice: No-one is really sure of the full scope of the inherent powers of the court. They may well be adequate, but there are difficulties with what you might call routine procedures. The inherent powers have to be exercised by the court. One of the difficulties is that these days you want to delegate many of those functions to the Sheriff and have him make the decisions. It seems rather inefficient to have the court (the judges) looking at the details of security. Our powers are probably sufficient, but these days it is inefficient to have the court exercising these powers. There are two ideas underlying the legislation: first, to vest the power in the Sheriff so that you do not have to do it through the judges; and, secondly, to avoid any gaps in our

powers. Those who recall the incident with the taking of the hostage last year will realise that it brought home to us quite suddenly how serious these things can be. We took the view that we did not want to rely on our inherent powers and possible arguments that there are gaps in them. That is the answer to the first part of it.

As to the second part of the question, by and large the searches will be no more intrusive than one goes through at the airport. Only in rare situations would there be a body search and by and large if the lawyers are recognised by the staff they are sent through without having to submit to the search, in the interests of efficiency. Intimate searching would be very much the exception. I do not know whether it has happened as yet. The Attorney suggests that the bill may not even provide for it. I am not sure: I know that it provides for intimate searching in the sense of under clothing, but I am not sure about body orifices.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Mr Atkinson misrepresents the position. The bill does not authorise intrusion into bodily orifices of lawyers or anyone else.

Mr ATKINSON: I am thinking of the mouth.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: That is a bodily orifice and it does not allow that. If there is reasonable cause to suspect that an offence has been or is about to be committed, the police will have all the powers of search presently provided by the law. That power has not been given to Sheriff's officers under the bill.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: All the more reason why it should not be searched and all the more reason why one should strenuously make the point that the bill does not go that far.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I represent a middle income electorate and I appreciate that legal aid is sometimes provided to people of lesser means, and the rich usually look after themselves. What progress has been made in terms of accessing what I would call 'justice' regarding assistance for people who need legal representation, because it is a constant complaint to me that people cannot afford to be represented properly in court and in my view that is a denial of justice.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: That raises a number of issues. There is the question of legal aid and in this current budget we have provided for a \$500 000 increase in the budget for the Legal Services Commission in relation to, particularly, fees payable to lawyers who have not had an increase since 1992—in fact they suffered a decrease in 1998, I think. There are a number of ways in which we seek to assist people who may be indigent. In a small claims jurisdiction, lawyers are not permitted to represent litigants unless the parties and the court agree. In that jurisdiction there is significant emphasis upon mediation and conciliation, used to great effect to remove from that jurisdiction at least all the formalities that traditionally have been associated with legal process and the conduct of cases.

In the Magistrates Court, again, there is a significant emphasis upon alternatives. With the drug court, the violence intervention program, the domestic violence court and the mental impairment program there are a whole range of alternatives all directed towards dealing more effectively with people in the criminal justice system and the diversion of them from the general criminal justice system. There are other ways in which we provide services to those who might otherwise find it an imposition to appear in court. A lot of electronic prelodgment programs, Bushlink and electronic and videoed facilities are now much more accessible than

previously. We talk a lot about people being unable to represent themselves but recognise that that is in a very limited context, because we do not expect a huge number of the population in the middle range between the indigent and those who have more money than they can cope with and only a very small number of those will not be represented in the criminal justice system.

There are many other alternative ways in which they can secure assistance. If it is away from the courts system and they want advice, they can go to the Legal Services Commission's advisory service; the Law Society provides advisory services; and community legal centres are regionally located. We have to be careful that we do not over react to something that is easy to assert but is not so much a problem as it might at first appear to be.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: There is not a lot the courts can do. I agree with the problem on which you touched: the people in the middle who do not get legal aid but who are not wealthy is a major problem for the system of justice. The difficulty is that most of those costs are not under the courts' control. In the higher courts I do not think any system has found a method which makes the higher courts' dealing with the more complex civil and criminal matters cheap or affordable for the average person. I am not sure you can do that because, when you get to the more complex matters, criminal or civil, you need to do things in those matters and you need representation that costs money.

We have a responsibility regarding the less complex matters, mainly dealt with in the Magistrates Court, to keep costs as low as we can to the extent that the procedures we say that we want parties to follow add to the costs. The Magistrates Court has done a good job. There is the small claims court and a number of diversionary programs to try to get people out of the traditional court model, dealing with things in a simpler way. We are doing what we can with information technology to make sure that distance does not add unnecessarily to costs. Court fees are part of the costs. The fixing of fees is a matter for the government, but in this state our court fees compared with those in other states by and large are lower. We have one of the lowest court fee jurisdictions in the country.

The short answer is that there is not a lot the courts can do, especially with more complex matters. In the lower jurisdictions we are doing a lot. I would not say that we cannot do more, but one of the fundamental obstacles you tend to bump into is that often the solution is seen to give powers to the judicial officer, be it the magistrate or whoever, to get the parties in, bang heads together and cut through the nonsense. The more you do that, the more complaints you generate subsequently that people were not given a fair hearing. I see a number of these letters come in: I get probably three or four a year from people who have been through the small claims system and say, 'I had a witness who could get there in an hour's time and the magistrate wouldn't wait.' There is a constant tension of trying to deal with matters quickly, simply and cheaply and have the people still walk away feeling that they got a fair hearing. The answer is that there are no easy solutions, but we are doing what we can.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: The only other issue is the Deitrich decision in the High Court. Members will recollect that we introduced legislation that we left on the table about 18 months to two years ago which has prompted a significant—

Mr ATKINSON: It was a bit longer than that.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: It is only about two years ago, I think. That prompted a range of discussions both across Australia and within South Australia about ways in which we can deal with that. There are currently consultations occurring in relation to the way in which we can best deal with that both from the courts' perspective and also from the perspective of the prosecution and the defence counsel. Ultimately it costs the taxpayers money because, if the Legal Services Commission is unable to fund it, the last thing we want to see is a stay of proceedings in serious cases in consequence of the Legal Services Commission being unable to fund that issue. In this state we have managed to cope with that so far, but these sorts of issues periodically arise in relation to Dietrich.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: My second question relates to a perception in some sections of the community that offenders get off lightly, and I commend the Attorney again for not getting into an auction on penalties. What can be done to convey to the public that people are getting the appropriate penalties for their actions? I focus particularly not so much on the serious level of crime but on the lower end—which is still important—such as bag snatching and breaking into cars. That is the sort of crime that annoys my constituents and I am sure others. People feel as though nothing much happens. Short of requiring a newspaper to report the whole court proceedings (and I know that will not happen), what can you do to get across the message that people who offend are dealt with appropriately?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: There will always be a different view about the appropriate penalty in particular circumstances. Last year in sentencing seminars and during Law Week the judges posed questions about real life situations where they had already made decisions and imposed penalties. They asked the members of the public who were attending what they would impose, and invariably the members of the public were softer than the judges. We will all have different views. When you are put into the position of having to make a decision it is much more difficult than people believe. It is not assisted where all the facts of cases are not presented publicly, but we have to live with that difficulty. I will ask the Chief Justice to respond from a judicial perspective.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: The courts have ceased to be a place to which the public come to watch justice being done, so the traditional approach that what we say in court provides the answer no longer applies, because most people do not hear what we say in court, and we have to recognise that. We do quite a lot and we have activities during Law Week and through the year. These may take the form of seminars where we hold a mock sentencing exercise and talks by judges. As some of you know, I and other judges will occasionally go on talkback radio and do our best to explain to the community what we are doing.

My own impression (and it is no more than an impression) is that when the public hear the explanation by and large they are satisfied, although there will always be an element who will be satisfied with nothing other than the most brutal punishment, and another group who quite legitimately say, 'I have heard your explanation, but I still think you should be tougher.' That is a matter on which minds can differ. In the course of a year we put a fair bit of effort into talking to the community. I realise that we still reach directly a relatively small proportion, but we do what we can.

Recently, we have set up our own web page on the internet. A feature of that is a new program that was launched a week or so ago called 'Ask the judge' in which, using a

password issued by their teacher, school children can send in questions which will be answered within about 48 hours by judicial officers—magistrates and judges—on a roster basis. That may be the way to go in the future; sending information out to people through the internet may be a way of reaching a lot of people we cannot reach at the moment. This is more than a pilot; we see this as a permanent facility. I would hope that, once we have learnt to do that and if it is not too resource intensive in respect of our time, we can extend it to the community at large. We do a fair bit to reach the community and explain to them. There are still a lot of people we do not reach, but we are trying. You will never persuade some people; sometimes because their views are extreme, and sometimes because legislatively they have a different view on what is the right approach. They may be right and we may be wrong.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: One of the problems, particularly in terms of juveniles, is that by definition the public do not know what happens to young people. I am not asking for their names to be released, but people do not see that a particular action has resulted in a particular penalty, so it appears as if nothing has happened with family conferencing and so on. There seems to be no understanding in the community in respect of what has happened to X who did something to a school or Y who did something else. The main concerns seem to relate to juveniles.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: In the end that is a matter of legislative policy. The way our legislation is at the moment tends to produce that result, and that is something for the community to address through its elected representatives in parliament. There are arguments in favour of treating young offenders differently to avoid the tarring and shame that comes with their being publicly identified, but the problem is that that tends to produce the consequences you refer to.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: People do not see the consequence to a particular action, even in regard to protecting the name of the offender.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: I recognise the problem. It would be eased only if the youth courts were opened up to the media so the media could go there freely. For various reasons that is the only thing that would change that. As a community we would have to face the issue of whether that is how we want to treat young offenders.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: There is provision in the young offenders legislation to allow the media to be in court and report, but without identifying the young offender. So, there is an openness there, but not to the extent of naming the young offender. There are differing views about that in the community, but the majority of the community agree that, as the Chief Justice has indicated, it is inappropriate to be naming young offenders left, right and centre, when that might have a very serious prejudicial effect on their future, not just in relation to the next few years after they reach adulthood but for a long time into their adult lives.

In relation to the juvenile justice system, we endeavour to keep explaining the way it operates. It arose out of a bipartisan approach by the parliament as a result of a select committee and a review of the then children's court and other processes relating to young offenders. It was piloted through the parliament by my predecessor, Mr Sumner, with the support of the then opposition. All the feedback we get in response to the operation of the juvenile justice system in this state is that it is seen around Australia as a leader and that there is a high level of satisfaction with both the police cautioning system as well as the family conferencing and

ultimately those matters that are dealt with in the Youth Court. In the current year to date, compliance rates for conference outcomes, for example, where compensation has been ordered, 76 per cent have complied; community service, 88 per cent have complied; an apology, 99 per cent have complied; and with other orders, such as attending school, counselling and so on, 91 per cent have complied.

Mr ATKINSON: That is much higher than normal community service compliance.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Not necessarily; it depends on what you mean by compliance in the other area. Sometimes it is only a marginal, rather than complete, lack of compliance. All the feedback from victims who participate in the family conference system and police who participate in all of it is that there is a high level of satisfaction with the way in which the system operates. But, we recognise that there will be repeat young offenders and that harassing tactics will be used by some young offenders. Right around the state we are endeavouring to deal with that constructively, because if we deal with it constructively it has longer-lasting benefits than merely detaining the young offenders or naming them.

Mr ATKINSON: In the last 12 months, what has been the courts' experience of litigants representing themselves? Is this happening more often and, if so, what are the consequences of it?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will ask the Chief Justice to respond to that question.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: The short answer is that I do not know; we do not keep statistics on it. Obviously, the most numerically important court is the Magistrates Court where a lot of people have always represented themselves and will continue to do so, and probably they are causing no particular problem. In the higher courts—the District Court and the Supreme Court—my impression, from what judges are telling me, is that there has been a slight increase, but I also get the impression—and this is anecdotal—that in the eastern states it has been a good deal more noticeable than in this state. My impression is that there has been a slight increase.

We are having some problems in the criminal area because people who are representing themselves there under Dietrich can seek a stay, and that can make it very difficult for us to manage the cases efficiently. I would not call that a major problem in our system but, on the other hand, it is a problem that I do not think can just be left to fester. In the criminal area it is a moderate problem, and in the civil area I think we have seen a slight but noticeable increase in the number of litigants. That is a problem in the sense that, as you would realise, it produces generally a very inefficiently run case. I do not think it would be any exaggeration to say that such cases tend to take two, even three, times as long as they would if the parties were represented.

What we often overlook is that this is costing the community a lot of money, because the judge and court staff are sitting there for two or three times as long as they should, and the opponent is often there for two or three times longer, and sometimes not everyone but the judge in particular may be left with a dissatisfied feeling because they can see that the litigant is not able to present their case properly.

I guess the answer is that it is a problem, but quantitatively it does not seem to be a major problem in this state. It is not at a level that we would say it is not worth even thinking about: it is a cause for concern, and what is happening in the eastern states suggests that we will see more of it. There is also, I think, a small element in this state, but noticeably in the eastern states, of people who choose to be unrepresented

because they want to get to their feet themselves and there are certain things they want to do and they will not be able to do if they have a lawyer representing them, and that is a real problem.

Mr ATKINSON: How many cases have come to the Supreme Court in the past 12 months owing to the failure of the cross-vesting scheme struck down by the High Court in *Wakim*? In the Estimates Committees last year the Chief Justice estimated that it would be 30 cases. Has there been any commonwealth funding to the state to cope with these cases?

The Hon. the Chief Justice: Taking the last bit first, I am not aware of any funding. If there is, it has come in ways I am not aware of and certainly there has been nothing direct to the courts. We have some figures here. So far, we have received four actions as a result of cross-vesting. I am unable to say whether those came to us as a result of the collapse of the scheme. In fact, looking at them I suggest not, because they are all from other Supreme Courts. One of the reasons why it has not been a major problem in this state is that the litigants have been waiting to see how the High Court decision pans out. Secondly, there was the remedial legislation that probably quietened things down a little bit.

We have set up a system of direct contact with the federal court so that when matters are being sent to us we are notified, and we have a designated master—Master Burley—who deals with them. Overall, so far it has not had any significant effect but our belief—and again this is anecdotal because there is no way of establishing it—is that a moderate number of cases in the federal court will come our way for various reasons, probably related to everyone waiting to see what happens with further High Court challenges. The cases have tended to go to sleep a bit and are just sitting still in the federal court. My suspicion is that in the next 12 to 18 months they will come to us, but only in a moderate number.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I think that there has been gross over-reaction to the cross-vesting issues raised in the High Court which has prompted the commonwealth government and a lot of business leaders from the eastern states to call for us to refer our powers to the commonwealth.

Mr ATKINSON: Stand your ground.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I appreciate that the honourable member says, 'Stand your ground', and that is what we are doing at the moment. We do not believe that it has been properly examined objectively at the federal and eastern states' level. Our Solicitor-General has given advice which throws doubt upon the concerns that have been expressed at the federal level. It is an issue that has been on the agenda of the Standing Committee of Attorneys for some time and will continue to be there whilst the commonwealth seeks to address the issues in a way which over-reacts but, in addition, is, I think unrealistic, particularly in the context of states such as South Australia and Western Australia, and even Tasmania, where the push for reference of powers means quite substantial jurisdiction being handed over to the commonwealth—much more than deals only with the Corporations Law—because cross-vesting issues raised by the High Court extend to a wide range of other cooperative schemes, including the National Competition Policy. We are prepared to bide our time and not yield to the commonwealth in terms of its reference of powers request.

Mr ATKINSON: The Attorney told the committee last year that the level of fines recovered was 51 per cent and the level of expiation fees recovered was 73 per cent, whereas Western Australia was recovering 92 per cent. In 1998, the

Attorney told the committee that he was expecting to recover \$27 million in unpaid fines in a full year of operation of his then proposed new scheme. Now that we have had eight months or so of the 'pay through the nose' regime, what are the percentages and the dollar recovery?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Certainly there was over optimism in 1997 about the amounts that would be recovered. It is not correct, with respect, to say that this scheme has been in operation for the last eight months or so: the full scheme came into operation only on 6 March this year. There had been a campaign directed towards recovery through the Penalty Management Unit of old warrants, and that was particularly successful. The 'pay through the nose' advertising campaign and the now fully operational fines enforcement scheme has borne some results, but it has been difficult in a relatively short period of time to get a comparison with previous years, partly because we have seen that the number of police expiation notices issued has decreased dramatically over the past year or so. That will necessarily have a follow through effect in the payment and enforcement system. In addition to that, if there is an increased level of recovery by police before it gets to an enforcement order, that will undoubtedly affect the rate of recovery. I ask Mr Cossey to comment on the most recent figures so far as they can be gleaned from information that is available.

Mr Cossey: The Attorney referred to the value of outstanding warrants, that is the old ones, that have been sitting around for a while. Since we have been actively chasing those, we have recovered \$4.24 million in fines and expiation notices that turned into fines through that. With respect to the expiation notices, figures that we have received from the Police Department, which is the major generator of expiation notices, show that in the 11 months ended February 2000 there were just over 342 000 expiation notices issued. In that same period, 241 000 or thereabouts were expiated. That is an expiation rate of 70.5 per cent, which was about the same as at the time the new scheme was conceived.

In March and April 2000, 43 768 expiation notices were issued, but in those two months 61 141 notices were expiated, which is some 17 500 more than were actually issued. So in those two months we saw a significant increase in the number of notices that were expiated. We estimate that in those two months, based on the previous percentages, we could have expected 40 000 notices to be expiated, and therefore we would estimate that there were more than 21 000 expiated than would otherwise have been the case in those two months, equating to approximately \$3 million.

In addition, the courts have collected approximately three-quarters of a million dollars more for this period, compared with the same period last year, giving a total of increased collections in the months of March and April of about \$3.75 million. We are still working with the police department to calculate the exact percentage recovery, because the lag effect is still with us. We think that in March and April the recovery rate of expiation notices at that point was somewhere between 85 per cent and 90 per cent. We still need to finalise the work on court fines.

Mr ATKINSON: Are you still calling the unit the Penalty Management Unit or has it got a new name?

Mr Cossey: Based on the results of some market research which emanated from the fines program we are calling it the Fines Payment Unit.

Mr ATKINSON: In 1998 the Chief Justice told the committee that more than half the long and complex cases, that is, cases listed for four weeks or more, were lasting twice

as long as the administration's estimates. Is this still the pattern in the District Court and Supreme Court and, if so, why is this so?

The Hon. the Chief Justice: I think it is the pattern. I have to say 'I think' because it is not something on which we keep precise statistics. But we do find that with the long and complex cases, which are cases estimated to go for more than four weeks, the estimates we are given by the lawyers are well exceeded as the case unfolds. I think the explanation is, regrettably, that still the profession does not make realistic estimates of how long the cases will run until very close to the start date, and sometimes after the case has started. It is a very frustrating factor for us, because we work on what we call a rolling 12 month roster, and if I allocate a judge for, let us say, three months to hear a case, and this has happened, and the case goes for six months it means all sorts of rearrangements so that I can leave the judge on the case.

So it is a problem, but I do not think there is anything about our practices that is productive of the problem. The lawyers might say that we ask them earlier than we should for an estimate of the length, but our complaint is that it is often, as I said, only as the case unfolds that we begin to realise that the estimates are well below what they should be. It is not as though we are not receptive to revised estimates a month before the case is due to start.

Mr McEWEN: Does the Attorney believe that juries are a valid sample in that they reflect community views, expectations and values, or is the jury selection process actually skewing them, and have any studies been done on this matter?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: There have been some studies, although not in South Australia. I do not believe it is being skewed. The Chief Justice will have much more experience on a day-to-day basis with juries than I. I ask him to respond from his personal experience.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: I think there is some skewing, but I think it is inevitable. I am not sure exactly how this works, but I do know, for instance, that if you live, let us say, 200 kilometres away from Port Augusta and you are called for jury duty you will be given an exemption much more readily than someone who lives in a suburb of Adelaide, for obvious reasons, because you hesitate to make someone make a 200 kilometre journey regularly. There are certain people who will get exemptions more readily because it will be harder on them to make them do jury service. So, some of the features of the system which produce the 12 jurors who actually get into the jury box do produce a slightly skewed sample. But I think, subject to that, it is a reasonably representative system.

Of course, you can judge that only by looking at the jury list yourself, looking at the occupations and looking at the people in the jury box. People do say, and there is probably some point in this, that you tend to get actually sitting in the jury box more people who are either retired or semi-retired or working part-time, but, again, that is because they are less likely to be excused, and we have to be reasonable when people ask to be excused. I think it is reasonably representative but, as I have said, there are factors in the process that produce an element of skewing.

Mr McEWEN: It is certainly the community view that they are skewed, and certainly in correspondence with the Attorney on a matter earlier this year, reading between the lines, I felt that the outcome was somewhat surprising, but, that notwithstanding, it was the jury that made the decision. So then one had to ask why a jury had made such a surprising

decision. Was it just through lack of adequacy of one of the parties in presenting the facts or was it simply because of the very constitution of that particular jury?

The Hon. the Chief Justice: It is one of those things we can never know under our system because of the privacy we accord. Obviously quality of advocacy can affect the position. Anecdotally one hears that sometimes there will be a dominant personality in a given jury and that that individual will have a significant influence on the jury. Sometimes it is recognised that juries are reacting against a particular significant witness in a case; for some reason the jury unexpectedly takes the view they just will not believe that witness, and I guess that sort of thing is inherent in our system. So we do get surprises—which is not to say that necessarily the surprise result is wrong. It may well be that what it reflects is that the people in the system have a certain attitude to witnesses, and the people who come in fresh from outside have a different and it may well be a more valid attitude, and that of course is one of the strengths of the system.

Mr ATKINSON: How has the court annexed managed mediation progressed in the courts in the past 12 months, and is it still being provided gratis to litigants who are before the court?

The Hon. the Chief Justice: It is progressing quite satisfactorily. I am currently awaiting a report, which the Chief Judge of the District Court tells me is almost complete, reporting on the pilot. We decided, pending the report, to keep the pilot going and so we still are providing them gratis. I do not have with me the numbers, but I know I sign orders probably about once or twice a week appointing mediators under the scheme, and so my impression is that it is being quite well used. One of the issues, of course, is whether, in effect, the state should provide the mediator privately or whether parties who want to mediate should themselves meet the cost of the mediator. But, in any event, for the course of this pilot and while we are reviewing progress we are continuing to meet the cost.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: And parties actually do pay the costs of a mediator in some circumstances, anyway, where they might take upon themselves the responsibility for organising mediation in the belief that they may be able to get a resolution to the matter. There is a reasonable amount of that sort of mediation which occurs as well as the court annexed mediation, as I understand it.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: Yes, that's right.

The CHAIRMAN: Attorney, you would be aware that for some time the Courts Department has been examining a proposition whether to expand its facilities at Port Augusta and there has been some discussion about the suitability of including the old police station, which is currently run down and dilapidated and causing considerable problems in the mall at Port Augusta. There is a general view in the community that something needs to be done with this building. In recent times it has been indicated that the courts department is looking at this building to see whether it can incorporate it into its system.

As the Attorney would be aware, it is important that something is done quickly, otherwise the difficulties caused by people unlawfully using this building will increase and the desire of the community to have the building knocked down will gather momentum. I raise this issue while the Chief Justice and the courts people are here so that they are familiar with what I think is a genuine need in the community, that is, to have something done about it.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Certainly both the government and the Courts Administration Authority are aware of the difficulties with the present court complex—if you can call it a court complex—in Port Augusta. Several options have been examined. Any of the options which have been considered would be in the cost range of about \$5.5 million to \$6 million. One of those options is the use of the vacant police building. I will ask Mr Cossey to comment.

Mr Cossey: Currently we are looking at three options without having yet formally had them included in the forward capital works program, other than as items for investigation. The first one, which was proposed by the administration of the Port Augusta council, was to redevelop the old town hall site as a court complex. Some preliminary designs have been drawn up. It looks to be a reasonably expensive option, but for the City of Port Augusta it would create a new building and take away a building that obviously is causing some maintenance difficulties at the moment.

The second of the options at which we are currently looking is to demolish the vacant police building and build a new courthouse on that site. The property is owned by the government, so we have asked the Department for Administrative and Information Services (DAIS) to give us a concept as to what that site would look like and its associated cost. The third option would be not to demolish the police building but see whether that could be converted into a court complex. Two of the three options that we are considering would involve that police station site either being cleared or being used in some sort of converted state.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the Attorney aware that the building is currently vacant? It is causing considerable social problems and there is some urgency to make a decision in relation to the future of this building. Therefore, I ask you and the officers of the courts department to take that question on notice because I believe that the community will insist that something be done very quickly because of the antisocial activity surrounding that area.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Mr Chairman, I will take that question on notice. We are concerned to resolve that question about the old police building, but equally we are concerned to endeavour to get better facilities for all those who might use the complex. As Mr Cossey has indicated, it is not—along with a lot of other things that we would all find desirable—in the forward estimates but it is certainly an issue that we are actively investigating.

Mr HANNA: What are the statistics for cases not reached, particularly in the District Court and the Supreme Court, and why do they not appear in the budget papers, the judges' report to parliament or the Courts Administration Authority report to parliament? Clearly they would be useful as a measure of efficiency. Every time a case is set for trial but not reached due to a lack of judicial officers for the number of trials set that day thousands of dollars of extra expense is involved for legal fees, witness fees and so on.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Delay is always an issue of concern for government, the courts, lawyers and litigants. I think the so-called delay in this state is much less than in some of the other jurisdictions such as New South Wales, Victoria and so on. I guess one also has to be careful to properly define what is meant by 'delay'.

