

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 20 June 2001

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**Chairman:**

The Hon. G.A. Ingerson

Members:

Mr M.J. Atkinson
 Mr M.L.J. Hamilton-Smith
 Mr T. Koutsantonis
 Mr R.J. McEwen
 Mr G. Scalzi
 Ms M.G. Thompson

The committee met at 11 a.m.

Department of Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts,
 \$332 228 000

Administered Items for the Department of Transport,
 Urban Planning and the Arts, \$10 846 000
 TransAdelaide, \$10 542 000

Minister for Transport and Urban Planning, Minister for
 the Arts and Minister for the Status of Women—
 Other Items, \$4 180 000

Witness:

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

Departmental Advisers:

Mr T. O'Loughlin, Chief Executive Officer, Department
 of Transport and Urban Planning.

Mr C. McSparran, Manager Portfolio Finance, Office of
 the Chief Executive.

Mr T. Argent, Executive Director, Transport SA.

Mr R. Frisby, Manager, Registration and Licensing.

Ms J. Holmes, Manager, Finance.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, welcome to the committee, and all the members. The estimates hearings are perceived as a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need for anyone to stand to ask a question or when answering questions. The committee will determine an approximate time for the consideration of proposed payments. That has been done and the timetable has been given to me. Changes to the composition of the committee will be notified to the committee as they occur. Members should ensure that they have provided the chair with a completed request to be discharged form.

If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be in a form suitable for insertion in *Hansard* and two copies submitted to the Clerk of the House of Assembly no later than Friday 5 July.

I propose to allow the lead speaker for the opposition and the minister to make opening statements if they wish. There will be a flexible approach in giving the call to ask questions, based on three questions per member, alternating sides.

Members may also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question, but do not assume that that is necessarily going to be the case.

Subject to the convenience of the committee, a member who is outside of the committee and who desires to ask a question will be permitted to do so once the line of questioning on an item has been exhausted by the committee. An indication to the chair in advance would be helpful.

Questions must be based on the lines of expenditure as revealed in the Estimates Statement. Reference may be made to other documents, including the Portfolio Statements. Members must identify a page number or the program in the relevant financial papers from which the question is derived. Questions not asked at the end of the day may be placed on the next sitting day's House of Assembly *Notice Paper*.

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

I also advise that for the purposes of the committee some freedom will be allowed for television coverage by allowing a short period of filming from the northern gallery. That may or may not occur.

I will invite the minister to make a detailed statement if she wishes, but before doing that I also have been informed that, in relation to omnibus questions, they may be tabled, and if the minister wishes to answer those at any stage she may do so or the answers may be supplied at a later date.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The accrual expenditure budget for Transport SA for 2001-02 is \$486.3 million. An operating budget of \$343.8 million will be spent on delivering outputs, with \$142.5 million being allocated to investing works. I highlight that \$100.3 million will be invested in road infrastructure in regional South Australia in 2001-02. This represents an increase of \$10.8 million, or 12 per cent, on the current level of funding.

Key state funded projects in regional areas include \$2.2 million for the Regional Roads Program (which was launched earlier this financial year). This program dedicates state funds to local roads of strategic importance, \$10 million to continue the government's commitment to seal all state rural arterial roads in incorporated areas by 2004, \$6 million (double this year's allocation) to build overtaking lanes, ongoing improvements to roads in the Flinders Ranges and the outback, the completion of Gomersal Road—

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: —yes, a popular move—which will provide an improved heavy vehicle route into and out of the Barossa Valley; further improvements to the Port Wakefield-Kulpara Road on Yorke Peninsula and the continued widening of the Lincoln Highway on Eyre Peninsula.

Overall, the budget includes federal funding of \$60.72 million for a range of projects including works on Portrush Road, shoulder sealing on Dukes Highway, widening of the Eyre Highway and overtaking lanes between Adelaide and Port Augusta and along the Sturt Highway. Again, in 2001-02, the federal government has provided funds for the Black Spot safety program.

In the metropolitan area, the Southern Expressway will be completed (\$14.25 million), and the Port River Expressway roadworks (Stage I) will commence (\$11.175 million). Other metropolitan projects include completion of upgrades to Robe Terrace and Torrens Road, further work on Commercial Road in the south (\$2.46 million) and improvements to Old Belair Road (\$1.25 million).

A new Safer Roads Infrastructure Program has been allocated \$6.8 million for shoulder sealing in regional areas and metropolitan kerbing. A new Metropolitan Traffic Management Works Program (\$3.4 million) involves a range of works, including bus priority plans at key metropolitan intersections. Some \$1.1 million will be allocated to councils to upgrade cycling facilities—

Mr ATKINSON: Hear, hear!

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Not only for the benefit of the member for Spence but for me also. This program also will provide 40 bicycle educational programs next financial year, with 10 of these to operate in regional areas. Meanwhile, the Government, through Transport SA, is seriously addressing all options to encourage the intermodal transfer of freight from road to rail. Tenders are currently being evaluated for the re-opening of the railway line between Mount Gambier and Wolseley in the South-East, and investi-

gations are being undertaken into major rail/road intermodal facilities both in metropolitan and country areas.

Mr ATKINSON: In relation to all departments and agencies for which the minister has responsibility, can she list all consultancies let during 2000-01, indicating to whom the consultancy was awarded, whether tenders or expressions of interest were called for each consultancy and, if not, why not, and the terms of reference and cost of each consultancy? Also, what are the amounts (and I am sure that the minister does not have this information) provisioned for consultancies in the portfolio for the years 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05? The opposition would be happy to receive those answers on notice, so there is no need for the minister to detain the committee or unnecessarily absorb its time by partially answering the question orally.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister may take the option of answering, if she wishes.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will incorporate in *Hansard* the consultancies proposed for next financial year for Transport SA, and I will obtain further information for the honourable member.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I be assured that it is a statistical table?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes.

Department for Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts Consultancies
Estimated Consultancies—Revised on 14/6/20001

Consultancy and purpose	Total value of Consultant
Below \$10 000	
Number: 0	
Between \$10,001 and \$50,000	
Number:2	
Air policy and strategy—Hudson Howells	0.05
Britannia roundabout: Concept planning and development—Connell Wagner	0.02
	0.07
Above \$50 000	
Number: 11	
National highways—strategic review—Veitch Lister Consulting	0.54
Overtaking lanes Sturt highway—OED Pty Ltd	0.29
Drivers redevelopment: Business case analysis—Simsion Bowles	0.10
Port River expressway: Financial—Price Waterhousecoopers	0.20
Waikerie bypass—SMEC Australia ACT P/L	0.09
Transport policy and strategy general	0.31
Southern expressway—Bridge concept—Connell Wagner	0.10
Southern expressway—Landscape tech advice—Green Environmental Consultants	0.05
Port Lincoln freight access study—QED Pty Ltd	0.08
Access management code—QED Pty Ltd	0.08
Greenhouse gas study—National Institute of Economics	0.06
	1.90
Total	1.97

Mr ATKINSON: Will the minister provide the committee with a detailed list and description of all the fees charged by Transport SA for various goods and services for the next financial year and the anticipated revenue from these sources for that financial year, and can the minister provide the same information for the current financial year?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I suspect that most of that information is already in the *Government Gazette* as part of the fees and charges related to the budget, but I will help the member if he needs it and bring it all together.

Mr ATKINSON: We do need it.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That information will be provided.

Mr ATKINSON: Some \$10 million has been allocated in the next financial year as part of the government's program to seal all rural arterial roads in incorporated areas by 2004. I understand that this allocation will allow about 64 kilometres of road to be sealed and pre-construction work to commence on two other roads. Will the minister advise how many kilometres of arterial road will remain unsealed after

the scheduled works in the next financial year and the estimated cost of completing this work?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The program is scheduled for completion in 2004, as promised some 10 years ago by the government. The projects currently under construction, their length and likely completion date, include Hawker to Ororoo, 61 kilometres to be completed 2002-03; Elliston to Lock, 72 kilometres to be completed 2003-04; Burra to Eudunda, 29 kilometres to be completed next financial year; Boolaroo Centre to Jamestown, 33 kilometres to be completed next financial year; and Swan Reach (the Bow Hill-Purnong section), 21 kilometres to be completed this financial year. Other roads which are scheduled for sealing under the program but which are yet to commence are Lucindale to Mount Burr, 24 kilometres and Morgan to Blanchetown, 26 kilometres.

I am able, Mr Chairman, to table the lengths remaining of unsealed roads as at June 2001. I will have to provide the costs outstanding for the honourable member. However, all the information is provided in forward estimates and has been confirmed with the respective councils in terms of their planning processes. Certainly, the expectations in the communities concerned are high for early realisation of this sealing program.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the member for Schubert that some four or five minutes ago I did advise the committee that, unless an honourable member is a member of the committee, that member would be required to wait until a line was completed. Since the member for Schubert has handed me a request to be discharged, I assume that he has been discharged. Whilst it may be being pedantic, at least the procedures of the committee ought to be followed. If the honourable member wishes to return to the committee, he needs to do that and ask a present member of the committee to be discharged.