Mr HANNA: If I might clarify, I am talking about cases which are set for trial, civil in particular, and five might be set down to begin on a Monday but only four judicial officers are available to hear those five cases. I do not understand why the statistics for cases set in that way but not able to be dealt

with by the judicial system cannot be recorded and presented to us particularly at this time, as I see it as a measure of the courts' efficiency, while recognising that you are trying to create a balance; that is, keeping the judges as busy as possible without over committing their allocation of judicial resources.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: As far as I can tell—I do not have a figure for the District Court in the papers with me—in the Supreme Court only two cases were not reached in the year to 31 March. I believe in the District Court it was pretty similar. I am not sure whether, through your own experience, you have had problems, but it is a minuscule problem in the Supreme Court and, indeed, if anything I wonder whether we are not under listing and having judges sitting around when cases settle. I believe, if not minuscule in the District Court, it is very minor, because it has been one of our biggest drives since I was appointed as Chief Justice to avoid cases not reached. I think in the combined criminal jurisdiction I would be surprised if as many as 10 cases a year were not reached.

In other states it is a major problem. In this state, as I said, it is minuscule in the higher courts, and it may be that we are under listing, although you then get back to the problem of putting up with some judicial inefficiency but basically giving people 99 per cent confidence that their case will go ahead on the day it is listed. Alternatively, do you improve judicial efficiency and run the risk of some people having to come back again? That is probably why we do not report it as a statistic because it is such a low factor.

Mr HANNA: What is the Attorney's policy in respect of the appointment of auxiliary judges? Do we have too many; what are the guidelines for the appointment of judges—and I do not mean in terms of their quality because they are all judicial officers, but in terms of quantity—and is that worked out in conjunction with the Courts Administration Authority? I note in the *Government Gazette* of 8 June it lists four auxiliary Supreme Court judges, three auxiliary District Court judges and two auxiliary magistrates.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: My policy is to rely on the advice I get from chief judicial officers. I do not have a problem with declaring or appointing any number of former judicial officers as auxiliary judicial appointments, if that is the wish of the relevant chief judicial officer. I do that on the basis that they are there in the event that they are needed. Again, the administration of that lies with the courts and not with me. The Courts Administration Authority budgets for auxiliary judicial assistance. I am not involved in the administration of that, and I do not need to be. If I got too close to it, there may be a question of interference anyway.

If the Chief Judicial Officer makes a recommendation and, if I am satisfied with the recommendation for appointment—that depends on the wishes of the former judge or magistrate (some do not wish to be on the list and others do) and our judgment of their ability to perform the tasks required of them—then, however many are on the list is irrelevant except for the extent of the need to call upon them from time to time and their availability. If there is a reasonable number on the list and some are not available, we do not have to scratch around and try to find some alternative way of addressing the issue raised by the courts. I will ask the Chief Justice to comment.

The Hon. the Chief Justice: I agree with what the Attorney says. We have, in total, about nine or 10 across the three jurisdictions. They are a pool on whom we can call when in need. In the Supreme Court, we would use an auxiliary for, in total, three months of the year, usually in

crime and because two months ahead we can see that we have a four week case and we do not have a judge to hear that case. So, we can bring in an auxiliary without disrupting our list. It is run on a pool system. The number of auxiliaries appointed is not particularly significant; what is more relevant is the overall level of usage. They are used in a similar way in the District Court, but I am not so sure about the Magistrates Court. As I said, we tend to appoint more than we use and work from that pool during the year.

Mr HANNA: I refer to page 30 of the 1999 Judges Report to Parliament (which came to the House of Assembly on 2 May this year) and judges' comments provided to the Attorney on aspects of proposed legislation. To what extent has the parliament departed from recommendations and advice given by judges?

The Hon. the Chief Justice: I do not really know, but my impression is: very little. The Attorney-General sends me the bill at a relatively early stage. We try to keep away from policy issues. It is not always easy to observe that line, but our comments are mainly on practical and technical issues. My impression—and I have never kept a list or precise track of it—is that, by and large, our comments are acted upon. We find the process to be satisfactory although, as I indicated in my report, at times we are conscious that we cannot do it justice because we do not have the time to look at the bills in the sort of detail that we would like to in an ideal situation.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr S. Tully, Electoral Commissioner.

Mr D. Gully, Deputy Commissioner.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now deal with the State Electoral Office.

Mr ATKINSON: I congratulate the Electoral Commissioner on the leaflet *Enrolling and Voting Explained*. Speaking as a member for the most multicultural electorate in the state, I think the State Electoral Office has chosen the 15 most useful languages into which to translate the leaflet. I also congratulate the State Electoral Office on the extra information provided in the accumulated monthly electoral roll update. I think this was partly in response to persistent questioning during the last two estimates committees. For the benefit of other members—the members of the other place will not be interested, but those who interact with their constituents will—the accumulated monthly roll changes now show why new electors have joined the roll for a particular state district: for example, new citizens, enrolling for the first time, re-enrolling after dropping off the roll, and transfers from interstate. So, one's new constituent letter can be adjusted accordingly.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: We recruit, yes.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: But you don't stack the rolls?

Mr ATKINSON: What does the verb 'to stack' mean in that context? I keep a healthy supply of the green electoral enrolment forms in my office and take them with me in my bicycle basket wherever I go.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Nothing sinister is to be imputed with respect to the honourable member. It may be that his party membership has some other things to count.

Mr ATKINSON: The Australian Labor Party is happy to rely on the enrolment details held by the State Electoral Office because we believe they are invariably accurate for our purposes.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: Given that the Liberal Party allows members of its South Australian branch to reside overseas—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We will not go down this track any further—it is verging on trivia and nonsense. If the honourable member does not have a constructive question to ask, I will ask Mr McEwen to put his question.

Mr ATKINSON: With the state general election due some time between 6 January 2001 and 20 April 2002, when is the next electoral roll review due and how will it be conducted?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will invite the Electoral Commissioner to comment.

Mr Tully: Electoral authorities around Australia are engaged in a process which is referred to as continual and continuous roll update. There are two major strategies to keep the roll well maintained. There are proper data sharing arrangements with organisations such as Australia Post and Centrelink on a national level. These arrangements have been made known to the Privacy Commissioner. They involve the authority for Australia's Electoral Commissioner to purchase change of address details from Australia Post. That address change data is matched with the electoral roll and, if there are variances, electors and potential electors are corresponded with and encouraged to update their records.

On a national scale, an arrangement has been entered into with Centrelink as well, which has a significant number of clients, and when there are changes of addresses that material is made available to the electoral authorities and electors are corresponded with. On a state level, we have access to motor registration data through legitimate means—demand powers under the Electoral Act—and that has had a very significant impact on the number of 17, 18 and 19 year olds with whom we have been able to correspond to update their electoral details when they are either not on the roll or where there is a variance with a change of address details of which motor registration has been advised and which has not been updated on the electoral roll. In every case it involves a letter and an enrolment card being filled in by the elector before any adjustment is made to the roll.

The second part of the strategy of continuous roll update is referred to as data mining and data improvement where the actual roll is interrogated from software systems and routines that have been developed to determine when more families than one are living at the same address or when more people than you would reasonably expect to be in a family living at the same address, and investigations are done. There has been a movement away from this snapshot in time of habitation review every two years, which has led to a significant burst in the peak of enrolment activity to a continued effort, and that keeps the roll more up to date at any point in time. There is still room for targeted habitation reviews and this will still be a feature of continuous roll update, although a diminished feature, and it will be more targeted to those areas that have a high incidence of movement.

On the state side we have an arrangement with the Residential Tenancies Tribunal to provide enrolment cards to people once they receive their receipts for bond moneys paid in, and this generates about 40 cards a day. The whole effort is moving towards the roll being more up to date at any given period, rather than there being peaks and troughs.

Mr ATKINSON: I have noticed that the troughs and peaks have been avoided because the accumulated monthly roll update is now about the same size every month, whereas at one time it would be quite brief, followed by a flurry of activity with a biannual review. Now that the State Electoral

Office can see on computer previous habitations that are vacant and premises where two or more families are living in the same dwelling, how does it follow this up: is it by visit, phone call or mail?

Mr Tully: The normal first stage would be a letter and a follow up letter but a personal visit is certainly not out of the question if circumstances are not resolving themselves. Generally, a letter would be the first approach.

Mr ATKINSON: The Electoral Commissioner previously mentioned that the office was working on elector compliance with how-to-vote cards. What were the findings of that work?

Mr Tully: In the annual report of the office last year, the compliance figures were released. I do not have them in front of me, but they would be available in the annual report.

Mr ATKINSON: Now that the State Electoral Office and the Australian Electoral Commission have a register for people willing to work in polling booths on election day, is the Attorney or the Commissioner able to say to what extent polling booth managers for the republic referendum were recruited through that register, given that 25 per cent to 30 per cent of previous polling booth staff will not be available on any particular Saturday?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: The issue of the republic referendum was a commonwealth responsibility and was managed by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I am not sure that it is relevant or appropriate for the Commissioner to deal with commonwealth matters, but he has indicated that he can give some indication as to what is happening in South Australia about recruitment so far is the State Electoral Commissioner is concerned.

Mr Tully: At the last state election the State Electoral Office entered into an arrangement with a work force supplier and encouraged anybody who was interested in working in a booth to register with that work force supplier. The member for Spence is correct in saying that the attrition rate from one election to another can be around 25 per cent or higher. The arrangement was that, where there was a vacancy through attrition or through someone not being available, that polling booth staff position was to be filled by somebody sourced by the outside work force supplier.

Whilst we will change that supplier, we have entered into an arrangement with another supplier for the coming election. We used that same supplier in carrying out our role with local government elections. People who are interested in working on or with electoral administration can register with that supplier and we source them through that supplier. We still value and still believe that the knowledge, know-how and competency for working in a polling booth is increasing: we do not underestimate the responsibility that we place on people who work in booths, so we still place value on the merit of somebody who has worked successfully and who understands the processes that occur and the importance of their task. We recognise in a merit sense that those who have satisfactorily carried out roles in a polling booth before have a merit advantage over those who have not. By the same token, we are looking to increase access to working in a polling booth to those outside near family relationships and they do this through registering with the outside supplier.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to the recent local government election and note that it is the first time we have seen statewide postal voting. What were the benefits in democratic terms of that method of voting?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will ask the Electoral Commissioner to respond. I do not think anybody has made an analysis of the so-called benefits and disadvantages. The honourable member is leading to a question about whether or not we will adopt it at the state level—

Mr ATKINSON: He did not actually say that.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I said 'if'. I am not an advocate for that sort of postal voting at the state level. I am a strong supporter of attendance and, whilst there are some who would wish to have how-to-vote cards and pooling both helpers removed from booths, I am not an advocate for that. That is all part of election day and I am strongly supportive of that continuing, subject to the constraints that currently apply. In terms of the benefits, one could say that there is a higher level of participation as a result of the postal voting in local government compared with the participation rate when attendance was required at pooling booths. That may be the significant advantage or benefit arising from that. I invite the Electoral Commissioner to add to that if he wishes to do so.

Mr Tully: The Attorney has touched on the major point, which is the participation rate. In these elections, whilst the final figures have not been computed, it looks as though the state wide participation rate for electors voting or attempting to vote in local government elections is around 40 per cent, which is significantly up on previous elections. If we take isolated examples of large, metropolitan based councils having participation rates even in single digits under a polling booth arrangement achieving 33 per cent at least, you can see that the participation rate has increased at least by a factor of three. That is seen as a very good thing.

Anecdotally, the interest in local government elections by the number of nominations and contested elections also seems to have increased. The activity around posters and electoral material also seems to have increased. As a side issue, there are some benefits in roll maintenance, as we are able to scan any return to sender mail and add that to our list of data available for roll matching and follow-up of vacant habitations that would come as a result of being aware of return to sender mail.

In multi-member electorates, the system used is proportional representation. Whilst it is in its early days, there is a great deal of interest in how proportional representation works. It presents certain challenges for electoral administrators to get across in simple and understandable terms the principles of proportional representation. There is no doubt that those who get elected under it are very fond of it, but some of those who were leading on first preferences but who missed out are still searching for the exact answers, and we are happy to take them through that. Generally the system appears to have strong support from commentators as being a very fair system, and it adds to the integrity of results when you have a fairly common view from electoral commentators that it is the fairest system.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: In council elections—and I understand that this could overlap with local government responsibility—I noticed that there did not seem to be any legal cut-off as to when incumbents have access to council resources in terms of newspapers and significant PR. It gives a significant advantage to an incumbent to have glossy material paid for by the council going out just prior to an election. Are you aware of that situation, and is there any move to bring in some control to stop an incumbent getting an unfair advantage by using council resources?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will ask the Electoral Commissioner to respond. Essentially, that is a policy area initially for

the local government minister and then for local government, but obviously we all have an interest in it.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: My question relates to influencing the election outcome.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: It is ultimately a policy issue, both for parliament and for local government. The Electoral Commissioner may wish to make some general observations about it in the context of a code of conduct.

Mr Tully: A number of pieces of correspondence come my way in general reflecting some of the issues the member for Fisher has raised. I have corresponded with the Office of Local Government, which I think sees, as I do, that it is a matter of council adopting a code of conduct. Whilst I am led to understand that the time limits for that code being adopted were later than the election period, and that may have been a little unfortunate, it is considered that the code of conduct adopted by council may well be the best way of dealing with the issues that have been raised.

Mr HANNA: In relation to timeliness, I ask the Attorney perhaps with the help of the Electoral Commissioner, how quickly are results expected in House of Assembly seats at the next state election?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: That is an operational matter, and I am delighted to be able to hand it to the Electoral Commissioner.

Mr Tully: Certainly our efforts will be going into getting accurate results within a time frame. We take on more and more responsibilities in the booths with doing two candidate or two party preferred counts, and I will certainly be sitting down with the registered officers of the political parties to outline what will be the approach in the booths. Again, we will hope to have all polling booth counts in by about 9 p.m. on polling night. The trend has been for an increase in ballot papers issued for absentee or postal votes, and the cut-off is seven days after polling day. In those very close elections for districts it may well go down to the wire and we may have to wait for those last votes to come in. That is something that the legislation quite reasonably puts upon us as electoral administrators.

I know the frustration regarding when we will declare the result, but while there are still live votes in the system we cannot close off counts. So, I have to give a very conservative answer and say that we need to take into account those votes before declaring results. We have an indication of how many absent or postal votes in the system are still to be returned and, where it is known that they cannot possibly affect or impact on the outcome of an election, we declare the result earlier than the seven days after polling day. Where they go right down to the wire I will continue to be conservative and wait until they are all in before we declare the result.

Mr ATKINSON: I ask the Attorney, without any particular hope: is anything being done to stem the increase in persons choosing to enrol only for commonwealth elections?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: No, nothing is proposed. An area of choice is whether or not to enrol at the state level. As far as the government is concerned, that is a fundamental issue which we intend to preserve.

Mr McEWEN: What lessons were learnt from the recent local government election in terms of general conduct? What hiccups were there and did we learn from them?

Mr Tully: The local government elections were a major logistical challenge for the State Electoral Office. It meant entering into a new set of arrangements with our partners. We established new partnerships with councils, where those

councils nominated their own deputy returning officer. Because of the geographical locations of some Australian Electoral Commission offices, we also engaged their support in a significant number of areas.

In all, about 1.14 million ballot packs went out to electors. That meant that around 8 million pieces of paper had to find their way into the right envelope at the right time. About 400 different permutations needed to be arrived at. From a logistical point of view, it was quite a challenge and the arrangements that we needed to enter into with other deputy returning officers were also a challenge.

We did learn a fair bit from the exercise, which was conducted under new legislation that came into effect on 1 January this year. There are a number of roll matters that we will work with with local government. Even though it is clearly the chief executive officers' responsibility to certify the roll, the House of Assembly roll forms a vital part of that roll. That is not a major issue, but the voter side of the roll, the supplementary roll, is one that will present a number of challenges to local government. We will continue to work with them to make sure that that roll is as accurate as it can be.

In terms of the hiccups, we were able to avoid those, I believe, by corresponding with CEOs once we were aware that there were issues around the rolls of some councils. We asked councils to identify any unentitled electors on the roll. That was done, and we were able to hold any returned envelopes outside the count. Therefore, the integrity, in my view, was maintained. Moving from the close of nominations to printing was an extremely time pressured task, and we will work on new systems for proofing matters.

Overall, I was satisfied with the outcomes. The close of nominations for local government elections was at midday. We had printers booked for 6 o'clock that evening for candidate profiles, ballot papers and whatever. It seems to be a bit of a tradition in local government to nominate late, and that certainly happened. There were a lot of withdrawals, a lot of activity moving from one ward to another, pulling out altogether or just being late, all of which complicated the task.

More resources are not always the answer because that can create its own set of difficulties. We will put some suggestions through the local government minister's review as to being a bit more generous to ourselves with time so that we can have greater amounts of time available for that proofing exercise. All the issues that were raised were dealt with very quickly and in a manner which I believe guaranteed the integrity of the election.

We worked hard on the local government review of boundaries that was completed late last year. We found that part of one street was in the wrong council area, otherwise all councils had correct boundaries. We needed to remedy one street of 70 electors, I think, but we did that very quickly. I was delighted with the efforts of not only the State Electoral Office but also the Australian Electoral Commission and deputy returning officers who were nominated by councils to identify problems, to disclose what they were to electors and to remedy them early in the piece. By doing this we managed to resolve any serious deficiencies. I think the main issue was the timing issue: we needed to be a bit more generous, as electoral administrators, in that critical time between the close of nominations and the mail out.

Mr McEWEN: I think that they did an unbelievable job in terms of the complexities that are unique to local government. The fact that the few issues that came up were so minor

indicates that, overall, they went well beyond what was expected. It was a fantastic effort.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: With regard to advertising leading up to an election, we seem to have a lower standard of honesty in politics than we expect of the rest of the community. Does the Attorney or the Commissioner want to comment on how we can ensure greater truth in advertising by the participants leading up to an election, and on the related issue of the running of dummy candidates where it is not made clear that that person is, in effect, not genuinely independent but is there for the sole purpose of allocating preferences?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: There is a real difficulty, in an election context, in identifying dummy candidates. However, there would be a lot of anecdotal evidence that that is the case. In the end, every citizen is entitled to nominate for whatever purpose, provided he or she satisfies the necessary qualifications to be an elector and then a candidate, and pays the fee, which he or she must know, if they are unlikely to have the support of a particular party, will ultimately be forfeited: that citizen is entitled to nominate. I think it would be a most undesirable step for us to begin to put in place a framework within which we assess the motivation of a candidate to determine whether or not that candidate is entitled to stand. I think it would significantly impinge upon the rights of all citizens, regardless of motivation.

People nominate for a whole variety of reasons. They change their names or seek to change their names to get some political advantage if they nominate as candidates. We have to expect that. That is one of the consequences of having an open and democratic system, and I would be very concerned if we moved down the path of trying to 'control' dummy candidates.

With respect to electoral advertising, the Electoral Act is now much tighter than it used to be. It causes pain for many candidates and political parties because of allegations and counter allegations. We have attempted to avoid framing the law in such a way that we get down to a court contest of every electoral promise or claim, particularly during an election campaign itself. That is always one of the difficulties: where should you draw the line? If we want the courts involved in assessing every claim or counterclaim, then it will frustrate the electoral process.

On the other hand, to allow claim and counterclaim without regard for the truth or for any consequences I think is irresponsible. I think that what we have in place, generally speaking, is a framework for electoral representation which is probably the best that we can achieve in all the circumstances, unless we want to bog down the system with litigation during the course of an election campaign.

My view is that the less that courts are involved in making a judgment about the political process in an election context the better that is for the system, in the sense that it will not then bog down the whole process. But it is a matter of balance and all of us from time to time will make statements about the accuracy or honesty of particular election campaigns. That is the very essence of political campaigning, and I do not think that that will change. There will always be that claim and counter claim. The question is the degree of inaccuracy that might be in the representations, and ultimately there is a sanction through the Court of Disputed Returns and also the Electoral Commissioner taking action in respect of what might be regarded as genuinely misleading and deceptive conduct.

The CHAIRMAN: In relation to the comments and whether the Electoral Commissioner will be paying attention to complaints in relation to misleading and inaccurate or malicious material, it was clear at the last election that there was a great deal of grossly misleading, inaccurate and quite scurrilous material which was circulated, and I just wonder whether the Electoral Commissioner will be seeking advice, if there is a repetition of these unsavoury and quite disgraceful activities.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will ask the Electoral Commissioner to contribute in a moment. But Mr Atkinson interjects 'such as travel'—and of course the ultimate remedy for that, although one perhaps without the satisfaction of being reinstated to the parliament, was obviously the defamation law. But that is not much consolation, as I say, if you have lost your seat as a result of that sort of statement. But the Electoral Commissioner did focus upon that sort of behaviour when it was referred, because the Electoral Commissioner does not have the responsibility for vetting every political advertisement—fortunately so, I suspect, from his point of view, as much as from anybody else's. I ask the Electoral Commissioner to make any additional comment.

Mr Tully: Of course I adhere strictly to a protocol that was adopted in parliament about complaints handling, and I am very fortunate to have excellent advisers in crown law to call on at immediate notice during an election period, and I do consult with them. They look at strict interpretation and the strict set of words that have been used and realise that at times words can be used in such a manner to convey a message, but that if those words are interpreted very literally they are in fact not misleading, and I do rely heavily on their interpretation and knowledge of that part of the legislation.

At the end of the day I do take all complaints seriously and assess all of them and if there are matters to be taken to court that is done, and in fact as a result of the last state election nine counts were taken to court, which I would have thought from my understanding of the past was a significant increase on anything that had been done before. I am aware, of course, of circumstances in other electorates where people were concerned about the implication of the way that the words could be interpreted, but, of course, legally we take a very literal view of those words, and that is persuasive in considering whether matters should be taken to court.

Another clear principle that the courts have established is that having opinions is not an offence, and stating things as opinions is not an offence, but statements that purport to be statements of fact that are misleading or inaccurate to a material extent are an offence. So there are matters of interpretation in this area, and South Australia in terms of its law of truth in advertising has provisions that are far stronger than exist in other states, as far as I am aware. I make no comment at all, as it is not my place to, on the policy of the parliament in framing the law. We administer the law as best we can, and with the support of crown law officers I will continue to assess complaints in line with the protocol agreed by parliament, unless that is to be revisited, in which case I will adhere to the new protocol for the coming election, whenever that is.

The CHAIRMAN: Attorney, could you advise what is the availability of the South Australian electoral roll, whether it is generally available the public? When I first became a member of parliament you could go to the Electoral Office and for a very small price buy a copy of the electoral roll. I understand that it is not quite so easy today. Secondly, can

you say whether the privacy of the information provided on enrolment forms is protected?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will ask the Electoral Commissioner to respond.

Mr Tully: Certainly, Mr Chairman, the electoral rolls for the last state election are available for purchase to anybody who wants to buy them. They contain the first names and surnames and the address of the enrolled elector.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Unless it has been suppressed.

Mr Tully: Correct. And they are available at a fee across the counter, and we still have those rolls available. There is no information available to members of the general public in any form on gender, date of birth or country of origin. But that can be made available to members who ask for that, under section 27A of the Electoral Act, and for members who have asked and paid a fee for that information it is available on the system that is made available through the office of the Treasury, and that information which does provide age band is available.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Has any consideration been given to the use of electronic voting machines to speed up the process of counting and general administration?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: There has been some consideration given to it. The Electoral Commissioner does keep an eye on what has been happening overseas and looks at that issue. In fact, his predecessor Mr Andy Becker was always looking at developments in relation to electronic voting. A lot of issues arise as a result of that: the integrity of the voting process, the integrity of the data, a whole range of issues, and they are issues which no-one should treat lightly. I ask the Electoral Commissioner whether he wishes to add anything.

Mr Tully: Yes, we certainly keep a watching brief on scanning equipment. The way we utilise technology at the moment some would see as rather primitive for vote counting in that we replicate every ballot paper entry from an elector twice; it is entered once and then validated in the order that the elector has nominated, and the computer program calculates the result. It is a similar arrangement that we used for the Legislative Council at the last state elections, and we used a forerunner to that system in local government elections for conducting PR counts, generally where the number of members to be elected was three or more or the number of candidates was significant.

We would love to move away from data entry into direct scanning, recognition of numbers on a ballot paper, but that technology is still not available to the accuracy that we would like, that being 100 per cent and, whilst some suppliers will speak enthusiastically about accuracy and getting good results, we are frightened that the machine reads a 3 as an 8 or a 7 as a 1, or something else, so that the integrity is not there.

As far as internet voting goes, we are also interested in that type of arrangement and believe that it is available. If the challenge was thrown to us we could put a working model in place, but the issues of security, user friendliness and secrecy of the vote keep coming up, and they would be possible foils to successful implementation. I am aware that Canada has looked at it as well. There can be issues of trading off secrecy of the vote for integrity; on the one hand, people want to know whether their vote was recorded in the manner that they desired, and the only way that you can show them that is to show them how it was entered into the system, and once you do that they become concerned about how secret their vote was. So, there has to be a debate in the community about any trade-offs in that. It is not that electoral administrators are

interested at all in how a person voted but the perception that they may be is still a major issue to be overcome.

What we are tending to do is use technology for a lot of the administrative tasks and keep a very active watching brief on what is happening as far as elector interface goes. My colleague David Gully has in fact developed a prototype of a system that could be used similar to a TAB or X-lotto ticket, but you can imagine the difficulties that may arise for those whose wish to complete their Legislative Council ballot all below the line. So preferential voting, with all of its benefits, does have some drawbacks in terms of adopting technology that they might well be able to use in scanning and vote counting in America, where they only vote first past the post, and it is easy to do that. So there are all of these policy issues that need to be considered before I think we could move.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: We are not changing the preferential system for the sake of a computer.

[Sitting suspended from 1.02 to 2 p.m.]

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr J. Birch, Chief Executive Officer.

Mr K. Penniford, Director, Strategic and Financial Services, Attorney-General's Department.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the committee that we are now dealing with the Attorney-General's Department.