Mr McEwen interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Does anyone second that?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It depends on the question.

The CHAIRMAN: Unfortunately, minister, you do not get an opportunity.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I will second it.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Schubert. I remind the honourable member that, in doing this, it is a most unusual procedure.

Membership:

Mr Venning substituted for Mr McEwen.

Mr VENNING: We were just a bit quick with the paper work. My question relates to the 'Capital Investment Statement' at page 25 under the heading 'Adelaide heavy vehicle bypass'. I note that \$2 million has been allocated next financial year for an Adelaide heavy vehicle bypass between Murray Bridge and Port Wakefield for B doubles and other heavy vehicles now travelling through the Adelaide metropolitan area. Will community consultation be undertaken to select the preferred option for the bypass in the Tarlee to Balaklava area and include opportunities for an assessment of the impact of the bypass on local communities along the full length of the proposed route?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: As a bit of background, I advise that currently all B double operators travelling between Murray Bridge and the Mid North to Port Wakefield must use roads in the metropolitan area, which is a bit stupid

in terms of traffic management because their destination is not the city and, unless they have a permit to do so, they therefore must travel through the built-up metropolitan area, which is expensive for them. It is also time consuming and, in terms of road safety, they must negotiate the Adelaide-Crafrers Road and Portrush Road, and the like, and encounter many traffic lights, stopping and starting, which is infuriating for every other road user.

The government has been investigating a heavy vehicle bypass. The route being considered travels between Murray Bridge and Port Wakefield via Mannum, Sedan, Kapunda, Tarlee and Balaklava. In the area between Tarlee and Balaklava, as the honourable member mentioned, three options are being investigated: Tarlee to Balaklava via Auburn, which would cost some \$2 million in terms of upgrade; Tarlee to Owen-Balaklava Road via Alma, which would cost some \$10.3 million; and Tarlee to Balaklava via Giles Corner would cost some \$8.45 million. I am being provided with all the community consultation I need at the present time, it would appear, from the member for Schubert.

However, notwithstanding his opinion, we are going out to wider community consultation, which, first, will involve the local councils and heavy vehicle operators because of logistics issues that we must explore. We will then be meeting generally with local communities as they would wish.

The CHAIRMAN: In discharging the member for Schubert and replacing him with the member for Gordon, I remind the member for Schubert that that is the last time that process will occur.

Membership:

Mr McEwen substituted for Mr Venning.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I have a question regarding the \$1.25 million upgrade of Old Belair Road, which is mentioned in Budget Paper 6, page 25 under 'Capital Investment Statement'. My constituency in Waite received that information with thanks and we look forward to the upgrade of the road. Will the minister explain what role the community might play in plans for the upgrade, when construction work will start and when it might be finished and, in addition, what impact that work might have on plans for Belair Road, which is, of course, the continuation of Unley Road running up past the Mitcham railway station, both of which, of course, handle traffic travelling down from the Hills.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I have appreciated the honourable member's local experience in exploring options for Old Belair Road. Transport SA has already undertaken market research surveys to explore possible options which have now been prepared in more detail. A consultant, QED Pty Ltd, has been engaged by Transport SA to undertake these consultations which, I understand, commenced some two days ago on 18 June. It is anticipated that they will take some 12 weeks and be completed by mid August. Subject to the outcomes of that community consultation, the current target date is to commence construction of road infrastructure improvements in December 2001.

That would be for the installation of an additional northbound lane at the Old Belair Road-Blythwood Road roundabout. That work should be completed this financial year and then the James Road junction upgrade will be completed the following financial year, 2002-03. In terms of Belair Road, I can give an undertaking to the honourable

member that I have been very conscious throughout this exercise about providing further improvement for motor vehicles rather than seeking to promote more travel on the Belair line; and so I should add that this road improvement should not be seen in isolation from government efforts from July to add surfaces to the Belair line. There will be additional services from 7 July.

In addition, we have taken account of a loathing on my part to see additional through-traffic attracted from the southern areas to any improved road length on Old Belair Road. In addition, at the honourable member's request, I recall meeting with the Mitcham council to see how we could combine its wish to see Belair Road upgraded in association with the Old Belair Road improvements so that we do not see big shifts in traffic volumes between these arterial roads.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I thank the minister for her reply and the excellent consultation that has occurred with our community throughout the development of this project. I refer to the Adelaide-Crafers highway (Budget Paper 6 and Capital Investment Statement at page 25). The minister and members of the committee would be aware that this has been a very substantial project to develop the major inroad into the city. It was open in March last year and appears to have been universally praised, although I heard on Radio 5AA talkback I think that truck drivers are complaining about the 7° gradient being too steep. One even said that the old road was better, which I find quite remarkable: the road is absolutely outstanding.

I seek three bits of information from the minister about that development. First, will the minister explain what measures the government is taking to maximise the safety of drivers in heavy vehicles and, in turn, road users on that new road given the issues that have come up? The traffic rides alongside of and really finishes at my electorate doorstep, and it is an issue of considerable concern to people living in Birksgate.

Secondly, the minister is aware of the issue regarding the disposal of some of the land no longer required for the project, in particular a parcel of land that contains Birksgate Cottage just north of the tollgate area. The minister has been very good at consulting with us on that, but we are yet to resolve exactly whether that property will be put up for sale or whether the community will make an effort to purchase it through the council. I am interested as to whether or not the minister can make a reasonable arrangement with the local community in regard to that land? It is very anxious to keep it as open space. Thirdly, what are the minister's long-term plans for the old Adelaide-Crafers road via Eagle on the Hill?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I have been interested to note the short memories of heavy vehicle drivers using this road. When I heard of the recent series of grievances by some drivers I did seek some information through Transport SA, and perhaps it would be of interest to members for this to be included in *Hansard*. I will incorporate in *Hansard* the record of crashes between Glen Osmond and Crafers before and after the opening of the freeway.

1.3.1998 to 1.3.1999

41 injury crashes and 175 property damage crashes in total
There were 28 semi crashes—3 injury and 25 property crashes
There were 11 truck crashes—1 injury and 10 property crashes

1.3.1999 to 1.3.2000

1 fatal crash, 43 injury crashes and 161 property damage crashes in total
There were 14 semi crashes—2 injury and 12 property crashes
There were 11 truck crashes—3 injury and 8 property crashes

1.3.2000 to 1.3.2001

16 injury crashes and 55 property damage crashes in total
There were 3 semi crashes—2 injury and 1 property crashes
There were 2 truck crashes—no injury and 2 property crashes.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: In referring to this members will see a marked decrease in injury crashes, property damage, rollovers of semi vehicles and crashes of semi vehicles and trucks generally. I am bewildered that anybody in their right mind, particularly a truck driver, would want to see a return to the use of those hairpin bends on Old Mount Barker Road. That does not mean that there are no improvements we can make to the Adelaide-Crafers road. There have been various discussions with South Australian Police, the trucking industry and Transport SA to see how we can improve information, advice and warning signs to truck owners and therefore make it safer for all road users.

I can confirm that on 17 April prominent signs were installed advising all drivers to use the left lanes unless overtaking. I had been reluctant to take that step mainly because under the current road rules it is clearly defined that on roads above 80 km/h that is law. However, it is clear that the law, when it comes to drivers in South Australia, is not always remembered or acted upon, and so we had to add these signs to this roadway. There are further advisory signs on the steep descent for truck drivers about the use of low gears. They will be installed at the Mount Lofty Summit. In addition, electronic highly visible warning signs will be installed at the Crafers interchange bridge to further reinforce advice to heavy vehicle operators. I anticipate that they will be procured in the next two or three months.

We will be adding signage and doing some roadworks at the safety ramp just before the Heysen tunnels. If you are sitting up in the cabin of a prime mover, the way in which the safety ramp has been constructed suggests that if you enter that safety ramp you could topple right over the top. There is enormous reluctance, notwithstanding the benefit of that safety ramp in that position, for truck drivers to use it if they need it. They have a mind block about it and we have to put up some barriers so that they cannot see over the edge, so that if they need to use it they will not find they are down the cliff but remain in the ramp. It is that sort of practical advice that has been useful in our discussions with heavy vehicle operators. If they have greater peace of mind about those safety barriers they are more likely to use them if they need them and not seek to negotiate their way down the hill and be a danger to themselves and everybody else.

There have been further discussions with the police about the enforcement of the road rules in terms of the Adelaide-Crafers road. There will be regular inspections at the Monteith weigh station to check on brakes and the general maintenance of vehicles. I think that will help get the message across to heavy vehicle operators.