Mr ATKINSON: In keeping with your ruling earlier today, Mr Chairman, the opposition will be required to ask its ombudsman questions up front. I would be interested to learn whether the Attorney wants to reply to some of these straightaway. Would the Attorney name all of his ministerial staff, their classifications and remuneration?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I am not prepared to name the departmental officers—it is on the public record—but I have three ministerial staff. My chief of staff is Ms Lynne Stapylton, my executive assistant is Ms Pam Huntley, and Mr Robert Bartlett is a ministerial adviser.

Mr ATKINSON: And most helpful they are!

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Thank you. They have a reputation for providing service, and that is not just to members of the Liberal side of politics but to all members, provided of course the questioning is not of a political nature.

Mr ATKINSON: Will the Attorney list all consultancies let during 1999-2000, indicating to whom the consultancy was awarded, whether tenders or expressions of interest were called for each consultancy and, if not, why not? Also the reasons for each consultancy and the cost of each consultancy, and one consultancy in which we are particularly interested is for \$100 000 to someone called Donovan for historical research.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will give an overview and then I will provide some detail. To 30 April this year there were 58 consultancies below \$10 000, totalling \$197 629.16. There were 22 consultancies between \$10 000 and \$50 000, and their total cost was \$467 302.36. There were seven consultancies above \$50 000, and the total cost was \$928 610.05. Each of the following consultancies was over \$50 000: Ernst and Young, \$52 000 to develop a requirements definition for the practice management system project, which was in the Crown Solicitor's Office; KPMG for a review of SA Ambulance, \$170 000; Donovan and Associates, for native title issues, \$121 363.73.

Donovan is an historian in the native title claims which are being made, and there have been 30 of them in South Australia. Four of those are overlapping claims from interstate which overlap the borders of South Australia, and 26 are within the boundaries of the state. Part of the research work which is undertaken requires us to identify the land tenure history, which is undertaken through the Department of Environment and Heritage but funded from my native title budget. There is also a requirement to identify the history of Aboriginal claimant groups, and Donovan and Associates contributes to the work which is involved in that historical research, remembering that, to establish native title, it has to be proved that there was association with the land in 1836 (the date of the settlement of the colony) and that subsequent to that time there has been a form of continuity of association, and of course historical research is relevant to determining that issue. I have just been reminded that the figures which I have given for consultancies were for the period 1 July 1999 to 30 April 2000. I can go through the consultancies from \$10 000 to \$50 000, if that information is required.

Mr ATKINSON: We would be happy to have them in writing.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I am sure you would, but the maximum cost of any one of those consultancies in the period to which I have referred was Maloney Field Services for \$48 750. That consultancy related to the transfer of CFS assets to the Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services. The lowest was \$10 000 to a consultant called Tomato Consortium, and that was to produce a crime prevention unit database. There were others—

Mr HANNA: Is that Tomano or Tomato?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: It may be a misprint, so I will take that on notice. I was rather surprised when I was reading my briefing papers to learn that there was a Tomato Consortium, but now that the honourable member refers to Tomano that may be the case. I will have the record sorted out.

There are a range of other consultancies, as follows: Arthur Andersen for assisting with the purchase of CFS appliances, \$25 000; Australian Business Enterprise Development for the development of business plans for the Surf Lifesaving Association and Volunteer Marine Rescue, \$17 930.40; the Centre for Economic Studies regarding the impact of the emergency services levy on insurance premiums, \$15 360; Jan Chorley for the National Anti-Crime Strategy Early Intervention Project, \$12 915; the Crown Solicitor's Office—I am not sure why we would have a consultancy for the Crown Solicitor's Office because that is part of the portfolio, but it was to provide legal and administrative advice for the Computer Aided Despatch project, \$14 078.90; Culture Shift for the National Anti-Crime Strategy Best Practice project, \$13 150.55; Flinders Consulting for research into the increase in listings in the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, \$38 275; Gibson Quai & Associates for specialist technical assessment in the review of current despatch systems, \$21 473.45; Andrew Hall for a review of land acquisition legislation and the commonwealth Native Title Act in the light of the 1998 Native Title Act requirements, \$24 225; Intec Consulting Group for an IT project, \$18 000; Interface Consultants to assist the workshop group to prepare a report for the Premier's Taskforce on Policing, particularly in relation to performance indicators, \$19 500; and, again, Interface Consultants for government management framework advice, \$11 687.50; Jenny Pearson & Associates for a review of the Community Corrections Program and the Youth Court Community Service Program,

\$27 131.23; Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage for archaeological investigation in relation to the De Rose Hill native title claim, \$11 200; Kenneth Maddock for native title issues, \$17 641.40; Maloney Field Services, to which I have already referred; OH&S Management to configure and install Recfind, \$40 456; Platypus Systems to develop a database to support the new court initiative, \$18 500; PSI Consultants regarding probity advisory services in relation to CFS fire appliances, \$36 406.88; Ryan Spargo for consulting with staff to develop a strategic plan for Crown Solicitor's Office, \$11 400; and Search Select International to assist with recruitment for the project manager of the Computer Aided Despatch project, \$14 221.05.

Mr ATKINSON: Which consultants submitted reports during 1999-2000; what was the date on which each report was received by the government; and which of the reports was made public?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Some of the consultants provided reports, but many did not. I will take those questions on notice and endeavour to provide a response in due course.

Mr ATKINSON: Will the Attorney detail all advertising and promotional activities and campaigns undertaken by all the agencies within the Attorney-General's Department for 1999-2000 and indicate the purpose and cost of each?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I am not aware of any advertising campaigns relating to the Attorney-General's Department. I will take the honourable member's question on notice, and if my answer is incorrect I will provide a response.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: There has been considerable discussion recently about a treaty in terms of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal reconciliation, which gives me grounds for concern. Has the state government considered the issue of a treaty, and does the Attorney wish to comment on that possibility?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Only a few days ago the Premier indicated that he does not support a treaty. It would be fair to say that the government as a whole does not support the concept of a treaty. A treaty connotes an agreement between two independent nations. That is not the situation in Australia. There is genuine concern about the prospect of a so-called treaty and what that might mean. In Canada, a strong separate nation movement has developed over recent years. It is possible that such a development in Canada is the motivation for seeking something called a treaty in Australia.

As far as the government of South Australia is concerned, we are placing a great deal of emphasis on reaching agreement (in so far as native title is concerned) with native title claimants and others. We have established an indigenous land use agreement negotiating team within the department. It is working with the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and native title claimants. At Port Augusta earlier this year I met with native title claimant representatives from around South Australia to explore the development of indigenous land use agreements as opposed to pursuing matters through the courts. I think everyone would have heard me say over the past three or four years that, in terms of the number of claims that we have in South Australia and the amount of work that goes into them, the likely cost to the government alone for each native title claim will be about \$5 million. It will be a long time before those claims are resolved if they rely on litigation processes to bring them to an end.

The difficulty for claimants is that, even if native title is determined to exist in relation to a particular claim, the matter will have to be more extensively explored to identify what those native title rights might be. The other point is that many

of the witnesses in relation to native title claims, those who seek to establish traditional association and continuity of association, will be dead before the finalisation of the litigation. So, as a government we put a lot of emphasis on indigenous land use agreements as the most likely way in which we can avoid costly, lengthy and complex litigation which will go on for the next 15 or 20 years, particularly in the light of the fact that the De Rose Hill claim has been running now for about four to five years in terms of preparation and initiation of proceedings and all the preliminary issues which have to be resolved, and it is not scheduled for trial in the federal court for about a year.

So, from the government's point of view it is important to try to get some resolution of this, because until those issues relating to native title are resolved there is a significant amount of uncertainty regarding what people can or cannot do with land in South Australia. Native title claimants are living in a state of limbo in that regard, and it is not in anyone's interests for these things to be dragged out. To get more certainty was one of the reasons why we introduced the Native Title (South Australia) (Validation and Confirmation) Amendment Bill in the Legislative Council where it is languishing because it is difficult to get people to address the major issues there.

There has been a lot of misrepresentation about what that bill seeks to do, when one particularly has in mind that in Queensland similar legislation has been passed. In New South Wales it has been passed, and South Australia and, I think, the ACT are the only two jurisdictions where this legislation has not been passed. In Labor states governments have been promoting the legislation. It is a source of frustration and concern to me that we as a parliament are not able to give more certainty to those very small areas of the state where land tenure quite clearly has extinguished native title and, in accordance with both the commonwealth legislation and the Mabo and Wik decisions, we believe there is no prejudice to Aboriginal people as a result of that legislation, but we cannot get people in the upper house to advance it. In all that we believe there is something more positive to be achieved in the way we are going than to talk about the so-called big picture issue of a treaty that is more likely to divide than unite.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I understand that over 30 per cent of people who interact with police in the courts are suffering from some mental illness or psychological problem. Are any strategies being developed to try to deal with this issue, because clearly it does not come through in media reporting that that is the situation. I know that it is not something that can be readily addressed, but are any strategies being developed to focus on that unfortunate interaction of people with those illnesses and the police in the courts?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: There are a number of areas where it is being addressed. In the courts we have particularly focused upon that with our Criminal Law Consolidation Act mental impairment legislation—and there is an amending bill in the Parliament at the moment to fine tune aspects of that. We were the first in Australia to enact that legislation, which more clearly addresses the issue of mental or intellectual impairment in the courts system. That has necessarily meant an additional cost. At the moment three reports from psychiatrists are required to assist in establishing mental impairment. That is being reduced in some circumstances to two by virtue of the bill currently before the Parliament.

There is to be a review of the way in which the mental impairment court works, but all the feedback from those involved with it, from the magistrates to the people involved

in the court and counsel, indicates that are all very pleased that at long last something is being done in the legal system to address the issue of those who commit offences but by reason of mental impairment there is not the necessary capacity to establish criminal intent.

In relation to police, I understand that we have a particular emphasis on dealing with mentally impaired offenders in a siege or confrontational situation. Particularly in the light of events that have occurred in other jurisdictions, that is something on which the police in South Australia place some emphasis. In terms of the health system, I am not as familiar with what is happening there with the provision of services. I know that additional funding was announced only recently—I think about \$2.4 million—by the Minister for Human Services and by the Minister for Disability Services two or three weeks ago, all designed to provide more support to those who might be suffering from mental impairment. So far as the criminal justice system is concerned, we are putting a special emphasis on it as a result of both the establishment of the mental impairment court and the enactment of the legislation that deals with the criminal law and mental impairment.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: We are well aware that two-thirds of domestic violence is perpetrated by males. I will focus on the other one-third that does not receive a lot of attention, namely, domestic violence by women against other women, for example, in lesbian relationships, daughters against parents and, in the minority of cases, women against men. Are there any initiatives to address that section of domestic violence which is often not made known to the community and does not get the attention it deserves?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I am not sure whether publicly it gets the attention that it might deserve, but certainly in policy terms we do not distinguish in our policy approach between those who might be heterosexual and those who are gay or lesbian. Domestic violence and violence between partners is a major source of concern. In relation to domestic violence, as a government we have taken a very strong approach towards prevention of domestic violence. All members of the committee will recognise that we place a great deal of emphasis right across the board on prevention of criminal behaviour as much as dealing with the aftermath of it on the basis that prevention is better than having to cure it. So several years ago we established a ministerial forum for the prevention of domestic violence on the basis that we believed that it ought to be given a high priority at the highest level of government. It involves six ministers and five non-government sector members and meets on a regular basis, supported by officers' working groups. It is specifically focused on issues of prevention.

In March we established an NDV project in the Port Adelaide and South Coast local service areas. The police are very supportive of the project, which is funded by the Crime Prevention Unit in the Attorney-General's Department. It is to be trialled for a period of 12 months and is directed towards prevention of revictimisation. There is also a domestic violence prevention web site and a program called Stopping Violent Behaviour, which used to be called a perpetrator program. An indigenous family violence strategy is being developed and there is also a state collaborative approach which has been worked through and established. The major focus of the local crime prevention area level in police and in government generally is to endeavour to focus upon prevention but not to deny the reality of domestic violence, which means that we end up providing a great range

of support to those organisations and government agencies that are providing support to victims of domestic violence.

The NDV project directly involves the police at the point of contact with both the offender and the victim and allows staged responses, all directed towards prevention of re-victimisation. In respect of that group to which Dr Such referred, not a lot more can be done at this stage, although if he has any ideas as to how to more adequately address it I would certainly be interested in hearing from him.

Mr ATKINSON: What are the names, titles and salaries of all executives in the Attorney-General's Department with salary and benefit packages exceeding an annual value of \$100 000? Which executives have contracts which entitle them to bonus payments, and what are the details of all bonuses paid in 1999-2000?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: No contract with executives provides for bonus payments. If it did, they would be fabulously rich; they are so successful. As with most, if not all, public servants, they have to take their rewards over and above salary and package just in the sense of vocation which they bring to the job. With respect to the details, I will take the question on notice. I doubt whether it is fair that we disclose the names of all the public servants who are at executive level status and their salary packages, but we might be able to provide the salary packages in a banding width or in some other way.

With this sort of information I do not want particular public servants targeted in the public arena. Naming them is an open invitation. I am not suggesting that Mr Atkinson or anyone else would do it in the parliament, but it opens the way for a significant focus on public servants, and I do not believe that that focus is appropriate. I will take the rest of the question on notice and bring back a reply in a form which I regard as suitable and, if members do not think it is suitable, they can put further questions on notice.

Mr ATKINSON: Will the Attorney list the names and titles of staff who have been issued with or have access to government credit cards, the reason for having the card and the amount expended on each for 1999-2000?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Again, the moment one gets into identifying who has what credit card and how much one spent it opens the way for those members to be particularly targeted in the public arena. I would be prepared to provide information about the number of credit cards, the reasons why the officers have those credit cards and the amounts expended, without necessarily naming public servants. There is no secret about the credit cards. There are tight controls over their use and, quite obviously, if there is any potential for abuse we are anxious to ensure that that potential is not realised. I have not had drawn to my attention any examples of abuse that I can recollect, remembering that part of the government purchasing policy is that the credit card should be used more frequently to arrange for the purchase of items of, say, stationery and other sorts of assets rather than putting them on a charge account. I might be wrong in my recollection about that so I make the cautionary disclaimer that I will need to check that as well.

Mr ATKINSON: Attorney, whatever position you adopt the opposition will be happy to maintain during the long years that we are in government.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I think that is probably unduly optimistic. I do not seek to make any judgment about what my or the government's successors might or might not wish to do.

Mr ATKINSON: A future Liberal shadow Attorney-General may well curse you. How many officers have been issued with government owned mobile telephones, what restrictions apply to their use and what is the total mobile phone call bill to the department?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Protocols are in place for the way in which mobile phones are dealt with. The prevalence of mobile phones in our community is such that I think Australians are proportionately among the highest users of mobile phones of any country in the world. Everyone's children seem to have them and everyone's parents seem to pay the bills.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: It goes on long after they have grown up, Mr Atkinson; you have a lot to look forward to, particularly in relation to the payment of mobile phone bills. Mobile phones are of particular importance for government, because it makes officers—sometimes much to their dismay—much more accessible either directly or through message services. People are more easily contactable. I am very conscious that there is always the potential to abuse phone usage but these days, with the way in which all the phone companies itemise all the phone bills, it seems to me that there is very little possibility for extensive abuse, if any. The government's mobile phone policy is subject to review from time to time. I will endeavour to provide the information but, again, I will probably not provide the names of public servants because, again, I do not believe that that is appropriate.

Mr HANNA: My question to the Attorney-General relates to the South Australian Classification Council. I am making it a multi-layered question to save time as much as anything. What is the annual budget for the classification council; who are the current council members; how much are they paid; how many hours do they put in; how are those council members selected (that is, with which criteria); how many staff are employed in the office of the classification council; how many films, publications and computer games have been classified by the council during the past 12 months; and have those classifications varied at all from the classifications given by the national classification board?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will take on notice the question about the annual budget; it is very small. Most of the classification of material is undertaken by the Office of Film and Literature Classification on a delegated basis, or the basis that classifications which are determined by that Office of Film and Literature Classification will apply to product which comes into South Australia. The South Australian council has the power under our act to review any such classification. Mostly it seems that there is satisfaction with the way in which the Office of Film and Literature Classification operates. In the past year there has been one instance where the classification was lifted from M to MA 15 or MA+ and was reviewed by the South Australian council.

It recently reviewed a film, where there was controversy, which went to the Office of Film and Literature Classification, but the classification went on appeal to the Film Board of Review. In that instance, the South Australian Council determined not to vary the classification given to that film notwithstanding the controversy that surrounded it. A statement was made at the time by the chairperson, Ms Judy Redman, so that was in the public arena.

The number of films and games that are the subject of scrutiny by the council is very limited. The exact detail is in its annual report. Obviously, it will not have produced an annual report for the current financial year. I will endeavour

to obtain the information in relation to that. With respect to the selection criteria, they are not as proscribed as the criteria set by the commonwealth legislation for the Office of Film and Literature Classification; they are selected on the basis of personal qualities, age and gender. At the moment I think there is a predominance of females on it—I think it is four females to one—and there is one vacancy, which is required to be fixed.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Yes, selected by the Attorney-General but appointed by the government of the day. I think it is an appointment by the Governor, from memory. I think that covers all the questions; if not, I will take the rest on notice.

Mr HANNA: With a view to saving public expense, is the Attorney willing to promote a scheme of publisher self-regulation whereby books, particularly those which might be available to young people, are marked on the cover as to possibly inappropriate content, for example, with respect to violence or obscene language?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will need to take the policy issue on notice, but an initial reaction is that I would be very surprised if that could work satisfactorily. There are enough complaints about the television free-to-air presentation of material to suggest that there will be differing views among publishers about the way in which standards should be applied. It might therefore be misleading to members of the public who could be forgiven for believing that consistency of approach across all publishers meant identical standards. Certainly, the guidelines would be consistent but that does not necessarily flow on to their application.

I am not immediately attracted to it. If the honourable member wants to put some proposals, as with any other policy proposals they will be considered. My initial reaction is that I do not believe that that will be an appropriate way of doing it. If we are talking about books that are available to children in school libraries, ultimately school librarians have to take some of the responsibility for identifying the content of material in those books. At the time of the recent controversy there was a proposal that every book that goes into a school library ought to be classified. That is physically impossible and so resource intensive as to make it a costly burden upon both publishers and the community, and I do not think it would ever get off the ground.

So, if it was a regulated framework, that is not on the agenda. In terms of the proposal, which in a sense is a self-regulatory framework, I have concerns that that might end up being quite a misleading representation of what is or is not in a particular publication. I prefer that both librarian and parental responsibility be the main guardian of the morality of young people.

Returning to the earlier question, you asked how much current members are paid, how often they meet and what support staff it has. Its support staff is a secretary who is a part-time officer employed in the Attorney-General's Office. I am aware of no other paid staff. Because the workload is not particularly onerous, they meet on maybe half a dozen or more times a year, but I will get some detail about that for the past 12 months. They are paid on a sessional basis and my recollection is that it is about \$100 or \$150 a meeting, but I will get some detail on that.

Mr HANNA: How much taxpayer funding is going towards the Premier's legal costs in the matter of Rann and Olsen?

The CHAIRMAN: That matter is currently before the courts.

Mr ATKINSON: This has nothing to do with its being sub judice.

The CHAIRMAN: The chair will make that decision. I just raise with the Attorney that he should be aware that this matter is before the court.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I do not have that detail at my fingertips. I will give consideration as to whether or not it should be disclosed at this point, on the basis that disclosure of that amount may have some impact on the conduct of the case. We know it is a highly contentious case, and I certainly would not want to do anything that would impinge upon the conduct of that case through the courts. I will take the question on notice but not necessarily respond.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to local crime prevention programs about which I am very much aware, there being a good one in my electorate. I believe that 14 councils continue to be funded through the local crime prevention committee program and an additional six councils were provided with direct project support from the Crime Prevention Unit. Can the Attorney advise the committee of the work of the local crime prevention committee programs and of the six councils supported by the metropolitan and rural prevention programs? Will there be continued funding for these programs?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: The program has been established on a three year basis so that those councils that are participating will continue to be funded for that three year program, subject to annual reports and meeting evaluation criteria which we set, on the basis that we believe that there has to be accountability in the way in which government funding is used.

What happens at the end of this three year program is something that will depend upon an evaluation that is currently under way. I think all members would have been invited to comment on the crime prevention program—at least members within whose electorates the crime prevention programs are being conducted—with a view to getting feedback from them about the way in which it is operating in their areas and what suggestions they might make for the future.

As part of the 2001-02 budget process we will have to present to the cabinet the results of the evaluation and then make the bid for the following three years, I presume. I think the three year funding cycle does provide a continuity that was not present in previous periods, and it gives certainty to councils, the government and employees.

The locally based crime prevention committee programs do work well through local government. There is regular monitoring by my Crime Prevention Unit and regular reporting, as well as training for officers involved in that program. We have them operating in Adelaide, Charles Sturt, Campbelltown, Norwood, Payneham, St Peters, Holdfast Bay, Marion, Murray Bridge, Onkaparinga, Port Adelaide Enfield, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie, Salisbury, Tea Tree Gully, Unley and Mitcham. Some of that innovative work being undertaken in this current year is focused upon domestic violence prevention, bullying prevention, the crime community environment art and design project along the disused railway line in Onkaparinga, and there is the Solomontown beach crime reduction project in Port Pirie. Then we have two officers who have a roving commission working with Mount Gambier council, Coober Pedy, Playford, West Torrens and Gawler.

I think the encouraging thing about this program is that local government bodies are taking initiatives which previously they were not taking, and crime prevention is becoming a much more accepted regime within communities accepting responsibility for trying to do something about the causes of crime. It is never going to achieve all of the objectives we want for it. It is never going to stamp out all crime but, hopefully, and I think this has been demonstrated, it provides a very important additional tool in combating crime, particularly at the local level.

The good thing about the past couple of years has been that, as I say, local governments have embraced crime prevention at the local level and it has brought communities together. We have a range of people involved at the local community level, including police, who are very supportive of the local crime prevention committee programs and crime prevention as well as going about their daily work. So there are a lot of pluses for it. As I say, we get some criticism for it because it cannot perform miracles but, on the other hand, I think it is a positive way in which we address at least some of the issues about crime which cause concern in our community.

Mr SCALZI: Attorney, I understand that recently established drug courts is one of the many initiatives in the justice portfolio to deal with problems of illegal drug use. Can you outline this initiative to the committee?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: The drug court pilot program has had a fair bit of publicity. I think it was up and running on 27 April this year. I have some interesting data that we have been able to put together in that period from 27 April to 7 June. Forty-six people were referred to the drug court; 18 people have been assessed by the drug court team; 13 people have been accepted into the program; 10 participants remained in the program; and three cases were pending assessment. Initially, referrals were only taken from the bail authorities in the Adelaide police local service area and from magistrates, but as from the middle of May that has been opened up to include referrals from the bail authorities in the other local service areas in the Adelaide metropolitan area.

It might seem a relatively small number of people accepted on the team, but it has to be remembered that we set it up on the basis that it would take up to about 100 participants each year, and it was a program which does require a concurrence of the accused person and their capacity and suitability for the program. Whilst some will fall by the wayside, the experience interstate indicates that there will be some who make it through and therefore are less likely to reoffend.

The drug court pilot is particularly important for Aboriginal people. There is a concern in Aboriginal communities about the extent to which Aboriginal people are involved with drug abuse, and so the Aboriginal communities have embraced the drug court project because it is more dependent upon interrelationships and reactions within the team with the accused than merely presentation to a court. There is an Aboriginal case manager and an Aboriginal justice officer who will be involved with Aboriginal people who are before the court on drug related offences. So we have tried to cover all bases and, hopefully, it will bear fruit. We have committed \$1.56 million for each of the two years that the pilot is running. There will be an evaluation of the program, and that will be on a continuing basis through to the end of the program. The object is to reduce the level of drug related crime and reduce harm to individual drug users.

Mr ATKINSON: Attorney, Budget Paper 2, page 4.14, reveals that in 2000-2001 you expect to spend \$5 million on coordination and advice. Budget Paper 4, page 5.4, lists your targets for that year. Can the Attorney advise in detail how the expenditure of this \$5 million is to be divided as between the different target areas nominated on page 4.14, and can he provide a fully itemised list of all expenditure to be undertaken of this \$5 million with a value exceeding \$10 000?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: While we are giving consideration to where it is in all these briefing papers, I suggest that I might come back to that, to save time and allow Mr Atkinson to get on with his questioning.

Mr ATKINSON: Another related question is in reference to page 5.81 of Budget Paper 4: why has the minister's own budget increased this year by \$200 000?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will take that question on notice and will arrange for a reply to be provided. I need to check those figures. Part of it may well be GST related, but I would prefer to give accurate information than merely supposition.

I provide the following information in relation to the earlier question, which is Output: 3.1, 'Coordination and Advice': the Attorney-General's Department policy and legislation, \$992 000; parliamentary counsel, \$1.7 million; equal opportunity, \$135 000; crime statistics, \$144 000; Office of Consumer and Business Affairs, \$469 000; Crime Prevention Unit, \$100 000; and support services overheads, \$677 000. That makes a total for the Attorney-General's Department of \$4.217 million. Courts Administration Authority, \$70 000; Department for Correctional Services, \$70 000; South Australia Police, \$401 000; emergency services, \$100 000; and justice portfolio, support services overheads, \$122 000. The total for the justice portfolio is \$4.98 million. So they are not contracts; they are the costs within agencies which we have assessed go to coordination and advice. If you look at the heading to the output class, that will define more clearly what coordination and advice is. I think that really is as much as I can provide at this stage.