In terms of Birksgate and the land, the member for Waite said that matters are not yet resolved. Well, they are really, but he just does not like the answer. The fact is that this land was acquired as part of the federally funded project to upgrade the South-Eastern Freeway and the federal government expects that Transport SA and the state government will dispose of any surplus land at market value to defray the costs of the federal government. Therefore, the local council, in its request to me to have this land simply transferred at no cost—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It was a nice try, yes, and I do not blame it. The land is valued at some \$340 000. I regret that I cannot oblige the council to transfer it at no cost.

In the meantime, the honourable member recently asked if the property could be heritage listed and preserved in that way. I can advise that Heritage South Australia has confirmed that it considers Birksgate Cottage not to be of sufficient heritage value to be listed on the State Heritage Register—notwithstanding the personal opinion of the member for Waite. Therefore I advise that it will take some time for Transport SA to finalise the necessary plans for division of land to excise the road reserve from that Birksgate property area and also to proclaim control of access along the Cross Road property frontage, but when that work is completed the property will be offered for sale at public auction and this is expected to take place in October-November 2001.

Finally, in terms of the Old Mount Barker Road, a number of people living along that road recently complained, and quite rightly, about its being used as a speed track or race track, and South Australia Police have been alerted to this and have taken action. The honourable member may have other advice, but I am aware of no complaints being received in recent weeks.

An earlier plan presented to three councils adjoining the Old Mount Barker Road was that it be down-graded to a two lane road with a bike and walking track separated by a landscaped median. That option is too costly and therefore a revised plan with no landscaping in the median and existing curbs simply buried and not removed is now before the councils. There is also an issue relating to street lighting, so we have a few issues to resolve in terms of costs and the final scheme, but certainly it is the government's intention that this be returned to local councils as a local road.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: As a supplementary to the member for Waite's question, I am glad to hear of the minister's concern for truck drivers and their safety.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: And community safety as well.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I am sure you are very concerned. I refer the minister to heavy vehicle traffic on the Mount Barker Freeway and the unfortunate accidents that occur. We are aware of the pressure on some drivers who have to meet deadlines, which can create problems like drug and substance abuse. Given all these factors, why are these heavy vehicle accidents not treated as workplace accidents and subject to standard occupational health and safety investigations similar to other workplaces? Presently these accidents are treated in the same way as other accidents. These drivers are working and should have the same rights as other workers. Will the minister provide a report on the matter?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: This matter has been taken up by the TWU, which is a federal union—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, but a federal award. It has been discussed at that level. First, I take exception to the use of the word 'accidents' as it trivialises what is happening on our roads in terms of death and injury and I would like to see more people more often—in particular, the media and members of parliament in terms of setting the agenda—regard them as crashes.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I have my bus licence.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: How often do you drive a bus?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Do you have a bus licence?

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Are we getting money from you for accreditation.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Have you put down your bus accreditation in your pecuniary interests?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Are you going to answer the question or change the subject?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I thought you were seeking to change the subject. I was only trying to keep you accountable in terms of parliamentary process. These matters are being discussed between the TWU and others. The honourable member would always know that the issue of owner drivers being deemed as employees is a vexed question under WorkCover and other arrangements and I suspect the discussions will be ongoing.

Ms THOMPSON: I refer to the overtaking lanes program from Budget Paper 6, capital investment statement on page 27, where it states that \$6 million has been allocated in 2001-02 to construct overtaking lanes on strategic regional arterial roads as part of the \$25 million overtaking lanes program to be completed in June 2005. We note that the Portfolio Statements detail programs for Noarlunga, together with the state arterial road program of \$6 million under the heading 'Overtaking lanes programs'. Will the minister indicate on which roads this \$6 million is to be spent in 2001-02?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: A total of eight new lanes will be constructed, with two additional lanes on both the Princes Highway and the Riddoch Highway, two lanes on the Berri to Loxton Road and two on the Noarlunga to Cape Jervois Road. I will ask Mr Argent whether he is aware that the sites for the two on the Noarlunga to Cape Jervois Road have been determined.

Mr ARGENT: Yes, I think they have.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Mr Argent considers they have been and we will provide specific advice on the locations in that area.