Mr ATKINSON: Did the Attorney see the advertisement placed in the *Advertiser* of 7 June by Sydney law firm Allen Allen and Hemsley, featuring a 24 year old lawyer, Winnie Ma, and listing one of her clients as the South Australian government? Did the government permit its being advertised as a client of Allen's?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Yes, I did see it; it was drawn to my attention. I make a point of trying to avoid having to read all those advertisements, but, yes, I did see it. I was concerned that the promotion was being used directly to attract young South Australian lawyers to Sydney. On the other hand, one has to expect that many young people will leave South Australia to go overseas and interstate, lured by bright lights and more money and also the opportunity for a different level of experience. Many of them, though, having pursued that course, will return to South Australia and do return to South Australia after they have had that experience.

In terms of Allen's, I have not had an opportunity since that advertisement appeared to check the extent to which Allen's represents the South Australian government. It has to be remembered that, in a number of the outsourcing contracts which the government has entered into and the privatisation or lease or sale contracts which the government has entered into, consultants have been used. Some of those are interstate consultants. With legal practitioners, we endeavour to give, as much as it is possible to do so, preference to South Australian firms, or, if there is expertise which is not available in South Australia, we generally insist on the

interstate firm ensuring that it does as much of its work as possible through South Australian firms and, in some instances, South Australian firms win a tender—and most of these are by tender—or part of a tender to work in conjunction with some other firm, either a South Australian firm or an interstate firm.

To the extent that Allen's might be advertising that it did work for the South Australian government, it may well have been in the context of one of those sorts of contracts to which I have referred, while ignoring the fact that most probably South Australian lawyers were also very heavily involved. If there are difficulties with particular interstate lawyers acting for agencies of the South Australian government, I am certainly anxious to ensure that something is done to try to address those issues. I am a very strong supporter of giving work to the South Australian legal profession, particularly in relation to outsourcing and other contracts. A large volume of work is done by South Australian lawyers for government, alongside the work that is done by the Crown Solicitor's Office.

Mr ATKINSON: Is the Attorney aware of instances of eastern state law firms being contracted by the Electricity Reform Sales Unit at going eastern states rates and then subcontracting the work back to Adelaide law firms at lower South Australian rates?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: No, I am not aware of that practice and, if it is occurring, I would be concerned. On the other hand, I am aware that, where there is a tender process, South Australian firms have been successful, but also interstate firms have been successful where they have additional expertise which we might require, but I am certainly not aware that interstate firms are subcontracting back to South Australian lawyers at lower rates and thereby making a profit. If Mr Atkinson has some detail which he would like to make available to me, I would be prepared to pursue the matter.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to 'Output Class 1: Preventative Services Targets for 2000-01' at page 5.6. One of the highlights is:

Work together with the retail industry to develop prevention issues associated with crimes against the retail sector.

I have a particular interest in this area as a significant proportion of my electorate work is in the retail sector. I understand that the Attorney-General recently released a discussion paper outlining a diversion scheme for minor shop theft which was developed by the Retail Industry Crime Prevention Advisory Committee. Will the Attorney-General advise the committee on the proposal, what is the process from here and the work of the committee generally?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I was pleased when I released this discussion paper that Mr Atkinson was on radio supporting it. That I hope will auger well for the—

Mr SCALZI: On 5AA?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I am not prepared to identify the commercial radio station on which he appeared—it is not something I ought to be promoting—but the fact that he was supporting the proposals in the discussion paper gave me some hope that, when responses are received from all those who may wish to make a submission by 3 July, we will be able to advance it constructively to a satisfactory outcome. It is fair to say that minor shop theft (as it is described) has been on governments' agendas for a number of years—Labor governments and Liberal governments.

When the issue was raised with me by my retail industry crime prevention advisory committee, it seemed to me that it was something that ought to be the subject of extensive public consultation. Because it was potentially controversial on the first occasion several months ago when this hit the media, there was immediate opposition to it from some members of the retail sector, but since that time I would hope that they have now had an opportunity to look at the discussion paper.

I have been concerned about issues relating to crime prevention in the retail industry for some time: it is why we set up an advisory committee to address some of the issues. That committee comprises the Australian Retail Association, the Property Council of South Australia, the Insurance Council of Australia (SA Branch), the Australian Loss Prevention Council, the Motor Trades Association, the Department of Education, Training and Employment, particularly because of the need to develop curriculum for young people in relation to their responsibility so far as retailers are concerned, South Australia Police, the Attorney-General's Office, the Office of Crime Statistics and the Crime Prevention Unit.

A retail crime and safety survey was undertaken in 1997. We have commissioned the development of school curriculum on issues associated with the retail industry. Now there is this minor shop theft diversion scheme which relates to minor shop theft of property up to \$150. I think it is more likely to produce a productive outcome so far as the victims (the retailers) are concerned than what occurs at present where about 40 per cent of those matters which get to court never result in a conviction or a penalty because they can be dealt with immediately. It is important to stress that the retailer (the victim) has a significant measure of say as to whether the police officer goes down the track of the diversion scheme on the spot or the matter goes into the court system. That, I think, is the difference between what has been proposed in this discussion paper and what has been proposed in the past.

One of those examples from the past was something akin to an expiation fee. I think that raised the hackles of a lot of people, whereas I think this scheme will be demonstrated to provide a more immediate and active response than occurs under the present system of charging and court appearances. It is likely to deal predominantly with first or early offenders as well as the ageing, the forgetful and the mentally ill.

Mr ATKINSON: The latest edition of Crime and Justice in South Australia—1998 dealing with offences reported to the police (victims and alleged perpetrators) mentions that incident reports were up 11.6 per cent on 1997 and offences recorded by police were up 11.1 per cent. Offences increased in six of the seven major offence categories: offences against the person (excluding sexual offences), up 6.3 per cent; sexual offences, up 6.6 per cent; robbery offences, up 46.2 per cent; unarmed robbery, up 38.4 per cent; armed robbery, up 61 per cent; break and enter dwelling, up 18.9 per cent; larceny/illegal use of a motor vehicle, up 35.9 per cent; fraud and misappropriation, up 2.2 per cent; damage property, up 14.7 per cent; and drug offences were down 3 per cent. Will the Attorney-General share with the committee any explanation he may have for the sudden sharp increase in crime in South Australia after five years of downward trends?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: The honourable member is referring to the 1998 figures. I have some more up-to-date figures. The Police Commissioner's annual report will contain all the data for the financial year. That report is likely

to be published in September or October, which is the usual time frame for that to occur, and the crime and justice publication will hopefully be published in the not too distant future, but much work still needs to be done on that.

Mr ATKINSON: By you?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: No. That is offensive to the Office of Crime Statistics, because I do not vet the crime and justice report or anything which it does.

Mr ATKINSON: You would like to have mastered it before we read it.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: That is a different perspective and, of course, it is not so offensive, although it is partly because the Office of Crime Statistics operates independently and professionally—and I am sure that the honourable member will recognise that. It is well known that levels of criminal behaviour fluctuate. From the early 1990s through to 1998 there was a steady decline in many offence categories. In 1998, for some unexplained reason, there seemed to be a significant upturn in some areas of criminal behaviour. They will, of course, fluctuate from year to year and month to month.

In 1999, there were 243 394 offences reported to police. As was the case in previous years, offences against property were the most dominant, accounting for two out of three offences reported. In contrast, driving offences, good order offences and offences against the person accounted for only 14 per cent, 10 per cent and 6.7 per cent, respectively. Sexual offences and robbery and extortion each constituted less than 1 per cent of offences reported, while drug offences accounted for only 1.9 per cent.

From the early 1990s through to 1997, there was a general decline in recorded crime. However, this trend was reversed in 1998 when an 11.1 per cent increase was recorded. In 1999, there was a further increase of 9.2 per cent. However, in contrast with 1998 when most offence categories increased, in 1999 a number recorded a decrease. In fact, most of the increases in 1999 could be attributed to an escalation in two categories: property offences and selected driving offences other than drink driving. Percentage shifts in the key offence categories between 1998 and 1999 are as follows: total offences up 9.2 per cent from 222 955 in 1998 to 243 394 in 1999—

Mr Hanna interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Well, the rate of increase is declining.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Well, they ought to. They are the least likely to be the subject of any offence. Offences against the person—I hope this will satisfy Mr Hanna—decreased 6.9 per cent from 17 590 to 16 370; assault occasioning harm down 1.3 per cent from 1 831 to 1 808; other assault down 8.5 per cent from 13 306 to 12 180; sexual offences down 3.6 per cent from 1 852 in 1998 to 1 786 in 1999; rape down slightly from 610 to 603—that is a small base, so percentages can vary significantly; indecent assault down marginally from 572 to 548; and unlawful sexual intercourse up from 121 to 155. I reiterate that the relatively small number within each sexual offence category means that calculation of percentage shifts may be misleading since any small numerical increase will produce a large proportionate change. Robbery—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I hope that the honourable member will give appropriate recognition to this in the public arena. Robbery is down 12.3 per cent from 1 752 in 1998 to 1 536 in 1999; armed robbery, down from 639 to 529; and

other, which is unarmed robbery, down 11 per cent from 1 067 to 950. Again, as with sexual offences, the relatively small number of robberies recorded each year means that small numerical shifts can produce large percentage changes. Although the total number of robbery offences reported to police decreased substantially between 1993 and 1997, this trend was reversed in 1998 due primarily to a substantial rise in the number of armed robberies. This upward trend was not maintained in 1999. The increase in 1998 therefore appears to be an aberration, with numbers now returning to what some might describe as more 'normal' levels, although I would hope that one would never accept any level as normal.

Unarmed robberies, which also increased in 1998, have also returned to pre-1997 levels; property offences, up 8 per cent from 147 344 in 1998 to 159 177 in 1999; and break and enter a dwelling, up 5.3 per cent from 18 846 to 19 836. It should be noted that a change in the legislation—and members of the committee will be well aware of that—in late 1999 replaced break and enter offences with criminal trespass offences. Break and enter dwelling figures for 1999 therefore include a small number of non-aggravated, aggravated and other criminal trespass offences that occurred in a place of residence.

The figures continue: break and enter a shop, down 3.3 per cent from 4 175 to 4 039; other break and enter, up 2.1 per cent from 9 957 to 10 167; and larceny and illegal use of a motor vehicle, up 9.4 per cent from 11 001 to 12 033. That is an area of concern which both police and the Crime Prevention Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Task Force and the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council are seeking to address, with both innovative policing and innovative prevention programs. Interference with a motor vehicle was up 25 per cent from 3 173 to 3 967; shop theft, up 2.8 per cent from 5 675 to 5 836, and a number of those are the sorts of offences that would fall into the category of minor shop theft; fraud and deception, down 32.8 per cent from 10 309 to 6 927; and damaging property up 15.9 per cent from 31 922 to 37 006.

It ought to be noted that during the 1992-97 period a number of those categories steadily declined. Hence despite the 1998 and 1999 increases, the most recent figures are generally lower than or comparable with those recorded in the early part of the decade. That applies particularly to break and enter dwelling, break and enter shop and other break and enter. By contrast, larceny and illegal use of a motor vehicle declined sharply during the early and mid 1990s. That was a period, even up to the late 1990s, when there was significant emphasis upon protection and taking precautions to ensure that one's motor vehicle was not interfered with or illegally used or stolen.

The 1998 and 1999 increases have largely wiped out the gains of the previous five years, but we are endeavouring through a number of strategies to try to reduce that yet again. Selected driving offences are up 51.7 per cent from 22 490 in 1998 to 34 108 in 1999; drink driving and related offences, down 9.6 per cent from 6 839 to 6 184; dangerous or reckless driving, up from 600 to 955; negligent driving, up 27.9 per cent from 2 060 to 2 634; driving while licence suspended or cancelled, up 71.3 per cent from 1 701 to 2 913; driving without a licence, up 49.9 per cent from 1 890 to 2 834; and motor vehicle registration offences, up 143.2 per cent from 5 326 to 12 953. It has to be remembered that the number of driving offences recorded in any given year is really heavily influenced by police enforcement practices. Increasing

random breath testing is one way by which a number of these offences might more easily be detected.

Drug offences are up 6.3 per cent from 4 309 in 1998 to 4 581 in 1999; possess and use of drugs, up 5.3 per cent from 1 750 to 1 842; possessing drug implements, down 14.4 per cent from 1 018 to 871; possession for sale or selling drugs, up from 780 to 882; producing and manufacture of drugs up from 470 to 705; offences against good order are down 8.4 per cent from 26 642 to 24 414; and other offences are up 45.6 per cent from 976 to 1 421. That is the full range. In 11 of the 20 categories offending is down. The fact that it was largely in offences against property and driving offences is preferable to its being in the area of violence against persons, where the majority of those categories showed significant downward trends.

Membership:

Ms Rankine substituted for Mr Snelling.

Ms RANKINE: I have a number of people come to see me about signing building contracts with large firms in particular and not being able to get their homes built as was originally agreed. How many similar complaints has the department of consumer affairs received in the past 12 months in the lead up to the GST's being implemented?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: One matter has been raised with me by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in discussions about legislation currently in the Parliament and as a result of that some inquiries have been made by the Office of the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. In that instance all was not as it seemed to be: a great deal of the blame was initially placed upon the builder when in fact there were a series of matters that caused delay to occur.

I am aware of the issues which you raise and, if there are particular examples, as with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am prepared to have them properly investigated. If there is deliberate delay to take advantage of contractual obligations or delay to facilitate the completion of other projects where GST may not be claimed, then I think that is an unsatisfactory practice. That has already been drawn to the attention of the two principal building associations, the HIA and the MBA. With respect to the matter raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (and I will not identify names), the original contract was signed and is still the subject of some further investigation.

The contract was signed in June 1999. The engineer's report, soil reports and plans were undertaken by the builder within reasonable time frames. The council gave its approval at the end of September 1999. Some delays were experienced with the bank providing finance, and that was not provided until January 2000. Then there were some issues personal to the customers, and several of those conditions which were not capable of being met by the customer were waived by the builder. Apparently there was a request to sign a new contract, but the customers declined to do so. It may be that in that instance the builder was quite justified in seeking a variation, if not a new contract, if only because of the failure of certain conditions precedent to construction being complied with. Nevertheless, work on that property has progressed without a new contract being signed, and at the point of this briefing note the house was almost half completed.

I am aware of at least one other instance where a complaint was made about pressure upon customers to enter into a new contract to facilitate the imposition and collection of

GST. My recollection is that that one was also investigated and did not proceed. It is a practice which is ultimately in the hands of the customer because, if the contract is on foot and is still live, there can be no obligation to enter into a new contract; the builder is required to comply with the contract. The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs is identifying all those complaints where this is a problem and is investigating them at my request. I will take on notice the question of how many there are, because I do not think we have that information. In fact, I do not think there have been very many but I will need to check it.

Ms RANKINE: These concerned one builder, with contracts signed within a day of one another with a delay of about nine months, with not a sod of soil being turned. So, there is an enormous amount of expense; it is not just getting the house built but people are incurring expenses in paying for rent and the storage of furniture.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I do not know whether the honourable member has made that information available to the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs. If not, I invite her to do so and we will be happy to deal with it on a confidential basis and endeavour to gain a full picture of the situation.

Ms RANKINE: In one instance the contract was ceased and it was put to the person building the home that the contract had expired and that it would cost an additional \$8 800 to proceed. Those people got their deposit back after some pressure and the home is nearly finished. In the other case, after some intervention from me the builders got their act together and proceeded with the house, but it had taken them some time to move on it.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I am pleased that those issues have been resolved, but I would still suggest to the honourable member that, subject to the approval of her constituents, she make the information available to the Commissioner so that we can get a full picture of what might be occurring. If it is with one builder we would like to know. We are taking advice at the moment as to whether or not those sorts of practices go to the very essence of a builder's entitlement to be licensed. I regard it as very serious if, through no fault of the consumer, that behaviour is something which prejudices the consumer. We have to remember that there may be occasions where the conditions precedent in the contract have not been satisfied, perhaps through no fault of the builder or of the customer, where there may have to be some accommodation. I would be quite happy to take the details on notice with a view to having them examined.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Mr B. Pryor, Liquor and Gaming Commissioner.

The CHAIRMAN: My question concerns the ability of the licensing commission under the Gaming Machines Act 1992 to hear objections from members of the public who wish to object to the provision of poker machines in premises or a club. It has been put to me that the matters which the Commissioner can take into account are very narrow.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: We had intended that Mr Prior would be present with the Treasurer tomorrow to deal with gaming issues, because they are under the Treasurer's portfolio and not mine.

The CHAIRMAN: We may deal with it twice. Tomorrow I will not have the ability to ask the question, so in sitting through a few days of hearing I will take the opportunity of asking the odd question or two.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will accede to your wishes.

The CHAIRMAN: The Commissioner would be aware that in parts of my electorate there has been considerable public disquiet in relation to applications for the installation of poker machines. It was put to me that the grounds on which the Commissioner has to consider these objections are very narrow and give little or no real ability to people who want to object to be properly considered. What are the Commissioner's comments in relation to that?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Notwithstanding the caution which I indicated earlier, I invite the Commissioner to respond.

Mr Pryor: You are right, Mr Chairman: the requirements under the Gaming Machines Act on which I have to satisfy myself tend to relate to issues such as the standard of the premises, security, the nature of the undertaking being carried out on the licensed premises, whether gaming would predominate over other activities, and whether the gaming area is so designed or situated that it would be a special attraction to minors. They tend to be those types of issues. There is also a requirement that I must be satisfied that the conduct of gaming on the licensed premises would not result in undue offence, annoyance, disturbance etc. to people who work, worship or reside in the locality. What the act does not allow me to do is to take into account socioeconomic issues or the issue of people simply saying, 'We do not like poker machines and do not want them in our community.' However, I do have a power of discretion.

One notable case involved an application for a gaming machine licence by the Nundroo Hotel/Motel on the West Coast. The local Aboriginal community at Yalata and the community of Oak Valley objected strongly to that application on the basis that this was the nearest licensed facility to their communities, that they were both almost dysfunctional communities, and that the impact on them would be devastating. I refused that application.

The applicant took it on appeal and the licensing court judge came down stronger than I did. Not only did he say that I was correct in refusing to grant the licence but went further and said that in cases such as that I could exercise my discretion to refuse a licence. I think you would have to say that that would be at the very worst end of the spectrum of any community in South Australia.

There have been other applications. I think the most notable, from a precedent point of view, would be Callington, Penneshaw (on Kangaroo Island) and recently one in the Flinders Ranges, where the communities simply argued that they did not want gaming machines. In each of those cases I found that I could not refuse to grant the licence. I suppose the most recent notable one was the Maylands Hotel, where some in the community argued that, irrespective of whether they could see or hear machines and whether they impacted on the operation of the hotel or whatever, they objected to the grant of the gaming machine licence as they objected to gaming machines, because, in their opinion, they were evil. I simply cannot refuse an application on those grounds.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the Attorney advise whether there is a good reason to make changes to allow more public participation in relation to the granting of licences in cases such as the Commissioner and I have talked about? It would appear to me that small communities do not have access to take the matter further and that the grounds on which they can object are very narrow. Do you think there is a case to broaden the grounds of objection?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Well, I would not like to make a comment on the policy. We all know that issues relating to

gaming machines are particularly contentious in the community as well as in the parliament, and ultimately any decision on these sorts of issues is made according to the conscience of individual members. Because I am not responsible for the Gaming Machines Act—that is the responsibility of the Treasurer—I undertake to refer that question to the Treasurer, and he will, I am sure, give some consideration to it.

Ultimately, it will be a matter for the legislature and the conscience of individual members. At the moment there is a bill in the Legislative Council to make amendments to the Gaming Machines Act. This bill quite clearly demonstrates the way in which conscience is exercised, and there is no clear indication of which way people will exercise that right of conscience.

Mr ATKINSON: My question relates to a report in the *Sunday Mail* of 7 November which states that under-age drinkers are finding it easier than ever to buy alcohol illegally in Adelaide. The *Sunday Mail* found that two out of three pubs were prepared to break the law and serve alcohol to under-age teens, and they were a 16-year-old and a 17-year-old. We are referring here to bottle drives. How many prosecutions have there been for under-age drinking in the past three years?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I suppose it depends on what the honourable member means. Does he mean prosecution of young people or prosecution of licensees?

Mr ATKINSON: Both.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Prosecution of licensees or employees for selling or supplying alcohol to minors—so far as the statistics are concerned we may have to take that on notice. But the headline was wrong, and I will invite the Liquor and Gaming Commissioner to respond.

Mr Pryor: There are two ways we can proceed with prosecutions for these types of offences. First, you have a prosecution under the act, and that can be a prosecution against the minor, and that would be covered by the juvenile justice system. It is all handled by the Commissioner of Police. To the best of my knowledge it is generally handled by either an informal or a formal caution. I do not have figures available to me of the number of prosecutions that the police have taken, because the police have responsibility for policing the Liquor Licensing Act. I have figures for the actions that either the Commissioner of Police or I have taken for the licensing authority for disciplinary action. So that is quite distinct from a prosecution under the act. I would have to confirm these figures, but I think in the past 12 months we have taken disciplinary action against four licensees.

It is extremely difficult to proceed to disciplinary action because of the requirement for proof. We have to be satisfied. Quite often we find it very difficult to get the minors involved to cooperate, either with the police or with my office. As to the ones we have taken, I think one licensee was fined \$2 000 and I think another one had two fines of \$1 500. So the Licensing Court is imposing some fairly heavy penalties, but it is difficult.

Mr ATKINSON: What level of spot checks are there to ensure compliance, and does the Commissioner do any entrapment in the way that occurs under the tobacco products legislation?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Entrapment is a very difficult procedure to follow. Of course, the undercover police operations legislation does not cover that, so you are back to the common law, and using minors to entrap in a licensed establishment context is quite different from using minors in

relation to delicatessens and the purchasing of cigarettes. I would have a personal concern about the use of young, under-age people for entrapment purposes. It is not something which I have considered or, as I understand it, the Commissioner has considered.

Mr ATKINSON: You do it for packaged alcohol; in bottle drives it would be the same as for a delicatessen.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I do not believe it is. They are all licensed establishments. It is a difficult area. I am prepared to take that part of the question on notice. There are some difficulties in engaging in the use of young people in licensed premises, which I still maintain is different from delicatessens and tobacco. But I am happy to take the issue on notice and endeavour to provide a reply.

Mr HANNA: In the light of comments by the Ombudsman in his report and correspondence to my office in relation to some long outstanding freedom of information reviews, what additional resources will the Attorney be ensuring to the Ombudsman, so that the Ombudsman's statutory activities can be carried out within a reasonable timeframe?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: For this current financial year an additional \$80 000 was made available to the Ombudsman. There is no provision for yet more funds in the next financial year. The government is very conscious of resource demands on the Ombudsman as well as on other areas of government and, ultimately, it is a matter of trying to get a reasonable balance. My understanding is that the additional \$80 000 did provide a useful fillip to the capacity of the Ombudsman to undertake his responsibilities. They were directly related to his request for additional resources in respect of freedom of information applications, as I recollect.

Mr HANNA: That is right; a second officer is working on that now. My second question relates to the review of community legal centres. Which community legal centres will be closed or amalgamated leading to a loss of sites? I am particularly concerned about the Marion Community Legal Service. The Attorney could just say 'None'!

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: No, as I would run the risk of misleading you. A tendering process is presently in train. As a result of tendering, it is likely that one community legal centre will not be funded, but it is not yet clear which one it will be because it is still subject to the tendering process. We went out to tender—and this was with the concurrence of the commonwealth Attorney-General—because Noarlunga Community Legal Centre refused to amalgamate with Marion, citing irreconcilable differences, even though Marion Community Legal Centre was keen to proceed. In the western region, Parks Community Legal Centre chose not to amalgamate with Bowden and Brompton, and similar reasons were cited, and the offer of mediation was refused. In the central region, Norwood and Adelaide Inner Northern had commenced their amalgamation discussions late last year but these broke down in May and they also refused the offer of mediation. I do not think anyone can dispute the need to try to rationalise services. The whole object of—

Mr Hanna interjecting:

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Rationalise services and provide better services. The whole object of this was directed towards providing a better and more coordinated service across the metropolitan area and also to provide outreach services into the country because there was a lot of duplication and there were things that some community legal centres could not do because they did not have the resources. The state also, as part of this, offered an additional \$250 000 for new regional services. We were prepared to put more resources into them

and also to try to facilitate change because they had all grown up according to what was then perceived to be a community need but there had been a lack of appropriate coordination of resources.

The other thing is that they had not been subject to any review in 15 years. I do not think that that is particularly healthy, particularly where you have agencies using taxpayers' money. We approached this in a spirit of goodwill designed to try to get the best outcomes for regions, but some refused to cooperate. We therefore took the view that they should go out to tender, and that is the fairest approach to it.

Mr HANNA: My next question relates to the Crown Solicitor's costs in respect of victims of crime matters. The Attorney would be aware that for members of the legal profession on the victim side there is a strict limit on costs, no matter how many court or chamber attendances are necessary to finalise a matter. Will the Attorney confirm that the costs of the Crown Solicitor's work in running those files is paid from the criminal injuries compensation fund, and, whether or not that is so, is it the case that the Crown Solicitor's Office charges per attendance rather than a fixed fee similar to that which is faced by members of the private profession?

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I will take the bulk of that question on notice. It is correct that the Crown Solicitor's costs are deducted from the fund on the basis of a certification to me and an approval from me, which, in some instances, as I recollect, have been delegated to the chief executive officer of the department. I am conscious of the legal professions' request to have a review of fees. I cannot recollect exactly what might have happened with that, but it is relevant in relation to the GST as well, but I think that issue is adequately resolved without any cost to the solicitors. There are some solicitors—and only a very small minority—who do run these cases even though there may be no reasonable prospect of recovery. It is not a prevalent practice but there are some where the amount which is recovered is set off against the amount which has otherwise been paid through insurance or worker's compensation. So they collect their costs on all the disbursements but nothing else. I am just a bit cautious about that practice. That is as far as I want to take that.

Mr HANNA: I will outline the precise problem since the Attorney will take it away to look at. If there are, say, four chamber attendances before a matter is settled, there will be a fixed fee for a legal practitioner in private practice who is running a case for the victim in respect of all of those attendances. What I seek to uncover is whether there is any discrepancy for a solicitor from the Crown Solicitor's Office who attends on those four occasions as well and, instead of getting a fixed fee for the lot, given that the matter has been resolved, charges out for each attendance. That is the question.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: I understand the question. I apologise if I did not make it clear. I understood the question, but I will get some information.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Attorney and his officers for their attendance today. A number of questions will, in due time, be incorporated in *Hansard*. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the votes completed.

South Australian Police Department, \$15 212 000
Administered Items for South Australian Police
Department, \$4 116 000

Witness:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire, Minister for Police, Correctional Services and Emergency Services.

Departmental Adviser:

Mr N. McKenzie, Acting Commissioner of Police.

Membership:

Mr Snelling substituted for Mr Atkinson.

Mr Koutsantonis substituted for Mr Hanna.

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

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I want to put on the record my sincere appreciation of all the staff (paid and voluntary) of my agencies: the police department, all the emergency services and the Department for Correctional Services. There has been a great deal of change for the better occurring throughout my agencies over the past year or two. During the last year, as that change has been implemented, obviously more pressure has been put on staff workload to get up to speed with that initiative. So, whilst my words are not many, I appreciate their commitment and dedication to the South Australian community and their agencies and also their professional support for me as minister.

I am sure that, as a result of these changes, whether they be in the police department, emergency services or correctional services, we will see improvements for both those who work in and deliver these services and, importantly, for those to whom these services are supplied: namely, the community of South Australia.

Mr SNELLING: On page 5.72 of budget paper 4, volume 1, there is a list of full time equivalents (FTEs) for the South Australian police department. The estimated result for the year 2000 is 4 438 and the budget estimate for 2001 is 4 535: an increase of only 97. The Premier promised 113 extra police by June 2001 plus 27 support staff. Why are there only 97 extra FTEs in the budget papers?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The short answer is that the government intends to honour the Premier's promise of an additional 113 police officers over and above recruitment and attrition. As far as police resources are concerned, you can talk about numbers but you must also look at how those numbers are utilised. I want to reinforce the fact that the numbers stated in the press release on budget day—that is, 113 additional police officers to be recruited before 30 June 2001 on top of recruitment and attrition—will occur.

When it comes to recruitment and attrition, your projections cannot be specific at any given time during the year. You may project that 110 or 115 people will retire or take a career change, but then you might end up with 130 or 140 retiring or taking a career change. Our commitment is to monitor attrition closely so that we maintain police numbers and that, on top of that, we recruit an additional 113. From the point of view of the public, that is the important issue. A number in the budget papers is not what is relevant; what is relevant is the recruitment and attrition figures plus the extra 113.

Mr SNELLING: So, the 113 are on top of replacements for natural attrition. Why do not the budget papers show that? Why is the increase only 97?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The budget papers can only anticipate what the retirement or attrition figures will be. The police monitor attrition every month.

Mr SNELLING: But the 113 are on top of that.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: They are additional, yes. I would like to reinforce that, because there has been some conjecture around the traps about whether or not these 113 were additional. To put it in language that we all understand, during the next financial year (1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001) there will be an increase of 113 police recruited over and above whatever the attrition rate happens to be for that year. So, if the attrition figure is 120, 120 police officers will be recruited, and on top of that 113 additional police will also be recruited.

Mr SNELLING: I understand that—it is as clear as mud—but my question is: why is that not reflected in the budget papers? Why do the budget papers show an increase of only 97? I am not suggesting that the government is showing bad faith, but there appears to be a discrepancy in that the budget papers show an increase of only 97, but the government has indicated an increase of 113 plus 27 extra support staff. So, there is a significant discrepancy between the government's undertaking and what is shown in the budget papers. I am just looking for an explanation.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will obtain a detailed response for the honourable member in due course, but what I have just said is very clear—it is pristine. I want to place this on the record at the beginning. We will recruit the number that we have lost through attrition and, on top of that, an additional 113 police officers will be recruited from the academy during that period of time.

Mr SCALZI: What action has the government taken with respect to police numbers following the review of the Premier's police task force?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: In my opinion as Police Minister, this has been one of the great successes of the task force report. The opposition may not agree, but the facts are simple. The task force report provided an opportunity for the South Australian police department to be looked at broadly, not only in terms of police numbers but what happens with the resources that are there: for instance, further strategic development and other issues of policing and what sort of support might be needed to assist our operational police.

As far as I know, this is the first time in history—certainly in modern history—where we have seen a task force come together, headed by our Commissioner and consisting of representatives of the Police Association and the justice portfolio, to have a clear and strategic look at the requirements. When you talk about police numbers—to use my colleague's words—the facts can be as clear as mud, because there is far more to a police department than raw police numbers.

Having said that, the Premier and the government have acknowledged that police numbers are a significant part of the equation when it comes to the department and its ability to be able to service the community. We were able to sit down collectively and have a close look at all the issues. As a result of that task force report, as has been announced, 113 additional—that is extra—police are being recruited over the next 12 months. That may mean that the last group of those police are in the academy in June. It will not necessarily be possible to have them all out on the beat over that 12 month

period, but the commitment is to get as many of them as possible out on beat and the last group through and into the academy at Fort Largs during June 2001. That is over and above attrition.

On top of that we have a situation that was established where some non-police, civilians within the police department, could further assist police to do their work, particularly a lot of the work around administration, and therefore the task force actually identified that 27 Public Sector Management Act employees be also transferred over to the South Australian police department. So, we are seeing 27 Public Sector Management Sector Act staff going over to the department, 105 additional sworn police officers going into general policing duties and on top of that seven crime scene investigators to assist the current lot of crime scene investigators. This should have good benefits for both the police and the community.

Clearly, from what I have just said, we will probably be looking at around 250 police officers being recruited to go through the academy between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2001, which means there will be a significant workload on the academy. Therefore, it was also identified that an extra police officer be appointed to facilitate training at the academy. The other important point is that, of the 105 additional police, 40 police officers will be put into two pools, one for the northern command and one for the southern command. Those 40 police officers will be able to address the issues we have from time to time where an officer is on long service leave, extended sick leave, maternity leave and the like. That has been lobbied for for some time by the association and been discussed by both the commissioner and deputy commissioner with me, and I am pleased to see that initiative is now coming to fruition over the next year as a result of the announcement from the task force. I acknowledge publicly the good and hard work with tight time lines that all the staff involved in the development of that task force for the report for the Premier put in, including a lot of work on weekends.

Mr SCALZI: Will the minister explain what funding SAPOL has been provided with by the government for its capital works program in 2000-01?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Members would see that the estimated outcome or proposed capital expenditure is an estimated outcome in 2000-01 as against 1999-2000—an additional variance—of \$20.9 million. That proposed capital investment increase will add significant benefits to the South Australian police department. Part of that will allow for the commencement of relocation of personnel from the functions of the old Angus Street police station to make way for the Commonwealth courts building. There is the issue also around the Sydney Olympics and the police have been doing a lot of work in preparation for the Sydney Olympics. There will be additional costs involved through the demands of the Olympics. When I say the Sydney Olympics, I mean the aspect of the Sydney Olympics that is coming to Adelaide, that is, the seven soccer games. There are infrastructure requirements for that as well as additional police resources, with overtime and the like.

We announced in this budget period the completion of the construction of the Netley police complex. That is an important initiative not only to assist police in the Sturt local service area who were located at Glenelg and who needed to be relocated given the Holdfast Shores development but also in terms of the initiative of bringing the Star Force effectively next to the airport, which will give great support to police and the community right across South Australia. An example of

that was clearly the Woomera issue recently where police needed to respond to that incident and get Star Force officers up there quickly. Clearly, their being located near the airport would be good for that.

There is work being done to complete the expiation notice system and the accommodation upgrade. There is also a police information database and data entry system for operational police that will allow remote access that is being developed. Finally, there is funding to provide significant minor works, equipment, motor vehicles replacement and, importantly to me and to all the police, some telecommunications interception capabilities that will be funded from the proposed capital investment program.

Mr SCALZI: We hear a lot about the problems of drugs and theft. What action has been taken to address the harmful effects of drugs?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: A significant amount of work has been done by the police over the past couple of years. All this work that has been planned and developed by police is fully integrated with a whole of government strategy to combat illicit drugs. As members would be aware, the Prime Minister announced a significant initiative into a national drug strategy. Whilst much work had already been done by police and other agencies in this state, the Premier took that up and is now chairing a cabinet subcommittee so that all the relevant ministers involved in illicit drug issues sit regularly and further develop whole of government approaches to the reduction of illicit drug trafficking, harm minimisation education, rehabilitation and the like when it comes to the issues around drugs but specifically to police.

The Premier announced today the drug diversion teams, which is a great initiative and involves some federal funding. To put it in simple terms, for people involved in minor offences around illicit drugs, police will be assessing whether or not they should be referred to the drug and alcohol units. There are more such units to be set up through the Minister for Human Services, but it will eliminate in many circumstances the fact that these people have to go through the courts system. As we know, many people who get involved in illicit drug use get involved sadly in minor crime and some major crime also. The major crime would not be covered in the drug diversion team's initiatives. It is a serious attempt by both police and the government to address the issues around drug usage.

As well as that, two key operations have been going on, one being Operation Mantel, which operates more at the local level where police officers are working on drug issues within the local service areas. There is another operation—Operation Counteract. I appreciate the work police are doing when it comes to the areas around illicit drugs. Many officers say to me that they feel that without illicit drugs we would probably see our crime rates in this state at the lowest they have ever been in recorded history. The illicit drug issue is one we all have to face. I do not think there is a family today in Australia that has not had a family member involved in the illicit drug issues directly or indirectly. It is a matter the police are committed to address from their viewpoint, together with other agencies across government and working with non-government agencies.

Ms RANKINE: The task force certainly was a much needed initiative, particularly in light of the rising crime levels in South Australia. We had the Attorney report in the last session that in 1998 crime went up in this state 11 per cent and in 1999 another 9.2 per cent on top of that, so clearly

something had to be done. Will the minister or the Premier be releasing the findings of that task force report?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The task force report is a working document, and some other work still has to be done on it, so it is now a working document for the police and justice portfolio. It would not be appropriate to release the document. We have released the key findings from that and as a result we have announced our initiatives, but the police are still working through other issues around that task force report and how it interacts with the justice portfolio. One of the good things about the new justice portfolio is that we have the opportunity to see police and correctional services in my portfolio and the rest of the Attorney-General's justice portfolio working closer together to combat and address crime and law and order issues. There is still some work identified there which the departments are working through, and therefore as minister I do not think it would be appropriate to release the report.

Ms RANKINE: I might have missed it; I thought we had some outcomes from that report, but I do not recall the findings of the report being released.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Outcomes or findings; it depends how you word it. It was a finding that resulted in an outcome, which was 113 police officers and 27 public sector management people. That has been announced as a finding that resulted in an outcome, and we are still working through the other issues.

Ms RANKINE: So, you will release the findings.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: It would not be sensible to release the report when police and justice are still working on the issues. I remind the honourable member that her party was in government for 11 years and it did not release every document over that 11 year period, because the departments had to keep working on them.

Ms RANKINE: I refer to page 5.61 of budget paper 4, volume 1. Do the 'other supplies and services' cover the provision of police uniforms? I have a question in relation to that. What, if any, checks are made to ensure that companies that are granted contracts to supply police uniform items provide their employees with their legal entitlements as far as wages and conditions are concerned?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As a point of qualification, is the honourable member saying that she has a concern over some issues regarding the terms and conditions of the employees of one of SAPOL's suppliers?

Ms RANKINE: Yes. I have been advised that Dixon Clothing has a contract for the provision of uniform items for SA Police. I have also been advised that outworkers are used by this company for the manufacture of those items and that the only work undertaken at the factory premises is the final finishing.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I do not think it would be the police responsibility or fair on the Acting Commissioner to ask him to try to comment on that at the moment, and neither could I. Given that it is in *Hansard* I will ask my officers to look at it and refer it to the relevant minister. If any issues need to be dealt with in respect of industrial relations and the like, I will ask the relevant minister to look at the matter.

Ms RANKINE: Would it not be your responsibility to ensure that contracts let by your department are let to appropriate companies?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As the honourable member would know, there are a lot of prudential management and probity issues around all sorts of circumstances with tenders

that are let, but there are always limitations as to what an agency should check on. When it comes to payment terms and the conditions of a supplier, it is drawing a pretty long bow to ask the police department to be responsible for that. If, as I am sure she does, the honourable member has a genuine concern, we will look into the matter and refer any issues to the minister responsible for industrial relations.

Ms RANKINE: In the capital investment statement I note that again there is no mention of the promised Tea Tree Gully patrol base. What is happening in relation to the provision of that patrol base, which was promised back in 1997 (which is three years ago now)? Has the minister or his department followed up with the Passenger Transport Board the suggestion of a collocation at the Golden Grove High School site? I understand the Passenger Transport Board is prepared to purchase the land and allow the patrol base to be built on the site.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Whilst the honourable member will not be pleased with what I have to say, the police have not yet made a final decision on what to recommend in respect of Tea Tree Gully. I am a local member myself so I understand that all of us want a police station right in the heart of our electorate. Obviously, all of us would like that, but operations and the placement of police stations are matters on which I must get guidance and direction. Some people want to see police stations grow at Para Hills, some want them to grow further at St Agnes, some want them to grow further at Holden Hill and some want to see them in Tea Tree Gully. One of the issues concerning all of this arose when our local service areas were announced just over 12 months ago. If my memory serves me correctly, about 20 additional officers went into that area, and therefore police had to make some decisions about how to manage their patrol responses, administration issues and the like, and they sought to send some of them through to Holden Hill. The short answer is that at this stage there is no answer on your Tea Tree Gully issue.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr McEwen): Can you give us an update on the Mount Gambier station? I think I am ahead of Ms Rankine in this regard.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I acknowledge the parochialism of the member for Gordon regarding the police station at Mount Gambier. I was down there just recently for Rescue 2000 and had a chance to catch up with the local member as well as the police. I am sure the Acting Chairman would endorse my putting on record my gratitude and appreciation to Senior Sergeant Paul Evans, who went above and beyond the call of duty to chair a hard working committee to provide a most successful national rescue competition. While I was there I had the opportunity to drive past and look around the new Mount Gambier police complex. As members would know, the government has provided significant expenditure on behalf of the Mount Gambier community totalling just over \$6 million.

The new accommodation will address issues concerning what was previously very poor, tired accommodation with inadequate standards for cells and general overcrowding when it came to desk facilities and the like for police. SAPOL has now completed two of the three stages in this complex that will allow this new station to be developed. The construction commenced in January 1999 and the staff moved in there in March. It is expected that the construction of the new secure car parking and all the landscaping will be completed in June. I will not be asking the honourable member to meet me in Mount Gambier for an opening in July, because we

would like the police and everyone else to be able to get a good number of people there to move through. Given good weather conditions I look forward to issuing an invitation to the honourable member in about September or October this year.

Mr SCALZI: I could ask about the numbers in Hartley. Will the minister outline what initiatives the government has in place with respect to crime prevention? I must commend the government and South Australia Police for the philosophy of crime prevention; it is a little like crashes and accidents. When people thought of accidents in the past it was that they were inevitable. The philosophy of crime prevention is the right way to go.

Mr SNELLING: I have a point of order, sir. To what budget line does this question refer?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: This question is consistent with the general line of questioning. I have respected the honourable member's side in that regard.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As the honourable member pointed out, crime prevention is a very important issue for the whole community. I said earlier and it is worth reiterating that one of the big benefits of justice being a large portfolio with the Attorney-General and me as ministers is the fact that we are able to combine strategies and integrate issues concerning crime prevention.

As we have often said—and that is not to flick pass anything but is more a statement of fact—crime and crime prevention is a community problem and requires the community to be involved in the solution. If we were to leave all the issues around law and order up to the police and the courts, I suggest that we would not be living in a state as safe as we live in today.

SAPOL, with its new local service area focus, has a strategy around crime prevention and crime reduction. I am sometimes amazed when people speak to me and try to impress upon me that police should work primarily or almost completely on reactivity and chasing criminals. Unless one builds up intelligence and good relationships with the community and works with the Attorney-General's crime prevention programs, one will not get the best outcome for the police or the community.

SAPOL's Crime Reduction Strategy is providing a problem solving approach to crime reduction. A primary strategy to achieve this intention is to establish networks in the community to identify incidents and factors regarding crime and, importantly, behaviour. Most members would from time to time see a few people—often young people—who tend to get a little disorderly. That is another area where police are doing specific crime prevention work; they are developing programs in conjunction with schools, Neighbourhood Watch, youth clubs and organisations to focus on intervention and awareness and education programs that can assist in the reduction of crime. That is one crime prevention program.

Police also participate in multi agency and business committees and forums that address issues relating to crime. An example of that is the crime prevention committees of councils which the Attorney-General funds. A police officer has been one of the leaders in that crime prevention committee, which has been very broad and has included members of parliament, people from health services and family and youth services, and the police department.

Another area of crime prevention and reduction is the support of Neighbourhood Watch and Rural Watch—and now we have School Watch and Business Watch. Those

initiatives have indicated, not only according to us but to insurance companies, a reduction in crime. They are some of the issues that the police are working on at the moment.

Focus 21 has reviewed SAPOL's community policing programs and has implemented or is in the process of implementing enhancements to the response to community crime prevention. There has been an assessment of 44 SAPOL administered crime prevention initiatives and programs to assess their relevance to SAPOL, SAPOL's crime reduction strategy and its core functions, and the development of a set of programs that it will implement. So, there is a very strong commitment to crime prevention.

Mr SCALZI: What funding has been provided for Neighbourhood Watch and Rural Watch?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As I said, Neighbourhood Watch and Rural Watch are very important programs. I thank the thousands of people—I am sure I can do it on behalf of all members of parliament—right across the state who are involved in supporting Neighbourhood Watch and Rural Watch. I include in that the police coordinators, because we all know you have an area coordinator, zone leaders and a police coordinator.

As at 16 May this year, there were 395 Neighbourhood Watch and 69 Rural Watch areas established in South Australia. The average household size of those areas varies between 600 and 2 000. There are 12 Neighbourhood Watch and two Rural Watch areas currently in the process of being launched, and importantly they include the Aboriginal community of Point Pearce. Two Business Watch areas are also being launched, including one in Port Pirie that will involve 200 businesses. I am advised that some 22 000 volunteer workers participate in the scheme one way or another. Everyone has a part to play, whether they letterbox, go to a local member's office to do the photocopying, or, as I said, are a zone leader, area coordinator or police coordinator.

It was pleasing to see that an additional \$80 000 was announced to go into Neighbourhood Watch and Rural Watch. There is some strong sponsorship, and I would like to acknowledge that. The value of the sponsorship from Channel 10, which has reaffirmed its commitment to sponsor the Neighbourhood Watch program, is about \$100 000. We see some of that support through in-kind on-air support. SGIC has been involved in Neighbourhood Watch and completed its sponsorship in January this year. It has been a loyal and generous supporter for three years. The Neighbourhood Watch AGM is coming up next Saturday in Adelaide, and we will be talking more about further support for Neighbourhood Watch during that time.

Mr SCALZI: Will the minister advise what preparations South Australia Police has made for the 2000 Olympics?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I am sure that all South Australians will be interested in this. Most of us, such as the member for Hartley, will be watching rather than being involved, although I understand that one of his sons could be a future Olympian, and I wish him well. In my opinion, as a government and a state we have been very successful in being able to host seven Olympic soccer games in South Australia. There is a lot of work for SAPOL when it comes to prepare for this. In conjunction with a number of agreements between the South Australian government and the New South Wales government, SAPOL will be responsible for providing security, as part of the Olympic Games, for the soccer teams and the visiting dignitaries during those seven games.

Soon the torch relay will come to this state, and for eight days the police will be involved in supporting that. Police have worked hard on that. They are past masters at that sort of thing when you consider the Tour Down Under and other special and major events that the police have supported. When you look at the acknowledgment the community has given police with the Tour Down Under, I am sure that the torch relay will see other good work from police. The final part of the Olympics that the police are involved in is the Paralympic torch relay in South Australia.

These things come at some cost, and the total cost for the police both in salary related costs and some capital costs will be about \$2.8 million. It is important to point out that \$1.398 million of that amount is for capital costs that are required to upgrade the communication facilities at the State Emergency Operations Centre and the purchase of portable radios and handsets, closed circuit television, ballistic vests, communication equipment for surveillance, robotics and bomb analysis equipment. Furthermore, additional training will go into supporting those officers who will be involved in some of the specific and technical areas of law and order and policing with respect to the Olympics. While quite a large amount of that money is in capital expenditure, I have been advised that it can be used for other future events in South Australia.

Ms RANKINE: Is it intended that all Tea Tree Gully patrols will continue to operate from the Para Hills site? Have some patrols already been relocated to other areas? Is it the present intention to proceed with transferring all Tea Tree Gully patrol operations to Holden Hill?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will reinforce what I said before, that as part of a comprehensive look at further capital works across the state I have a significant document being developed, and it is in a draft form at the moment, with respect to how we will manage capital works and police station location in the mid to longer term. When it comes to the operational issues surrounding the specific question there, I will ask the Acting Commissioner to comment.

Mr McKenzie: The question is posed in a couple of parts. Until we settle the long-term question of where those patrols to operate out of Tea Tree Gully, which are currently operating out of the Para Hills facility, should be housed it is not possible to answer that from a long-term perspective. But there has been no shift in patrols from Para Hills. It is still part of the Holden Hill local service area numbers there. From time to time people who shift from one location to another, according to crime patterns, may be exerting various influences on parts of the Holden Hill local service area communities. But the arrangement that was split and left the police station operating at St Agnes and the patrols operating at Para Hills will continue until the longer term decision is made as to where those patrols should be located.

Ms RANKINE: Has the minister or the Acting Commissioner any idea of how long that will take? We have been waiting for three years for a decision and we have been getting the same answers for three years. How much longer do we have to wait before a site is located or a decision made?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: We will wait as long as we need to get it right, and not only that area but across the state when it comes to future planning. But the important thing that I want to put on the record now is that what police are doing in that area right now is good policing work. There is no requirement that I am aware of for urgent decisions to be made. As I said before, I know that all local members want

to see capital works in their own area, but when it comes to police and what they do in that part of the local service area, compared to any other, the police are doing a good job. They are committed to that work and they do a lot of operational planning that we are aware of and we see on a day-to-day basis when they attend incidents.

Ms RANKINE: I would agree with the minister that the police are doing a good job but, unfortunately, crime is escalating in that area so something needs to be done quickly. What was the cost in 1999-2000 of interstate and/or overseas travel by South Australian police department employees, including commissioned officers? Who undertook that travel and what was the nature and reason for the travel?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will have to take that on notice and I will get a detailed response in due course back to the member. Again, just on the member's throwaway line at the beginning, when she referred to crime escalating in that area, there is a group of people within the police and myself who receive a police management information report, a very detailed and complex report, every month on all issues around policing right across the state. I would not suggest for one minute that it is a proper way to address issues around law and order by simply a throwaway line that says crime is escalating. I have seen a range of areas out that way where there has been a significant improvement, and that needs to be reinforced.

From month to month, right across that police management information report, you will see areas that have significant reductions and you will see areas that sometimes have an increase. But if you look at the trends and if you look at the specifics of different areas of crime, the long-term trend indicators in this state have been good. I will not say any more because the Attorney has already, I understand, gone to considerable length to address the areas around police statistics. But I think it is important to get it in perspective.

Ms RANKINE: I was very pleased to see some revamp of the Neighbourhood Watch program. I think the minister would agree that, whilst it is a great program, it was lagging. Enthusiasm was dropping. Young people I think are an important factor in Neighbourhood Watch and it needs to become quite relevant in relation to them. Operation Flinders I would say is one of the really quite positive initiatives in a crime reduction strategy. Can the minister guarantee that the same level of commitment by the South Australian police department will be maintained in the next year for Operation Flinders?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The government, as the honourable member may know, has quite a commitment to Operation Flinders and there is money provided, I understand by the Attorney-General. I know that the Premier made an announcement recently about some additional money. I think from memory it was about \$40 000 of additional money into Operation Flinders. I have been up there and spent a day and a night there myself, and I agree with the member that Operation Flinders is a very good program and there is a commitment by the government with respect to what the Police Commissioner is prepared to put in there with specific police resources. I have discussed that with him in recent times and I will have further discussions there when he comes back from his study in America.

Mr SCALZI: Will the minister outline what action has been taken to address the criminal activity of some motorcycle gangs?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Outlawed motorcycle gangs, as I have said many times on the public record over

the past 12 or 18 months, is an issue that from time to time causes significant concern not only to police in states right across Australia but to the community. But again, to put that in perspective, most of the law and order issues around outlawed motorcycle gangs are within their own gangs. There are a lot of initiatives that police actually have when it comes to outlawed motorcycle gangs in South Australia. From March until August 1999 there was an increase in the number of incidents involving outlawed motorcycle gangs in South Australia. Since August 1999 I understand that there has been a reduction in that illegal law and order activity with the outlawed motorcycle gangs.

The police have an Avatar policing strategy that has different levels of policing that are prescribed through that operation that work with an intelligence management plan and evaluation plan. Whilst I do not think it is appropriate to go into all the detail on the public record, I can assure the member that that operation has a significant commitment by police in combating outlawed motorcycle gangs.

Nationally, there is an Operation 'Wing Clipping', and that is through the Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence, and that project is relevant to outlawed motorcycle gangs. It provides an intelligence database with each state contributing intelligence holdings from their own relevant operations so that they can look at the national picture. There was a national conference on 16 August last year. SAPOL hosted a national outlawed motorcycle gang conference in Adelaide. That was attended by the state and federal law enforcement agencies, including the Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence and the National Crime Authority. All state and territory law enforcement agencies reaffirmed a commitment to free exchange of information and cooperation. This cooperative approach is multi-tiered and extends between practitioners, intelligence analysts and managers through the Australasian Crime Commissioners' Conference level.

The other issue that I want to touch on is the fact that I raised at the Australasian Police Ministers' Council last year in Sydney issues around a Panzer taskforce reference. As some members may know, currently Western Australia is the only state that is conducting an operation under the national reference. It was agreed at the APMC that we could work with the NCA to develop that Panzer reference. Police have finished that work. I understand that that work is now with the NCA and, if everything goes well in the next few weeks, it will come before the IGC (Inter-Government Committee) with the National Crime Authority, and from there the final steps will be put in place to complete that task force which will give police another advantage when it comes to working with law and order issues around outlawed motorcycle gangs.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the minister indicate whether the department will put satellite dishes, particularly for the new low orbiting satellites, into those isolated police stations which do not have access to reasonable telephone communications so that officers working in these isolated parts of the state can be in quick communication with their station or other police officers? I travel around the north on a very regular basis, and it amazes me that, with the huge increase in tourism which we want to encourage, the police department does not seem to have access to this sort of equipment which other agencies have access to and which I do not think would have such a demand. I think that they ought to be the highest priority; that is, they should have GPSs and satellite phones so that when they find people who are broken down

or lost they can use this equipment to call for assistance. In my view, some departments must have an excess of funds at their disposal.

Mr McEwen interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: National Parks—no hesitation for me. I can give you a list if you want me to.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Mr Chairman, I appreciate your interest and concern regarding this matter considering that many parts of your electorate are remote and pastoral areas, and I appreciate the question without notice. I have travelled in some police vehicles certainly on the west coast that have had a satellite phone. As you would recall, the Government Radio Network is currently being rolled out to CFS, SES and SAPOL in what is known as the greater Adelaide area. However, apart from the remote and pastoral areas of the state, the Government Radio Network will have enormous benefit to police and other emergency services. In fact, when I arrived in Whyalla with the Commissioner the day after the tragedy of flight 904, the first thing I said to the police officer was, 'How are your current radio communications?' He said, 'We are just getting there.' They cannot wait for the Government Radio Network.

Obviously, there are some areas where the GRN will not work and therefore I will ask the Acting Commissioner whether he would like to comment on the police operational policy in respect of satellite phones, but I wanted to get on the record the fact that the GRN will be of enormous benefit to many rural and regional police officers.

Mr McKenzie: I do not know the exact number of satellite phones we have in both the western and northern regions of the state, but, in recent years, I know that we have purchased quite a number of them. They are used in areas where the existing and longstanding radio systems have been found to be wanting, particularly on extended patrols into the extremities of some of the police districts. The CIB vehicles are fitted with satellite phones and also the commanders of the local service areas have satellite phones. On top of that, we have some that are available for police going into specific areas for special operations. So we have tried to maintain a policy of flexibility and coverage.

To my knowledge, there seems to be a feeling that the existing systems that we have are adequate, albeit that some departments may be better resourced than us but, in the mobile phone sense, we have a radio system which, in general terms, is probably the most reliable 24 hour system available to government departments.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask the minister another brief question without notice—I know he likes these questions. The area that I was referring to was somewhere such as Oodnadatta and travelling towards Innamincka and places such as that, all in the AP lands and the extremities of the AP lands, which is pretty isolated. Has consideration been given to having a light aircraft stationed at Marla to take people quickly to the AP lands and elsewhere, particularly when people are searching for people lost in the Simpson Desert? The minister would be aware that National Parks uses an aeroplane because it saves time. I do not have a problem with that.

I do not think it would be very hard to encourage some young police officers to obtain pilot licences—they would probably be pretty keen—and I believe that it would make the police operations in the north of the state very efficient. The former President of the Legislative Council and I have raised this matter previously, and I raise it again because I believe that some economies and efficiencies could be employed to

allow officers to fly. You can fly from Marla to Pitjantjatjara in about an hour, but it takes about 4½ hours to drive. If you lost someone in the Simpson Desert—and there are more and more people crossing that area in four-wheel drives from Innamincka—you will find them a lot easier at 5 000 feet than you will on the ground, particularly when using a similar sort of aircraft to that which they use in the tourist areas of Wilpena and Arkaroola.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As you indicated—and rightly so—there has been a growth in tourism, including outback tourism, in South Australia. I will ask the acting Commissioner whether he wants to make any further comments in a moment, or perhaps we will take the question on notice and provide a more detailed answer. Not only have we looked at this issue of equipment in relation to police but also in relation to other emergency services and people who are responsible for search and rescue. Recently, I was able to commission a couple of SES vehicles—brand new, good quality four-wheel drive vehicles that can be well equipped with search and rescue equipment—to places such as Cooper Pedy and other areas that can work into the Pitjantjatjara lands. If my memory serves me correctly, the police officer at Manna Hill has a pilot's licence. He also heads up the Yunta ambulance service.

Some police officers at Manna Hill, Marla and places such as that are very committed and extremely experienced and trained in areas over and above what I describe as general policing duties. Together with the SES around Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Lincoln, Gordon Hartley has been undertaking a lot of training work on air observation and also on what we call drop masters, which, in fixed wing aircraft, can observe from the air search and rescue operations, including being able to drop the right sort of rations and equipment.

One of the other things that I would highlight is the floods that occurred throughout the Pitjantjatjara lands just a few months ago. I worked with the Director of the SES and also the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and then through to Emergency Management Australia when an operation was implemented with the army to get food and supplies urgently into the Pitjantjatjara lands. That whole operation was able to be implemented to the point where rations were delivered within about 48 hours of the call. There is also the ability to provide additional resources through the interaction and the relationships between states.

Mr Chairman, you probably know that the police have two twin engine fixed-wing aircraft. In an emergency situation, we also have the capacity to use the Rescue 1 helicopter, although, for obvious reasons, we do not do that regularly. Again, during those floods, Rescue 1 was used to rescue two elderly gentlemen, one of whom was unwell, who were caught in an area of land surrounded by water. So, I think there are some good facilities there between the police and the emergency services and their interaction with the federal defence department. I will ask the Acting Commissioner to add his comments.

Mr McKenzie: I will contribute a little more to that, not so much in the forward thinking department but historically. We established our air wing with two aircraft. For a period of time, one of those was based in the Far North and flew a lot of regular flights transporting prisoners and police from one area to another. We found that to be not as efficient as having both aircraft based in Adelaide. We then increased to three aircraft and flew general passengers from Adelaide all over the state. Some years ago, a consultant was engaged to examine the interaction between the flights that we were

conducting, the needs of police in remote areas, the emergence of helicopters as a policing type tool on behalf of government—where all that fitted together. It was determined that the most efficient model was to give the ordinary transportation role to the commercial sector.

So, quite a few of our administrative flights are on commercial aircraft. The operational side of policing is still catered for very much by the twin engine aircraft of which we have two operational. Integrated with that is access to the two privately sponsored government helicopters that are used by police, the Country Fire Service and the ambulance service. Recent events have shown that this is a sensible model. We have covered the floods (both recently and some years ago) that struck the Far North, searches that have occurred from time to time, the continual transporting of operational police between Adelaide and Woomera to deal with the illegal immigrants who broke out in the past two weeks, the uranium demonstrators who have moved around various parts of the northern areas of the state at Beverley and Roxby Downs, and the search for the missing aircraft off the coast of Whyalla.

All those events have fallen into the category of operational policing requirements and have been serviced quite adequately by our fixed wing aircraft. We had some helicopter time in reserve that we could have used for any or all of those events if the need had arisen. In fact, we did use the helicopter for parts of the Whyalla search. We are continually assessing the situation. Our aircraft fleet is ageing. We are looking at the most effective way of transporting operational police throughout the state in the future. The administrative transport function sits separately with the commercial sector. It is an ongoing consideration.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Given the number of people who are being detained at Woomera and the Premier's answer to committee A regarding commonwealth compensation to SAPOL and the South Australian government for any extra police activities in Woomera, how many police officers were stationed at Woomera when the detainees were first housed there and how many were there just prior to the break-out?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The Woomera issue was interesting. As Police Minister, I was in constant contact with the Acting Commissioner and advising the Premier on policing issues and general issues involving the almost 500 people who left the compound at the peak of the incident. There are normally two police officers located at Woomera. When this incident occurred, the police reacted quickly.

From memory, there were close to 27 police officers at Woomera working with and supporting the security officers who are paid for by the federal government. These were very experienced police officers, including an assistant commissioner, a chief superintendent who has had a lot of experience in the area, and a number of star force officers, who were supported by Port Augusta police. I was very comfortable with the intelligence base and the reporting to me as minister by the Acting Commissioner.

Clearly, there is an issue at Woomera. We are making sure that any costs incurred by the South Australian police to support the federal government's illegal immigrant detention centre will be fully reimbursed. There is a letter to support that. As I have said, during those 24 hours I was close to the Acting Commissioner and, from my point of view, the police and security officers had the situation under control.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I gather from the minister's answer that he is saying that there are two police officers stationed at Woomera and that when the break-out occurred additional staff were sent up there. Given that local busines-

ses had to close down during the break-out and the fact that the local member had been warning the government of increasing tensions amongst the detainees, that local residents were concerned, and also given the Premier's answer in another place on the response time and his concerns about the lack of AFP officers, does the minister not think that it would have been prudent to have had more police officers stationed at Woomera earlier to assist the Australian Federal Police?

Does the minister not think that this situation could have been contained a lot earlier without having an impact on small business and the local community, bearing in mind the fear amongst the local community and the federal minister's admission that we do not know who the people in these camps are? They could be terrorists, convicted criminals or rapists.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member should round off his question and bear in mind that operational matters are matters for the Commissioner not the minister. Further, I would like to know where were the Australian protective services personnel who in my days at Woomera dealt with these matters?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I understand that the response time was 24 hours. If that is true, is the minister still comfortable with the response given to the people of Woomera?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will ask the Acting Commissioner, who was effectively in charge of the operations, to comment in a moment. When the honourable member says that people were forced to close their businesses, I understand that discussion took place between the police and business operators and it was suggested that, given the circumstances on that day, it would be best to close their businesses. A strategic assessment was commenced some time ago by the Northern Operations Services of SAPOL to assess the implications of providing policing services in the Woomera area. That assessment included discussion with Australian Correctional Management Pty Limited and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA).

I am advised that a number of meetings have been held between the local community police, the ACM, DIMA and other relevant state agencies to obtain cooperation and agreement between those agencies on these issues. I repeat that the issue of the illegal immigrants and the detention centre in my opinion is primarily, and rightly should be, the responsibility of the federal government not the South Australian police department. The South Australian police department's primary responsibility is to look after the permanent residents of Woomera. Senior police have decided at establishment level that normal policing requires two permanent police officers at Woomera. I will ask the Acting Commissioner to comment further.

Mr McKenzie: The assessments really reached a head in early April when there was an exchange of letters between Commissioner Hyde and the Adelaide Director of DIMA to reaffirm the responsibility arrangements between the commonwealth and the state on the security and containment of the illegal immigrants in Woomera. The compound in which they were situated is approximately two kilometres outside the Woomera township itself. That was done in the first week in April where there was clarity as to which agency was responsible for what and close cooperation has existed since then, along with monitoring of the operation, and progress with the processing of the visas for the illegal immigrants has been part in the risk assessments conducted.

At the time when the break-out occurred, as it is also wise to note, we had a number of non-far northern police in the area who were providing a watching brief on the uranium protesters as they moved from location to location between Beverley, Roxby Downs and Lake Eyre South. There was disruption to those communities and a policing component had to be supplied in addition to the normal police services there as residential. We always had that flexibility component. When the break-out occurred, we had a chief superintendent and, from memory, six other officers who were performing this containment watching function over the protesting groups in the area. They were moved very quickly, in a number of hours, to assist the normal Woomera police. They had an aircraft at their disposal and reinforcements were flown in very quickly.

Not only did we have additional police in there but, most importantly, we had a negotiating and management function for the incident from the state's perspective—someone who could liaise and negotiate direct with the commonwealth on the resourcing matters as to how the commonwealth would meet its responsibilities in containing this group. Between all those people who were making decisions, it was agreed that the 500 or so who had broken out of the compound were quite peaceful and were causing no great harm or threat to the people of Woomera. As a precautionary move, the local and visiting police under the command of Chief Superintendent David Easom advised the banks, local businesses and the community of Woomera to close their businesses and just wait and see how things were negotiated by the commonwealth. That state was maintained for a number of days and never reached an agitated state, but obviously some frustration was shown by the illegal immigrants to the visiting media in furtherance of their cause.

Gradually, the negotiations employed by state and commonwealth people, mainly the commonwealth, were used to good effect and on the Friday evening around 450 of them started the long trek back to the compound, which incidentally was insecure as well, not having been repaired since the break-out. As it progressed, SAPOL was constantly monitoring the needs of the Woomera community and determining whether further reinforcements were necessary. It was determined that we had sufficient police in there and we built up to almost 30 at one stage to provide a variety of functions. That proved to be a very wise decision. The commonwealth also built up its level of reinforcement and was able to provide the functions that was its responsibility. There was never a risk to the people of Woomera that got past the consideration stage.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Thank you for the straight answers, Commissioner. It is good to get a straight answer in estimates, sometimes. Mr Chairman, with your indulgence the opposition has some omnibus questions. Do you wish us to put them on the record now?

The CHAIRMAN: I ruled earlier that those questions should have been asked earlier to give the minister the ability to answer them. I will not allow you to take 20 minutes to read a series of questions parrot fashion. If you want to ask a reasonable number of questions, I will allow that, but, if it is a spiel which is impossible for the minister to answer, I will rule it out of order because it is not appropriate. If we are going to be here for 10 or 15 minutes, the answer is 'out of order' because it turns the whole process into a nonsense. There are other forums for you to get those answers. I will allow two or three minutes for the asking of questions and the

minister will have the ability to respond now or this evening, if he so determines.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: We are happy for the questions to be taken on notice. I do not expect an answer from the minister now. I do not wish to take the time of the committee. Will the minister list all consultancies let during 1999-2000, indicating to whom the consultancy was awarded and whether tenders or expressions of interest were called for each consultancy and, if not, why not, and give the reasons for each and the cost of each? Which consultants submitted reports during 1999-2000? What was the date on which each report was received by the government? Was the report made public? Will the minister detail all advertising and promotional activities and campaigns undertaken by all agencies within his portfolio for 1999-2000, the purpose of each and the cost of each? Will the minister list and name all titles and staff who have been issued with or have access to government credit cards, and give the reasons for having the credit cards, the reason for having government vehicles, and the expenditure and amount expended on each for the period 1999-2000?

The CHAIRMAN: The chair points out that surely you do not expect the minister to indicate every police officer who has access. If that is the question, that is being quite ridiculous. You can rephrase the question. That will take unnecessary hours of time to answer, which is not productive. I suggest that you rephrase that question.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I find it strange that you are instructing the opposition—

The CHAIRMAN: I want to see you get an answer. It would be the view of the chair that when you ask such a question you will not get an answer, because the resources involved to provide those answers would be excessive. It would be the view of most responsible people that the resources ought to be put to more productive use.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The use of taxpayers' money is important and the issue of government credit cards is an important issue and we would like to know how much was expended, what it was expended for and who used them. It is not too onerous a task for the government to be open and honest about government credit cards. The minister can take the question on notice.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I am prepared to provide in the course of time some of the general issues around the policy of credit cards and the number of people who have them, but I am not prepared to provide the names of individual officers who are given a credit card, because that is not appropriate. I am prepared to discuss the issue around consultancies and I am happy to do that now. In doing that, I reinforce the fact that the honourable member is probably aware of the government's policy and a press statement by the Treasurer in recent days about the government's commitment to reduce consultancies. That is common knowledge and a policy commitment from the government. One of the things the opposition always fails to point out when it comes to consultancies—and it is worthwhile spending a minute on some history, because it is some of the most relevant history to this state—is that we did not have the luxury of buckets full of money slushing around all through agencies when we came to office in 1993, so there had to be a reduction of public service people. That was something that the government, had it had good budgets, would not have had to address. If you are going to reduce the paid work force and save a huge amount of money for taxpayers of South Australia on a recurrent basis, then from time to time you also have to look at putting part of that saving back into consultan-

cies. Before I came into this office I can recall story after story in the media about the Labor Party, which had more public servants than we have today and which also incurred significant expenditure on consultancies.

Ms Rankine interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Just relax for a moment; I am about to address the question of police consultancies. I want to put that on the record, because I get a little tired of the rhetoric from the shadow treasurer and a couple of others about what our government does with consultancies, and it is worth putting it back into its proper perspective. If you look at the total amount spent on consultancies over the past three years in SAPOL, you will see that in 1997-98 some \$288 000 was spent on consultancies; in 1998-99 some \$206 000 was spent on consultancies; and the estimated total expenditure for consultancies in SAPOL for this current financial year, 1999-2000, is about \$252 000. A functional breakdown of the areas for which consultants were utilised for 1997-98 shows the following: in the information area, \$55 000; human resources, \$45 000; finance, \$86 000; technical specialists for year 2000 compliance, \$75 000; and 'other', \$27 000. That adds up to \$288 000.

In 1998-99 there was a reduction in information consultancies bringing the figure to \$47 000; in human resources there was a significant reduction back to \$21 000; in the organisational area there were consultancies of \$5 000; and in the finance area there were consultancies of \$38 000. Some \$95 000 was spent on technical specialist areas, and the total was \$206 000. This year the amounts are: human resources, \$29 000; the organisational area, \$60 000; finance, \$25 000; \$120 000 for year 2000 compliance; and \$18 000 for 'other'. At this stage I should say that, when you look at that and the work the police have done internally on the development of Focus 21 and compare that work and the cost productive nature in which that work was developed here over a much shorter period of time than in other states, including Western Australia, you will see that the police department has been very cost effective in using internal resources, knowledge and experience. It has gone out to seek consultancies only when it has been absolutely necessary.

No specific funds have been committed at this stage to consultancies in 2000-01 and beyond, but I reinforce to the member for Peake that if he looks at the range of consultancies in SAPOL, which has a budget in excess of \$300 million recurrent, he will see that they are averaging between \$206 000 and \$288 000 over that three year period.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I do not doubt the ability of police officers to conduct very good work themselves. They often make a bad system work well. During my travels throughout country South Australia I have found that country police officers do an exceptionally good job making bad systems work. Following from the question from the Chairman about communication devices for country police stations, I visited a number of police stations on Yorke Peninsula late last year, and in a number of one and two officer stations there was a problem with staffing levels and maternity and annual leave; they were not being adequately replaced. Often I found mobile phones being donated to local police officers by local community groups which had held fundraisers to help buy their police officers mobile phones, because the radios they are issued with do not work outside the township. I often heard complaints that country officers had to travel to the city to obtain furniture and equipment for their stations. They all think they are the poor cousins of the

city officers; they get the second-hand equipment and hand-me-downs. Will that all change in the next 12 months?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I am pleased that the honourable member has got out of the big smoke of Adelaide and managed to find his way around parts of rural and regional South Australia.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Of course you would not have been, that is for sure, but we will not enter that debate. I am pleased to hear that the honourable member has got out and about, but he has certainly not been talking to as many or the same police officers as I have been speaking to when I have gone to rural and regional South Australia. I am pleased that he has endorsed the government's direction with the government radio network. I will reinforce this on the public record.

When members read back through this *Hansard* they will note that one of the key points the honourable member raised was the problems that police have with their radios. I would ask the community of South Australia to look carefully at not only what the honourable member has just said but also what many of his colleagues have said in the past, when in my opinion they have worked against the best interests of police and emergency services by throwing out innuendos and a lot of non-factual material and comment on the government radio network.

Mr Chairman, I know that you would agree with this; in fact, you raised it when you talked about satellite phones. The most important thing for police officers in rural one and two man police stations is good communications. I know that at the moment the police communications at the bottom end of Yorke Peninsula, for example, are not at the level that the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, the government or I would want. In rural South Australia we also have issues with mobile phone networks. Whilst it is getting better, quite a lot of that system is inadequate. The GRN will address those issues and provide police with the most important tool that an officer needs in a single or double officer station.

I want to touch on a couple of other points the honourable member raised. One concerned issues involving the replacement of an officer when one leaves. The honourable member's party had 11 years to modernise the police act, which went back to about 1954, but for those 11 years it sat on its hands regarding the police act.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Well may the member for Peake laugh, but it is a statement of fact. Members opposite sat on their hands and did not do anything about modernising the act. That changed when we came to office. It had to change, in the interests of three key groups, not the least of which is the police officers themselves; and, secondly, the senior officers in the commissioned ranks who are there to run the department from an operational perspective. The third concern was the fair delivery of services to the rural community in particular. We had an archaic system whereby an appeal process could take 12 months before an officer found out whether or not he finally had a position in Maitland or Arthurton or anywhere like that, so we had to do something. Since the honourable member has been there, he will now find that we are in a position to fast track the appointment of police officers.

Another matter that we have addressed is the fact that we have a relief pool. The honourable member raised the issue of maternity leave. I am keen, and so are the police, to get more women into policing, and announcements have been

made recently about such initiatives. I am aware that that issue may not have been an issue in the past but it will be an ongoing issue in the future, as is long service leave and long periods of sickness. Therefore, that 20-person pool of police officers that will be available by 30 June 2001 at the latest will be of enormous benefit to police officers and their communities.

I appreciate the work that those officers do. In recent times we have worked hard to provide budgets that will allow the police to provide additional resources and facilities. Recently I have had discussions with the commissioner about one-officer stations and what we can do to improve telecommunications when that officer is not on duty. The issues surrounding police telecommunications are currently being looked at in quite a detailed manner.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: In relation to country police stations, especially one-person police stations, we have found that while the officer is out on patrol usually their spouse remained at the station answering phone calls and so on. One officer told the shadow spokesperson, Patrick Conlon, and me that they thought the incentive to move to country towns was being eroded by the government because the rent relief program was abolished by the government. Is the minister addressing the problem of recruiting? Of the 113 officers that you will be recruiting, will you be targeting the country to recruit locally? Also, will you consider introducing a plan to give spouse support to these one-person stations?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I put on the record my support for the spouses of police officers in country towns. I am a country person and know the generous work that police officers' spouses provide in back-up and support to those officers: that is to be commended. That is not new. All my life I have seen police officers' spouses not only answering the door and the phone when an officer is out but involved in many other community activities, as are rural police officers.

I find it interesting to talk to police officers when I get the chance to go to the bush. Some sergeants and senior constables who have been in the police force for some time have had very little duty in the city and do not want to go there. They are what we nickname 'bush coppers'. They are an integral part of the rural and regional policing strategy and do not want to do the sort of police work that metropolitan police have to do.

I will highlight a couple of other issues. SAPOL spends some \$54.5 million providing services in regional areas including preventing crime, upholding the law, preserving the peace, providing assistance in personal emergencies, coordinating and managing emergency incidents, regulating road use and preventing vehicle collisions. There are 760 full-time equivalent police officers employed in regional areas throughout the country in, for example, the member for Gordon's electorate, Mount Gambier, and right down to very small areas such as the member for Stuart's electorate in Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs.

As part of the 113 additional police officers (on top of attrition) who will be recruited under the Premier's task force, it is proposed that 21 be deployed in the following regional areas: five to Mount Barker; an extra officer to Murray Bridge; one to Nuriootpa; one to Kadina; two to the Far North; two to Whyalla; two to Port Pirie; one to Berri; and four to Mount Gambier. The West Coast will see an additional officer at Port Lincoln and Ceduna. As I have said, there is now that reserve pool.

I make the point that it is okay to have a dig when you are in opposition. I acknowledge that there is more we aspire to do, and when we get the house in order in South Australia it will give us the chance to do more. When I was at a cabinet meeting in Port Pirie I went in a police car to look at a drop-in centre that is being developed for young people. The country police officer told me that recently he had been provided with far better resourced facilities than he had seen for years. So, whilst some police officers may indicate that they have problems—and I have acknowledged that with radios and the like—some police officers are saying that they are better equipped and resourced now than they were in the past.

The CHAIRMAN: I refer to the road above Marree, which was being blocked by a group of anti-uranium demonstrators. I received reports that these people prevented members of the public from travelling on the road. I am of the view that the public has a right to travel on this road. Can the minister give an assurance that, when people engage in this sort of anti-social and irresponsible behaviour, they will be removed and that the road will remain open so that law-abiding members of the public can go about their business? I was told that elderly tourists were forced to turn back and could not proceed on their planned journey. I do not think anyone has to put up with that sort of behaviour. Will the police take action against these people, whom I have observed on a number of occasions? One could comment about their activities, but perhaps it would be better if I did not.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I appreciate your comments, Mr Chairman. Given that this is strictly operational, I would ask the Acting Commissioner to respond.

Mr McKenzie: I am not conversant with the situation at Marree. At Roxby Downs a sit-in occurred at an intersection just near the entrance to the mine; in fact, it was one of five entrances to the mine property. It was decided operationally that it was inconveniencing only the people who worked at the mine and the vehicles that were coming from the mine for commercial reasons. The mine management was quite comfortable with allowing that to occur, but rain intervened and shortly after that the protesters moved on. It was part of the transient pattern between Beverley, Roxby Downs and Lake Eyre South. I am not aware of the incident to which you referred near Marree.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The Acting Commissioner will pursue that issue and get a briefing note to me in due course, and I will respond to you.

Mr SNELLING: It was good to see from budget paper 4, volume 1, page 5.17, that the definition of 'response time' has been revised to include the time from initial contact to the dispatch of police officers: previously it has been defined as the time from dispatch to the arrival at the scene. Why did the government have such a fanciful definition of 'response time' in the first place?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The government has never had a fanciful definition when it comes to response times. It is fair to say that until now, and certainly since I have been involved with the police as minister, previous governments have reported the same way. There are two ways you can report—from the time people are dispatched or from the time the phone call comes in. On average there is just over four minutes of work involved from the time someone first rings in to the point where they are able to dispatch a patrol and give it adequate information.

I know from my own personal experience in the past few weeks that it is often far quicker than that. Tragically, I had a requirement to ring the communications centre myself, and I got through and everything was there within a few minutes.

An honourable member: Did you tell them who it was?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: No. Fortunately in this tragedy the police station and ambulance were only a few hundred metres up the road. It has been a considered initiative of the Commissioner to alter the way in which we report response times. I would ask the Acting Commissioner whether he would like to comment on that further, because it was never intended by police to be misleading. There are two ways police forces record response time averages, and we have now gone to a different methodology.

Mr McKenzie: The measurement of time taken associated with police taskings falls into four different categories. The first is the time that is taken to record the details of the call, and that, on average, takes three to four minutes. Depending on the priority of the call after that, whether it is an A, B or C, it can take a varying number of minutes to attend to because the most urgent cases are always attended to first, and the most urgent cases are where there is a real threat to the public or where there is an offender still in the vicinity. So, that is the second period that is measured by our communications system.

The third period is the time that it takes the patrol to attend to the call once the tasking has been given to the patrol, generally by the computer system in the car. The final period that is measured is how long the patrol takes at the scene, and that can vary depending on the complexity of the call, the amount of counselling that has to be undertaken with victims at the scene, or the follow-up action that results from the call being made.

It is interesting that these call times vary quite considerably from one local service area to another, and that is a constant source of measurement by us down to data collection unit level within the local service area so that we get precise placement of our patrols and the quickest possible service to the public.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions on the police lines, I declare the examination of the votes completed.

[Sitting suspended from 6.02 to 7.30 p.m.]

Minister for Police, Correctional Services and
Emergency Services—Other Items, \$220 000

Departmental Advisers:

Mr J. Paget, Chief Executive Officer, Department for Correctional Services.

Mr A. Martin, Manager, Financial and Physical Resources.

Mr M. Williams, Ministerial Adviser.

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

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Minister, does the government have any plans to reduce on-site medical services, to reduce prisoner transfers, and, if you do have plans to do that, what would be the cost?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I understand that the question concerns prisoner transfers and, if we have any plans to reduce the number of prisoner transfers, what would the cost be?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The question concerned plans to introduce on-site medical services, rather than transfer of prisoners.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: At the moment we have some communication between myself and the Minister for Human Services with respect to where we may be able to do this. This is not an easy area, because there are certainly a lot of occasions where, because there is particular technology required for medical services, a prisoner needs to be taken to a hospital. But it would be my desire, where possible, to actually reduce the number of prisoner transfers for medical reasons. I have written to the Minister for Human Services to open some dialogue on how we may be able to alter the current situation. With respect to what the costs might be, it is too early for me to say. Human Services funds the health services as part of the department. It will take a little bit of work, but where possible I would like to see an opportunity developed to restrict prisoner transfers for basic medical checking.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Minister, in terms of prisoner transfers, not in terms of general escapes, but in terms of prisoners being transferred for medical reasons or for a home visit, or whatever the reason might be, how many escapes have there been in the past year, what was the cost of retrieving those escapees and how many were successful?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Can I say at the outset that the issue of escapes is obviously extremely important to the government, to the department and to me, in that our whole object, in a perfect world, is to stop any escapes, and the situation is that a lot of initiatives have been put forward to try to eliminate escapes. There are performance measures put in place, and a range of other initiatives. But this year, to date for 1999-2000, there have been eight incidents of escapes, involving 10 prisoners, of whom five were classified as low security, four as medium security and one as high security. All of the offenders have been apprehended.

There is a message there for anyone who wants to think about escaping. First of all, the likelihood of staying out of prison for more than a day or two is pretty remote. Secondly, you suffer enormous consequences because you go back to square one. So any benefits that you have earned over your period of rehabilitation in the prison system is up for review again. There is a strong message there for all prisoners. With respect to the actual costs involved in apprehending escapees, I am not in a position to give you an actual dollar cost. In the case of these escapes, there was one situation where Group 4 was involved in the management of a particular prisoner movement and there was an escape. The other escapes involved the Public Service, with departmental prison officers involved in the management and the issues around transferring those prisoners when the escapes occurred. There have been involved and detailed inquiries by my Chief Executive Officer when it comes to all of these escapes. I am not in a position to talk about some of the individual ones because there are still issues pending with those inquiries that are proceeding. Suffice to say, the government and the department are doing all they can to reduce the number of escapes.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I would say at the outset that myself and the shadow Attorney-General, Michael Atkinson, went on a few visits and visited Port Augusta and Port Lincoln prisons, and the staff of the department were very helpful in showing us a lot of these initiative schemes that are in place, and we found them to be very impressive. I thank the department on the record now for the assistance we were given. We will certainly be doing more of these tours. I think

it is important that members of parliament visit and see the programs that are going on. In terms of the transfers, I believe there were two people who just walked away from Adelaide Airport. When prisoners are being transferred are they required to wear any special clothing that will identify them as prisoners? If not, why not? Is the government considering placing prisoners who are being transferred, for any reason, in special clothing so that the general public and police would be ready for a quicker response to identify these prisoners?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: First of all, I thank the member for Peake—also on behalf of the member for Spence—for the comments he made with respect to my department. I was quite pleased to approve and support the visits that you both made to those prisons. I want to put on the public record my appreciation of the dedication and the good work that departmental officers by and large are doing in relation to prisons.

Prisons are actually one of the hardest of all instrumentalities to manage because there is such a huge cross-section of people, some with far more dysfunctional backgrounds than mainstream society and, obviously, with that comes a lot of complexities. The government and the department are committed to not only rehabilitation but also to ensuring that prisoners pay the penalty for their crime.

If we can prevent repeat offending we will achieve three goals: first, our community will be safer; secondly, these people will be back in mainstream society where they can be a net contributor rather than a negative contributor to the general community; and, thirdly, from an economic point of view, we can put that money into health, police and the other areas where governments allocate parts of their budget.

As to whether or not prisoners should have a different dress code to mainstream society, I am looking at a range of issues with my immediate staff and also with departmental officers (mainly the Chief Executive Officer). Until such time as the reviews have been completed—the investigative work has been done but they are not complete because of the appeals process—it is not proper for me to discuss them. I am not in a position to discuss what initiatives we might put forward, other than the immediate initiatives that were put forward whereby the issue of prisoner transfer immediately went back to the CEO signing off on all prisoner transports until management procedures were addressed.

There is some argument that the issue of clothing should be looked at, but the other argument is that prisoners are re-entering society for a range of reasons. One we talked about at the estimates committee last year was a mother who, after careful consideration, came out to see her daughter at a school sports day. The issue there was primarily about the daughter—this was probably the first chance she had to excel in her life and she wanted to have her mum there like the other kids. So, it was as much about caring for that child as it was for any other issues. If that mother had been forced to adhere to some special dress code she would have stuck out like a beacon, which would not have been in the child's best interests. Also, at an airport if you had flashing lights all over a prisoner being escorted, you would certainly unnerve a lot of the community travelling through that airport.

To put it into perspective, whilst we have had some escapes this year, if there are no more escapes to 30 June this year, it will be one of the lowest annual escape rates for over a decade. Hopefully, the media will get that message across to the community as well as they got the message across about those who did escape. We have made significant improvements and we are now seeing a situation where we

will have one of the lowest numbers of escapes in at least a decade.

That is an overview with respect to dress codes and the issues we are looking at in respect of escapes. The other point that my CEO has pointed out is that some United Nations policies and agreements actually work against some of those initiatives.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I refer to the escape that occurred when the prisoner was in the custody of Group 4. Will any penalties be imposed on Group 4 as a result of that escape? Have you revised the procedures for transferring prisoners? Will the government fine Group 4 or review its contract? What steps have been taken to ensure that that sort of escape does not happen again?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The first thing that happened after that escape was that the chief executive officer and I met with the Director of Group 4 in my office and discussed the issues around that escape because, in fairness to Group 4, we have had a very cost-effective and well managed prisoner escort contract. In fact, I need to place on the record that since 1996 (when the movement contract with Group 4 first started), in excess of 200 000 prisoners have been involved in a transfer or a movement of one kind or another—often for court issues or medical issues—and there have been only three successful escapes from Group 4. Group 4 has an excellent record when it comes to escapes, but, suffice to say and as I have said publicly, one escape is one too many.

We immediately asked the Director of Group 4 what he was doing. He set up a full inquiry. Those in Group 4 have procedures in place whereby I understand they have implemented their form of disciplinary actions with those officers. However, whilst the contract contains a clause that incurs penalties if there are a number of escapes over a period, given that they have had only three escapes with 200 000 movements and that an escape is a rare occurrence for them, they are not subject to penalty at this stage.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Minister, I realise that you were not the minister at the time the contract was signed but I find it strange that an acceptable number of escapes are allowed under the contract. I understand what the minister said earlier about one escape being too many. However, in terms of a monetary fine or penalty within the contract, Group 4 is given some leeway in terms of the number of escapes. Is it per year or over the period of the contract? How exactly does the minister work out when it is penalised for an escape?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: First of all, to answer that question I need to put one point on the record: I am not aware of any prison system in the world that is absolutely foolproof and that there would be no escapes. Therefore, to have a clause in a contract that provides that the minute you have one escape you are subject to financial or some other penalty, I would suggest, would make it almost impossible to get anyone who would be interested in coming up with a commercial contract that would be in the interest of government and therefore the community. Only a small number of escapes can occur without a significant penalty coming in over a given period, but this is one escape that has occurred with Group 4. It is one escape too many, as I said, but, given that it started in 1996, we are talking about a five year period, three escapes and 200 000 prisoner movements: I would suggest to the member that the contract is working well.

Not only is it working well from the point of view of what I have just highlighted but it is working well from the point of view that it has assisted us as a government to deliver more

for the overall department and for the community with a reduced financial contribution. In 1993, it cost about \$64 000 per prisoner per year. We are at approximately \$37 000 per prisoner per year at the moment, yet we are able to deliver a better outcome for everyone concerned when it comes to correctional services.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: What is the capacity of the Remand Centre; how many prisoners can it hold today; and what is the occupancy rate now?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will have to take that question on notice and get back to the member on the detail. I have been through the Remand Centre and remand centres are one of the more difficult areas to manage because people are coming in and going out and you are not able to set up programs for those people as you can in the mainstream prisons. You have lots of transfers and lots of issues. I want to put on the record that remand centres in any prison system are one of the hardest areas to manage. The total headcount as at 14 June 2000 in the Remand Centre is 170 and the capacity is 247, so we have quite a bit of space at the moment. I might also mention that we have been upgrading the Remand Centre when it comes to security as well as some other maintenance matters.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Will the minister detail how many lock downs have occurred in the Remand Centre in the past 12 months and say whether those lock downs occurred due to staff shortages in the Remand Centre or in any prison in South Australia?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will take that lock down question on notice, because I do not have the answer on the tip of my tongue. However, let me say this: the issue of officer shortages and so on is an issue that is run by the Public Service Association and, in my opinion, it has another agenda. It runs these agendas on a regular basis, whether it relates to correctional services or a lot of other agencies where it has members. The fact remains that we are committed to prison officer numbers. We are on a continual recruitment program. We have more bed space in the prison system right at the moment than we have had for probably some years. Certainly, in the last year or two we have been well down on bed numbers, yet we have not cut the number of prison officers. I am a little tired of the Public Service Association, led by Jan McMahon, running some sort of agenda that is not in the best interests of the department or the people we are having to look after.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Does the government have any future plans for or have any consultants been hired to investigate the future privatisation of any other South Australian prisons?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Do you want to develop some policy?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: No, just give us yours.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Our policy is out there. We have a mix of private and public prisons. I think that is a healthy mix. We have only one privately managed prison, that is Mount Gambier. I want to reinforce the fact that we as taxpayers own that facility and that it is managed by Group 4. Group 4 is also involved in the prisoner movement contract, about which the member asked some questions earlier. It is not on my immediate agenda to alter the current mix. I think it is working well but, as I say, I think it is healthy for both areas. It allows us to look at what happens in the private sector as well as our own public sector. I have already placed on the record my appreciation for those committed correc-

tional service officers and the work they do, be they employed by the public sector or privately.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I am not questioning the dedication of the correctional service officers but my question was: has the government any plans, or has it employed any consultants, to investigate future privatisation of any further South Australian prisons?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: My answer is that at the moment I have an agenda to run the system pretty well the same as it is at the moment.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I do not say that, but that is how it is, yes.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: When does the contract for the operators of the Mount Gambier prison expire; has a new contract been negotiated; have all the performance criteria been met with the prison operators; and have any penalties been imposed upon them as operators since the privatisation?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: First of all, there was a review of the Group 4 operations as a matter of standard procedure. From memory, the documentation for that was publicly tabled a couple of months ago, so it is all out there for the public to look at. I must say that the report card, if I could describe it as that, came up very favourably for Group 4. That is point one. The second point is that, as I have also indicated on the public record, we have been in the process of renegotiating the contract with Group 4, but, given that I still have to take that issue through to my cabinet colleagues, I am not in a position to make any further comment on the specifics of that for obvious reasons. Government has to take those procedures through cabinet before I can publicly comment.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: During the last financial year, how many prison staff have been assaulted by prisoners and have those assaults resulted in the loss of working hours?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The estimated result for 1999-2000 is approximately eight assaults on prison officers. A targeted expected level of activity is set. These assaults are a bit like prison escapes: one assault on a prison officer is one assault too many. The targeted expected level of activity for 2000-01 is less than six. The assault rate relates to the number of prisoners who are victims of acts of physical violence inflicted by other prisoners that are liable to result in injury. So, this also involves prisoners who are assaulted.

Our estimated result compares favourably with the latest data from other jurisdictions. In 1998-99, the result in South Australia was approximately 9.4, the third lowest assault rate and under the national average of 10.4. We do not hide from the fact that, sadly, there are assaults in prisons but, as I said, the target for next year is less than six. That target will be reassessed as more accurate data becomes available. We are committed to continuing to reduce this figure because we are not happy if an officer while doing his work is assaulted or a prisoner assaults another prisoner. I often talk to my CEO about this and how we can further reduce assaults in the prison system.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Are assaults broken down into categories, such as sexual assault, physical assault or verbal assault?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will ask the chief executive officer to give the honourable member a more detailed answer.

Mr Paget: The way in which we report is consistent with the report on government services by the Productivity Commission. There are national indicators. These figures are

recorded across the nation—an assault by an offender on an offender or an offender on an officer. This issue received a lot of media publicity recently in New South Wales, which has high result rates. There are some problems with accounting rules as to what constitutes an assault rate. We have problems with non-physical assaults such as spitting or minor assaults which we have to record for WorkCover purposes. So, there are some issues about the validity of the accounting rules.

We are particularly pleased with the fact that for the 1999-2000 year we expect a drop on the previous year of 20 per cent to 30 per cent in the number of assaults on officers. Looking at the literature, it is a problem, and the Productivity Commission reports indicate that it is a problem for all jurisdictions because of the sheer nature of what is a dysfunctional group of people, many of whom have poorly developed anger management skills and are used to resolving things quickly with their fists.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: One of the courses that we conduct, and one which obviously is needed to be conducted for a number of prisoners, is on anger management.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: In terms of sexually transmitted diseases, officers are not told who is HIV positive and who is not so that prisoners are not singled out. What is the percentage of prisoners in custody who are HIV positive?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Compared with many other jurisdictions, we have a much lower rate of hepatitis B and C, AIDS, etc., but we do not take this issue lightly. The honourable member would have seen an announcement that we made recently following a significant amount of representation from people right across Australia and after observing what has happened in other jurisdictions where further initiatives have been implemented to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The department is continually focused on this issue. I will ask the CEO to provide further details.

Mr Paget: It would breach human rights and privacy considerations to reveal the HIV status of a prisoner, so we do not do that. Officers and health professionals in the department and the South Australian Forensic Health Services apply universal health control precautions and treat everyone as though they are infected. We reimburse hepatitis B injections for staff and take the precautions that are common to most residential care facilities for dealing with such rates of infection. We are concerned not so much with HIV and AIDS, which in most jurisdictions run at about .3 per cent or .5 per cent, but with the high rate of hepatitis infection. The issue within the corrections environment mirrors that within the community. Until HIV and hepatitis infections are sorted out in the community, we will have the same difficulty in mastering this problem in a prison setting.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: So, we are moving towards best practice and erring on the side of caution. That is no different from an AFL game where the doctor and trainers wear gloves when treating a footballer.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I understand the practice and why it is employed, but I want to know whether the number of people with STDs in prison is higher than in the population outside prison and whether it is higher because it is being spread throughout the prison. I am not asking you to identify individual prisoners who are carriers, but I would like to know what procedures you have in place to make sure that, first, these diseases are not spread amongst other prisoners and, secondly, they are being dealt with in terms of medical assistance.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I want to reinforce the fact that compared with most other states we have a lower incidence of sexually transmitted diseases.

Mr Paget: The rate of hepatitis is quite high, and that reflects what is happening in the community. The rate of HIV and AIDS is well documented around Australia at about .3 per cent to .5 per cent. It is certainly higher in prisons than in the community, which is to be expected because of the sheer nature of the prison population: 75 per cent of prisoners have drug related problems and invariably are injecting drug users. So, the chance of hepatitis infection is high.

Provision is made for methadone maintenance, building on methadone pre-release and methadone programs that existed before. The condom distribution program which has recently been improved will aid in ensuring that prisons do not become incubators of infection. Drug and alcohol courses and courses relating to well-being and teaching people how to look after their health are part of this endeavour.

So, there are the drug and alcohol programs, the life skill programs and the other aspects of prison life, such as creating work opportunities to keep people off drugs. There has been the recent creation of an integrated investigations intelligence unit to try to get a better handle on criminal activity and the drug trade both within and without the prison system. These all contribute toward making prison a more healthy place.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The other point raised again recently was that, as well as the work actually done through the prisons system, when a prisoner finally gets parole they receive a kit, which I approved last year, which has information and other material in it to assist prisoners to remain safe from those sorts of diseases and keep other people safe from them once they leave prison. We are doing work on when they re-enter mainstream society, which is also important given the lengthy period of time some of them are in custody.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I have a few more questions on this. How often are prisoners tested for STDs in terms of blood tests? Is it only once they enter prison or is it every three months? Are there cases where prisoners who are disease free enter the prison system and then contract a disease while they are incarcerated?

Mr Paget: Mandatory blood testing breaches the World Health Organisation guidelines, so we do not conduct mandatory blood testing. It is up to prisoners whether they wish to be blood tested, and many do. There is usually a high rate of take up, but there is no mandatory blood testing. The reality of DNA testing under legislation will cast a different shadow on that issue. In terms of those who have seroconverted in custody, I am not aware of any in the South Australian jurisdiction. There have been a couple of cases in New South Wales, if I recall, which were not successful when they went to court. We had one case where it was alleged that a person seroconverted to hepatitis, but that matter was withdrawn before the courts. I cannot recall any proven case of seroconversion since I have been here.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: In terms of the mobile work camps (MOWCAMPs), how many prisoners have participated in these camps since their inception, what has been the cost of the camps, what is the success rate, and how is it measured?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I am very much committed to MOWCAMPs because there are three things you can gain from them: first, you have a situation where the prisoner as part of their restoration to the community is putting back into the community, and a lot of work is done in national parks and places like that. Public facilities within a local

community, such as halls, have been repainted. If you go to Troubridge Island you will see buildings with huge maintenance work being done. If you go to the Coorong you will see a lot of noxious weeds, boxthorn and the like and fencing issues all being addressed. Therefore, we have a chance for them to pay back to the community that way.

Secondly, we have work occurring that otherwise would not occur, so it is not keeping other people out of work because the money is simply not there to do some of that extra work. Thirdly, you have a chance to assist in the transition of those prisoners back into mainstream society. You do not go out on a MOWCAMP within the first part of a sentence—you have to earn the right. That is very important because if someone breaches the standards on a MOWCAMP it will potentially put the whole program at risk because the CEO and I will revisit it and say, 'What are the pros and cons of this and is it worth it?' I reinforce that it is a privilege for them and it happens towards the end of their sentence, and it helps with their transition back into society because at some stage 98 per cent of all prisoners in the system return to mainstream society. Whether the community like it or not, they are the facts. One of the biggest challenges for us as a department is to ensure that those people become positive contributors to society.

I can respond to some of the other issues raised by the honourable member. The number of prisoners on each project may differ. A normal camp consists of a maximum of 12 prisoners with two supervisors. The prisoners who participate in the camps come back very positive and like to do the work. I have some photographs of some of the work in my office where they take pride in it, as it is often one of the few times in their life when they have the chance to learn new skills. The Department for Correctional Services says that since March 1996, when we first started to get serious on MOWCAMPS, prisoners have contributed about \$939 000 worth of work to the community. There is a net benefit of nearly \$1 million. We still have to feed those prisoners and supervise them, whether they are in gaol or on a MOWCAMP, so in real terms the actual cost of having them out there from a department budget viewpoint is not exorbitantly high. Clearly there are additional costs in transporting them, accommodation on site and the like but, when you look at the benefits, the community and the department are a mile in front.

I place on the record some of the diverse work they do: fence building and maintenance; household painting and maintenance; pest plant control; repair and installation of park signs; road repairs and walking trail maintenance; water tank cleaning, installation and plumbing; waste management; and removal and salvage of fencing material. An example of that that is very beneficial is up in the Danggali Conservation Park where at the moment there are a lot of fences that National Parks and Wildlife wanted to get rid of. The government has put in a considerable amount of money for the centenary of federation to have a reenactment of all the paddle steamers from up the top of the Murrumbidgee River system to finish at the port of Goolwa. One of the limiting factors, despite the amount of money put in, is how you supply all the timber. We have been able to kill two birds with one stone because we have prisoners pulling up the old fences that are no longer needed in the park, cutting up the timber and stacking it along the river bank. That is another issue.

In the 18 months prisoners have been working in the Coorong, they have advanced the environmental plan for the Coorong by approximately 10 years. One project in which

they have been involved is the construction of significant walkways. Mr Chairman, you spoke about tourism. The Coorong is certainly an icon for South Australia, and the estimate is that there has been an increase of between a minimum of 1 000 and up to 12 000 visitors walking through the Coorong National Park directly as a result of the signage.

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the agreement, it is now necessary to proceed to the next lot of officers for the examination of the Country Fire Service.

Mr ATKINSON: The opposition has a difficulty in that someone who was going to do our questioning on the emergency services levy at the scheduled time, just after 9 p.m., is at a council meeting. I have left messages on his home telephone number and his mobile phone, but from the opposition's viewpoint we may just have to persist with the agenda as it is.

The CHAIRMAN: You have a problem because, if the Government members play the game, I will call after the allotted time. I have no alternative but to call government members for the last period. We are bending over backwards to try to facilitate the process, but you will not get double dipping. As good a people as we are, we will not do that. It is not the responsibility of the committee; members are supposed to be here. I will allow you to ask the questions that you want to place on notice, and we will then proceed to the Country Fire Service.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Will the minister list all consultancies let during 1999-2000, indicating to whom consultancies were awarded; were tenders or expressions of interest called for each consultancy and, if not, why not; what was the reason for and cost of each; which consultants submitted reports during 1999-2000; what was the date on which each report was received by the government, and was the report made public? Will the minister detail all advertising promotional activities and campaigns undertaken by all agencies within his portfolio for 1999-2000, and the purpose and cost of each? Will the minister detail all interstate and overseas travel undertaken during 1999-2000 by the minister, his staff and any executive public servants, including cost, location and purposes; and list the names and titles of staff who have been issued with or have access to government credit cards, the reasons for their having the credit cards and the amount expended on each in 1999-2000?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I have already dealt with the credit card issue. I have said I am prepared to provide the policy and the number of people with credit cards. That is all I am prepared to do as a standard practice. The rest I will take on notice and get back to the honourable member in due course, but he will be pretty disappointed because, sadly, the minister has not travelled overseas at all this year.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The minister should get out more often. The minister said he would list the number of credit cards. Will he list the total expenditure on the credit cards or just the number of people who have them? We understand the minister does not want to give names and that is his decision, but we would like to know whether he will give us a total expenditure at the end for those credit cards.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I am happy to do that. It is mainly the issue of individuals. There are policies and checks and balances and it is not appropriate to release all the individual names. I will give him that; it is not a problem.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now proceed to examine the Country Fire Service.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr S. Ellis, Chief Executive Officer, Country Fire Service.

Mr F. McGuinness, Manager, Emergency Services Fund.

Mr J. Deller, Ministerial Adviser.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Please excuse my ignorance on some of the Country Fire Service matters. With the intended roll-out of the radio network, what has been the cost to date for the Country Fire Service? Has it experienced any difficulties interstate where the network has already been applied in the same area as Country Fire Service? Have we learnt from those mistakes and made sure they do not happen here?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The member for Peake will be pleased to know that even he and all his constituents will be major beneficiaries of the government radio network, because it is not only for the CFS but also for the police, the SES, the ambulance, the MFS and other government agencies, so there are significant benefits. I will raise a point on this issue that is sometimes brought up. I am not the minister responsible for the government radio network: you will have the chance to ask questions of the Hon. Robert Lawson, who is the appropriate minister and who is due for questioning in estimates committees in a couple of days. My agencies have the benefit of the usage of about 70 per cent of the whole radio network, so obviously I have a huge interest—especially personally, I have to declare—with this radio network. I recall Ash Wednesday nearly 20 years ago (and we were talking about it only the other day), when we had to turn off the radios completely. They have improved a bit since then but, as I have said on numerous occasions, the radio network here for emergency services and police is operating on band-aids.

We have looked closely at the issues involved in radio networks in New South Wales and have examined coroners' reports, and we will be ensuring that the issues highlighted over there will be addressed in the building and development of this radio network. I happened to meet with the Director of the New South Wales SES in Mount Gambier at Rescue 2000 and he told me he was impressed with the way our radio network had been developed and also that theirs was now operating very well. The base build of our radio network is stronger than theirs, but I understand that one of their problems was training, which issue we will address. Secondly, there were some issues around simplex and other systems that can operate where officers are on the back with a fire hose and so on. Ours has simplex as well as trunk, digital and a lot of other features.

Some 4 300 pagers are being purchased initially for the CFS alone, so that is an important initiative. One of the things that have frustrated CFS volunteers in the past is that many of them did not have access to pagers and, if they did, they did not have digital read-out pagers. They often had a pager that just beeped. They might have been in the middle of the paddock and had to dive into the brigade station to find that they had to back-pedal past their own farm. With these pagers we will be able to give them detailed information so they will know exactly where the fire is and whether they are required immediately or on stand-by. The messages that can be sent to them will be significant.

So far there has been no significant cost to the CFS, but that will change on the basis that we are just rolling out the greater Adelaide area at the moment and they are trialing the GRN and building the network. We expect that at times they

will have to switch off or make other arrangements as they roll out the new network, because when you are building something new little issues will occur, but they are all ready for that. Whilst the existing radio network is operating on band-aids, it will continue to be operational until any teething problems with the new radio network are sorted out, and only then will the old, inadequate system be closed down completely. Funding for the CFS is available through the emergency services fund, so that was an increase in its budget for last year and this year as part of an amortised arrangement for the GRN.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The minister mentioned earlier that training might be a slight problem. If 4 300 pagers are being given out, does that mean 4 300 volunteers must be trained on how the system will work? If so, how much will that cost the taxpayer; is it budgeted for in the current budget; who will provide the training; and will it be put out to consultants, or will the firm from which we have bought the radio network provide the training to these volunteers? How will the government structure getting out to the remote communities to train them? Will the volunteers be brought in? What will be the costs involved in all that training?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: That is all part of the package with Telstra. Training is a component, and part of what it will be doing involves the principles of Train the Trainer, where you bring in core people from across the state whom you train as a trainer, and then those trainers go out and train individual CFS officers. We have 17 400 officers or thereabouts to train. Train the Trainer is a standard educational practice used today. In fact, I have done some of those courses myself. It is part of the package.

We have established a training consultative group, and every brigade has nominated a SAGRIN instructor. Training materials and videos are being developed. We have established a transitional implementation team which includes a transition manager, a training project officer and a radio communications terminal equipment manager. A lot of work is being done in that area. The CFS has a lot of training ongoing, and even with the current radios one is always training and practising.

I have mentioned to my Chief Executive Officer that in about October this year it is my intention to get together a few bus loads of people, not all captains and group officers but people at all levels, in the Kuitpo Forest or somewhere like that and give them a chance to see how good these radios will be for them.

Ms RANKINE: With the new funding arrangements under the emergency services levy for the CFS, can you tell us how that will affect asset ownership of the CFS in relation to current and future ownership of both premises and vehicles?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As members may or may not recall, under the act I have another 13 to 14 months to finish all the transitional arrangements around mobile and fixed property when it comes to the CFS and ownership. I want to put a couple of points forward at the moment. First, it is important to remember that the assets—the trucks, equipment and the buildings—for all intents and purposes are assets of the community. We must never forget that. In the past, part of the funding, even though it was under-funded, came from state and local governments, so it was the community contributing to that.

From the point of view of operations in the future and control of operations for that equipment, that will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of the CFS and

his board. In order to be able to better manage the assets, they will be transferred, subject to agreement with local government and the community, into my name as minister. That will be done in consultation with those councils. It is currently being worked through. We have a deed of agreement between the LGA and me, as minister. Currently we are in the process of further developing that with each of the 68 councils.

I reinforce that what we are doing is in the best interests of the overall management of the vehicles for those people providing the services and those receiving them. If councils have equipment that is over and above the standards of fire and emergency cover, it does not have to be transferred if they want to keep it, because often it was obtained without the dollar-for-dollar state and local government mix of funding.

Ms RANKINE: Does it require any legislative change?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: No, it will not: it is already in the legislation. The Local Government Association, on behalf of the councils, was involved in the development of the Emergency Services (Funding) Act. One intention was to look at the transfer of assets, because that would be in the best interests of the people providing and receiving the service. I highlight why: some areas would have struggled to come up to standards of fire and emergency cover, no matter how good the intention was. By managing those assets across the state, when we replace an asset in an area that is exceptionally busy we can transfer the replaced good asset to an area where the workload is not as high, and it will allow them to have a better asset than they had before. It is commonsense to do it that way and it will provide a better strategic state-wide management opportunity for the equipment.

With respect to buildings, I am not particularly fussed whether or not they transfer to me in fee simple or under a lease agreement. The main point is that we need to manage those buildings because we will be putting in taxpayers' money to maintain them for life, which may be 40 years or five years, because we might decide to build a collocated greenfield site. At the moment we are looking at putting the CFS, the MFS and the SES together at Burra because it is cost-effective to do so. The agencies have indicated that they would like to do that. That means that some of the other assets will become redundant and will be returned to the council if it owns them. It is a commonsense way of addressing the matter.

Membership:

Mr Atkinson substituted for Mr Snelling.

Mr ATKINSON: I have been looking at budget paper 4, and I notice that all the emergency services are lumped in together. There are a number of variations in the revenue and expenses and in the assets and the payments that I would like to question, but because the services are lumped in together one will miss the obvious reasons for resource variations that one would have taken had they been separated into the various emergency services. In future, would it be possible for the minister to provide the operating statement broken down by agency?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I agree that for lay people—and I clearly include myself as a layperson in this, albeit that I did three years of accounting as part of a course—sometimes it is a little difficult to follow some of the budget papers. Therefore, to be fully transparent about it and put it into the language that we all understand, I have another chart which I am happy to make available to the honourable

member and everyone else. In fact, it will be put into the report card I am doing annually to the whole community, so that they can see exactly how much money has been collected, how much money has been spent, what is involved with the services and so on. I am happy to provide that to you in the next couple of weeks.

Mr ATKINSON: What about the next budget paper? Can we have the statement of financial position and statement of cash flow separated into the agencies?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will take that on board and discuss that with the Treasurer. It is the Treasurer's budget paper.

Mr ATKINSON: In budget paper volume 1 at page 5.79 on major variations to emergency services it is stated:

Decreases in other expenses is also due to capitalisation of GRN expenses.

I presume that is the government radio network. What does this mean?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Effectively it is as I indicated to the member for Peake. We had to amortise over a period of years the costs of the GRN and the contribution from my emergency services levy towards that, because we were allowed to fund only that portion of the government radio network relevant to emergency services from the fund. In fact, initial papers that were documented in the parliament prior to my becoming minister indicated that we may contribute more than we are contributing, but given that we are just starting to role that out we have not spent all that money yet, but I can assure you that it will all be spent over the seven year period.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

Mr I. Pickering, Chief Executive Officer, South Australian Ambulance Service.

Ms RANKINE: Can I again place on record my congratulations to the Ambulance Service for the ambulance booklet that was developed by the officers at Modbury, which I understand will be launched statewide very soon. In fact, at the launch of the trial Dame Roma Mitchell said that she thought it was probably the best initiative to come out of the Year of the Older Person. So it really is a credit to the Ambulance Service. Minister, there were plans to establish a new ambulance base at Redwood Park, and I understand just before the last council election the Tea Tree Gully council rejected that application, and you were quite critical of that, understandably. However, when I looked in the capital works budget there was no allocation for either purchase of land or construction of that facility. Can the minister tell me why that is and what is the government's intention? Will you proceed with an appeal against the council's decision?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: First of all, I agree with you in relation to what the Modbury officers did, even though it gives you a chance for a free kick again in your own area.

Ms RANKINE: We do great things out there!

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: We do in the south, too. One of the great things about the Ambulance Service is that broad experience and the fact that officers from all over the state contribute in order to grow the service as we know it, which is benchmarked to certainly the best in Australia and, arguably, one of the best in the world today. No, we are still committed to that station out there, and in fact tomorrow my Chief Executive Officer, or some of his staff, will be meeting with council officers to try to work through the issues around

that location. I was critical of the issues around not approving that.

One of the problems you also have is that you have that NIMBY (not in my backyard) issue. People want fast response times, they want emergency services to be there, but they have concerns over things like sirens and such issues. I did chuckle at one of the comments where someone said, 'There are lots of accidents on that corner so why would you want to make it worse by having an ambulance station there?' I would have thought that that was exactly why you want an ambulance station.

The Ambulance Service is very careful in the way it operates its ambulances. I had the pleasure of opening a new station at Ashford recently and they have an understanding with a few houses in the street next to Anzac Highway that, whilst they will put on their flashing lights they will not hit the siren until they get on to Anzac Highway. Those sorts of things are standard procedure for the policy around that issue. The funding is available, from my understanding. We are committed to that station. The only hiccup we have is getting approval. The capital funding for the Ambulance Service is a stand-alone budget from the government. So that is why you would not have seen it in the budget papers, but the money is definitely there.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I understand that there is driver training with ambulance drivers; there is none given to police officers, apart from their initial training. Because ambulance drivers are exceeding the speed limit and going through intersections, what level of driver training is given to ambulance officers, or to drivers of any emergency services vehicle? How many incidents or accidents have there been involving emergency services vehicles in the past year?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I will hand over to my CEO on that. There have been some accidents. There are many emergency services vehicles on the road. Next to the police vehicles the Ambulance Service would be the busiest emergency service. Sadly, from time to time there will be an accident. One of the things I would like to work harder on with the community is to actually get them to be more courteous and also not to panic when they see emergency services vehicles. A lot of accidents could probably be avoided if people were just a bit calmer. When they hear the siren they should watch their mirrors. If there are flashing lights coming up they usually flicker in the mirrors. Drivers can thus pull across to the left and try to give the emergency services vehicle a clear pathway. I know myself from driving a fire truck that it is not easy sometimes when you are trying to get through a town.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I have not driven one for a while, but I can tell you that it is not easy when you are trying to get to the response as quickly as possible within the law and you have people who will sit in front of you and daydream. With respect to training with police, for argument's sake, depending on the sort of work they are doing, I know some police get extra training during their career, and one of the things I understand supervisors are always required to do is to keep an eye on this. It should be an ongoing thing through experience; younger officers sit in vehicles with older officers. Part of the probationary side of being a police officer is getting that training. I will now ask the CEO to comment further on driver training with the Ambulance Service.

Mr Pickering: There is an induction training period during which the initial driving is taught, and that is a lot to do with driving with a patient rather than speed driving. That

is undertaken as continuing education and we have specific instructors who go around the country teaching volunteers. That program has just been revamped now and I think something like two-thirds of the staff have already gone through the revamp program. It is an ongoing program for us. But we do not teach pursuit driving as a police concept; it is more don't spill the water type driving.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Minister, I was fascinated earlier when you talked about your report card that you will be sending out to the community. Who will pay for this report card? What contents will be in the report card, and how can you justify using taxpayers' money to send out a report card on your emergency services tax?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: First of all, it is not a tax, and it needs to be reinforced that the Labor Party supported every principle of the emergency services levy. In relation to some of the propaganda, I would ask people how they could justify, not only financially but in waking up in the morning and pinching themselves, the sort of material, the propaganda, the non-factual, almost libellous stuff, that they—including the member for Peake—tramped around in their electorates. I took great offence that members of the Labor Party were to be so hypocritical, in that they support every principle of this. If they do not, be hypocritical again but be hypocritical right here and now. There is a reporter ready to listen to you right here and now and report it tomorrow in the *Advertiser*. They can say that Mike Rann and the Labor Party are now doing a backflip and are not going to proceed with the Emergency Services Fund—if South Australia was ever in an unfortunate position to see them back in government. So, there is the challenge for propaganda material.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I will give you a challenge: I dare you to walk outside the chamber and repeat exactly what you just said.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There will be no threats here; I will close it straight down.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: He threatened me!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am running this committee. I will name the next member who makes an improper threat across the chamber and close it down forthwith. I do not intend to say it again. Members know better than that; just read your standing orders. The public expects better than that sort of conduct and I am certainly not going to tolerate any more of it. We will now move onto the emergency services levy.

An honourable member interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I will not put up with that nonsense. I am chairing this committee.

Mr ATKINSON: The useful publication Budget at a Glance refers to taxes being reduced by \$658 million. The minister has just said that the emergency services levy is not a tax and, indeed, last year he said:

I know the honourable member is a very slow learner but it is not a tax.

Page 3 of Budget at a Glance states:

Taxes have been reduced by \$658 million including . . .
· reduction in emergency services levy (\$24 million).

Will the minister explain why the emergency services levy is a tax when it is being reduced but not a tax when it is being levied?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: It is not a tax at all and I stand by what I said last time, because it is a statement of fact. The difference between a levy and a tax is quite simple. Let us not get excited about this. This is a levy, because every

dollar is quarantined and guaranteed to provide funding to emergency services. It is not money that goes into general revenue and it is not money that any part of government can get its hands on—therefore, it is a levy. If you consult a dictionary, you will see that is substantiated in the definition of ‘levy’.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: If you look at page 3, you see that it talks about ‘budget highlights’ and the highlight includes issues such as taxes. It talks about the separate issue of the emergency services levy.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: It is a levy dedicated and quarantined to fund emergency services.

Mr ATKINSON: Just answer the question. Why, on page 3 of this government publication, is it considered under the dot point ‘Taxes’? Has the author made a mistake? Is the author as ill informed as members of the Parliamentary Labor Party and, if so, why?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The honourable member can ask the Treasurer because he was the one who put that in there. I make the statement because it is a relevant statement. In fact, this is very important, because in some of the propaganda that was tramped around the electorates by the opposition—

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think we have had enough of that. I do not think we need provocation at this time of night. The Chairman’s blood pressure will rise.

An honourable member interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not need assistance from the member for Peake. I suggest to the minister that we will not go down that track of political propaganda.

Mr ATKINSON: In budget paper 2.10, reference is made to ‘remissions and concessions’ on the emergency services levy totalling \$46 million. What guarantee is there that these concessions will continue after the next election should the Liberal Party be returned to government?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As has been said publicly, the government is committed to maintaining those remissions during this term of office. Depending on the election, we have a situation where, if we are given the chance to continue to rebuild the state, we may be in a position part way through the next term to be able to produce further benefits for the South Australian community. The government is about reducing debt and freeing up opportunities for South Australians. The biggest challenge for us is to get a third term of office so that we can continue to do the work in rebuilding and growing our state.

Mr ATKINSON: Is that a yes or a no?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: What I have said is that we are committed to it for this term of office. We are committed to looking further at how we can reduce costs to the South Australian community, and the best way we can do that is to win office for a third term to continue with our job. I have said many times that as minister I have no intention whatsoever of removing the remissions. As I said, we are about rebuilding the state, freeing up money and making things available in a proactive sense for the community.

Mr ATKINSON: The Emergency Services Administrative Unit was established last year with a budget of \$1 million, in addition to the existing emergency services budget. What is the estimated result for the Emergency Services Administrative Unit and are its costs within budget?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The Emergency Services Administrative Unit has a key job in that one of the benefits we can deliver for the community and for the people providing the services (both paid and volunteers) is that we can drive the dollar further if we can integrate, where appropriate, a range of issues that are common to all the emergency services, and I share with you issues such as risk management, occupational health and safety, training, financial management and also procurement. Whilst I want to reinforce the fact that the government is committed to autonomy when it comes to the operational side of the services, in the past there has not been the opportunity to do so.

A classic example of the work being done with ESAU is where it had a significant part to play with some other parts of the justice portfolio in being able to procure 21 Isuzu four-wheel drives that are currently being fitted with 3 000 litre firefighting equipment and tanks. That procurement allowed us to buy a lot better than in the past where, for instance, a council might buy two fire trucks and someone down the road buys three.

The \$1 million a year that it costs to run ESAU is \$1 million that will be spent not only in procuring better equipment and so on but importantly enabling us to get the best of occupational health and safety, risk management and so on in other emergency services, because, if you do not do that, you run the risk of putting people’s lives in danger and also having significant increases in WorkCover liability and so on. A lot of good work is being done, and that will continue in the future as a result of the formation of ESAU. The other important part is that ESAU integrates with ESEF (Emergency Service Executive Forum) where the Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Fire Service, the CFS, ESAU and the Director of SES plan across agencies capital works projects, procurement and best practice management policy for all the services.

Membership:

Mr Foley substituted for Mr Koutsantonis.

Mr FOLEY: Budget paper 4, volume 1 at page 5.75 refers to funding of emergency services agencies decreasing by \$10 million. This is mainly due to funds for the government radio network being held in the emergency services levy fund until contracts and costings are finalised. Why are they not finalised?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As I indicated before the honourable member came in, I am not the minister for the government radio network, but 70 per cent of the radio network will benefit my portfolios. What has happened is that we are working through the development and the roll out of the radio network at the moment. We do not pay for this until such time as it starts to roll out, and that is just starting now. We have amortised the cost of our contribution to the radio network over a seven year period.

Mr FOLEY: As a supplementary, the minister is saying that he has amortised the cost over seven years but he has not spent anything in year one; is that correct? Is that what the minister is saying?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The roll out of the government radio network is just starting to occur in this current financial year, and I would expect that probably by about August or September a significant part of the first stage, which is the greater Adelaide area, will have rolled out.

Mr FOLEY: What the minister is saying is that he has collected the emergency services levy for this current

financial year for which little or nothing has been spent to this date. What he is now saying is that he is amortising it over eight years.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I am not saying that at all. What I am saying is that we have to contribute a certain amount each year for a seven year period. The first payment to DAIS will occur before 30 June this year. We had to have a budget line for that—you have to be able to pay for things—and we will be paying our contribution thus far to DAIS before 30 June.

Mr FOLEY: I have a further supplementary. What was the payment to DAIS as at 30 June this year?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: We have not paid that.

Mr FOLEY: How much is it expected to be as at 30 June?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: Approximately \$13 million.

Mr FOLEY: How much did the minister raise through the emergency services levy this year?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: For the radio network?

Mr FOLEY: Yes.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: It was \$13 million.

Mr FOLEY: The minister raised \$13 million.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: A portion of the overall amount collected was apportioned for the government radio network, and that was allocated at \$13 million.

Mr FOLEY: Can I suggest, Mr Chairman, if I may, a supplementary—and I know this is dear to your heart. In fact, the minister has raised much more. How much did the emergency services levy raise this financial year?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The total amount of money?

Mr FOLEY: Yes.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The total amount of money, including the government contribution and the community contribution for this year is approximately \$141.5 million.

Mr FOLEY: Exactly, but only \$13 million has gone into the government radio network for this year. How much will it be next year?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: It is amortised over a seven year period, so it is estimated to be \$13 million per year for seven years.

Mr FOLEY: It is \$13 million per year for seven years.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: That is the emergency services fund contribution to the GRN, because, as I said before you arrived, under the act we can contribute to the GRN only for that portion of the radio network relevant to emergency services.

Mr FOLEY: That is \$91 million out of a government contract for \$250 million.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I am not responsible for the overall administration; I am not the minister for the radio network. What I am responsible for is simply paying that portion of the radio network relevant to emergency services, which is \$13 million, and that is what I am doing, and doing gladly. Now, if it upsets the member that I am not contributing more than that—

Mr FOLEY: No, not at all. It is an accounting fiddle.

The Hon. K.T. Griffin: Rubbish!

Mr FOLEY: The Attorney may say it is not, but I suggest that it is a fiddle, and the Attorney knows it is a fiddle.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: This is not a fiddle. Even though the radio network initiative and all the initial implementation occurred under Premier Arnold, the fact remains that the Labor Party has been prepared to misrepresent the urgency and the importance of the radio network. From my understanding, whilst previous documentation tabled in this

parliament indicates that up to \$25 million per annum of the funding for the government radio network may have been raised by the emergency services fund, under the act, we could only raise the money relevant to emergency services, and that equated to \$13 million. Therefore, the balance must be found from general revenue. The honourable member can ask the Treasurer about the rest.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We came to an arrangement that questions would be asked by only one side. We have foregone a break. I therefore—

Mr ATKINSON: We have foregone questioning on the state emergency services and the SA Metropolitan Fire Service—a combined questioning of 20 minutes. In fairness, we could be given five minutes to round off this matter because we have had only 15 minutes on the levy.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! An agreement in relation to the times, which I have in front of me, was signed off by the member for Spence. If you want to have an agreement, everyone should stick to it and play the game, otherwise we will have a 15 minute break and come back.

An honourable member interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. The chair has been tolerant on this matter. I did not initiate the agreement.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I will allow the honourable member to ask one more question.

Mr FOLEY: Thank you, sir. The high cost of collecting the emergency services levy is attributed in large part to the start-up costs which for 1999-2000 are estimated to be \$9.4 million. I note from the budget papers that more money has been allocated for the collection costs. Will the minister advise the committee of what are now the expected collection costs of the ESL?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The situation regarding the collection costs is on the public record from last year. If the honourable member wants further details on the collection costs he can ask the Treasurer tomorrow, because the Treasurer is responsible for Revenue SA. The honourable member is desperate to get some line up that is not right, but the bottom line is that the advice given to me shows that the collection costs for this year will reduce by approximately \$500 000—and I stress \$500 000.

Mr FOLEY: Why does the budget say that an extra \$2.2 million will be allocated in the financial year 2000-01?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: The advice given to me is that the collection costs for this year will come down by \$500 000.

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: That is what I am talking about, Mr Chairman.

Mr FOLEY: The minister is saying that the collection costs will come down by half a million dollars, but the budget papers show that a further \$2.2 million will be appropriated for collecting the ESL.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As I have already said, the advice given to me is that Revenue SA's costs will be reduced this year by \$500 000.

Mr FOLEY: That is not what the budget papers say.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: I suggest that the honourable member ask the Treasurer, because he is the minister for Revenue SA. It is a pity that the honourable member will not be factual and acknowledge the benefit of the emergency services fund to the community of South Australia.

Mr FOLEY: There is clearly a dispute. We will deal with that overnight and look at the budget papers tomorrow with the Treasurer, but budget paper 2 says that a further \$2.2 million has been appropriated for the collection of the ESL.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! As far as the chair is concerned, this is the finish of any agreement. I have given the honourable member another question, but as far as I am concerned this is unfair and unreasonable. Many of us could have asked questions. Members have had a much better go than they would have got under the system of one for one. I will allow Ms White one quick question, and that is it, but I am afraid that she will have to do a lot better if she wants to do this again on another day.

Ms White: This is an important question, so that is why I insist on asking it. It affects many people in my electorate who live in caravan parks. In November last year I wrote to the minister regarding this issue. I received a response saying that the minister would attend to this matter the next day. Despite many telephone calls from my office there has been no response to my letter, which concerns the fact that rents in caravan parks have been increased 'due to the emergency services levy'.

Many of these people are pensioners, but they do not receive the pensioner rebate and they have just been hit with the GST. No other resident in rental accommodation is hit with the GST on their rent. Long-term residents in caravan parks and transportable homes pay half the GST on their rent. These people are being hit from both sides. The minister undertook to look at a fairer system for them.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member has asked her question.

Ms White: I ask the minister to respond.

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire: As members may or may not know, prior to the introduction of this new funding system, in 1998-99, 70 per cent of people contributed a total of \$69 million to emergency services. Today, 100 per cent of the community who own property or motor vehicles will contribute \$76 million. Clearly, many people will contribute significantly less under the new system with the remissions that were announced on 23 May.

As the honourable member would know, caravan parks received a reduction in the emergency services levy. Unless there are circumstances within individual agreements, landlords or caravan park proprietors will pay the emergency services levy as they did in the past. Individual agreements existing under the old system that are transferred by the caravan park owner will remain under the new system, but we actually debit the landlord, the owner of the caravan park. I also point out that, sadly, there are many examples of caravan parks needing emergency services.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the examination completed.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: An arrangement has been entered into, and that arrangement stands.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: An arrangement was entered into this evening by members of the committee that the committee would finish at a certain time. We have gone considerably over that time. In fairness to the members who have done the right thing—

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that the arrangement that has been entered into stands.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I rule—

Mr Lewis: If I don't, you'll have to sack me and close the committee down.

The CHAIRMAN: If you want to put on an unnecessary turn tonight—

Mr Lewis: No, I just want 30 seconds.

The CHAIRMAN: It makes a farce of the whole thing. The members have been sitting here for the whole evening to maintain the quorum of this committee. They entered into a sensible arrangement. I could have asked three or four questions, as could have other members, but you want to disrupt the whole proceedings. This sort of conduct does not reflect well on members of parliament. I propose to put the question—

Mr Lewis: I wanted to ask the minister a question about the state's emergency helicopter leasing arrangements.

The CHAIRMAN: You can ask him privately about that matter.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If I allow you to ask your question I will have to allow other members. I have made my determination.

Mr Lewis: Under standing orders, I claim my right.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule you out of order.

Mr Lewis: Under what sessional order?

The CHAIRMAN: I rule you out of order and I am not going to—

Mr Lewis: Under what sessional order?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I rule you out of order and I will not—

Mr Lewis: Under what sessional order?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the agreement we entered into and at the discretion of the chair. There being no further questions, I declare the expenditure—

Mr Lewis: I ask that it be noted that I protest that you have closed the proceedings before the appointed time and denied members the opportunity to ask questions.

The CHAIRMAN: I am most happy to have it noted that the honourable member is dissatisfied. I declare the examination of the vote completed. The committee will resume tomorrow at 11 am.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.12 p.m. the committee adjourned until Thursday 15 June at 11 a.m.