Ms THOMPSON: The minister will not be surprised if my next question relates to the Southern Expressway. One issue relates to the intersection of Brentwood Drive and Honeypot Road where a bridge has been built over Honeypot Road and which is causing traffic problems for local residents in accessing Brentwood Drive and the surrounding streets. There are delays, particularly in the morning around school drop off time, in turning from Honeypot Road to Brentwood Drive. There is a kindergarten on Brentwood Drive, so it becomes a particularly sensitive area for residents. It is complicated by the fact that in the morning if you are travelling in an easterly direction and turning right into Brentwood Drive bad sun glare comes over the top of the hill. It has been disturbing local residents so much that a group of residents planned a meeting, which I understand has occurred, to discuss the matter.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The sun?

Ms THOMPSON: The difficulty in turning right from Honeypot Road to Brentwood Drive. They feel it is caused by problems with the bridge on Honeypot Road over the Southern Expressway. Will the minister provide a report on what is happening there? I expect that you cannot do that immediately, but one of the major issues is when the Southern Expressway will open. The capital works statement says 'completion in 2001', but driving over it almost every day as I do it looks as though that is a very ambitious statement. I was confident that I heard Andre Luks warning people about disruptions to traffic on Beach Road where the roundabouts are being constructed for access to the express-

way, and I thought he said that this would occur for eight months. Will the minister clarify what is happening in respect of the opening of the Southern Expressway and the whole issue of completion of all associated roadworks?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The date of 16 September has been suggested to me as the opening of the road. The heavy rains last winter and most recently have caused some delays in terms of getting access to the sites, but certainly if you as the local member put 16 September in your diary it would be great to see you there because it is an important road investment for the south and for your constituents.

I will obtain some more information from Transport SA and the project managers for the Southern Expressway about the particular issues that the honourable member has mentioned, because we would not wish to see the Southern Expressway regarded as anything other than a bonus for the local community. If there are concerns, we would wish to address those in the best way that we can. Sometimes compromises have to be made, but we should certainly explore them.

Ms THOMPSON: What work will be outstanding after the opening on 16 September?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I understand that the only issue which may involve the closure of stage 2 for a day or so in the summer months is the final seal of the road. That cannot be applied during winter because it needs optimum weather conditions. This seal is extremely important in terms of reducing noise. It is a special seal requiring special weather conditions. Therefore, once the road is opened I see no reason for closure other than for this scheduled work which will be done in warmer weather.

Ms THOMPSON: What about landscaping?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I understand that landscaping is being undertaken now with the benefit of winter so that the plants get a hold. We are very thankful for all the volunteers who are helping us and also the Aboriginal training program that is involved in the landscaping.

The CHAIRMAN: A large number of constituents, including the Chair, will be very interested in the 16 September opening.

Ms THOMPSON: My next question relates to the metropolitan traffic management program (Budget Paper 6, Capital Investment Statement, page 25). According to the Capital Investment Statement, an amount of \$3.25 million has been allocated for 2001-02 to the metropolitan traffic management program which is due for completion by June 2004. At the same time, the Portfolio Statement states that \$3.4 million is to be allocated to this project. We understand that these funds will be used to upgrade intersections and intersection approaches to improve the interaction of buses and other vehicles and to reduce travel times and congestion in peak periods. Will the minister clarify which is the correct figure and advise the locations for which these improvements are planned during 2001-02 and beyond?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am advised that the capital cost over a three-year period is \$6.05 million, of which \$3.4 million has been allocated in 2001-02. A strategy has been developed in Transport SA. This is one of the bonuses of bringing road transport and public transport together in a bigger portfolio in terms of officers working together and talking. As an aside, I say that Transport SA has appointed a project officer to the Investment Strategy Unit of Transport SA specifically to address public transport issues. My understanding is that this is the first time that a road authority in Australia has acted to appoint someone to feed

in public transport issues on a direct basis in terms of strategy, planning and budget processes.

Transport SA has identified 150 locations throughout the metropolitan area for works that will benefit public transport—in particular, on-street buses. Today and over many years buses have been given very poor priority over other road traffic, particularly when you consider the number of people whom buses carry on a daily basis. What has been happening over time is that vehicles carrying one or two people seem to have a priority over buses carrying many more. So, we will give greater priority to buses at key intersections over time.

The current project involves in the coming financial year West Lakes Mall, to the city via Port Road, Main North Road, Elizabeth to the city, Goodwood Road, and South Road to the city. Those are the first locations for this new program.

Ms THOMPSON: There are several locations on each of those roads?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That is right. I will have more details shortly. They have not been defined at the moment, but the roads have been selected.

Mr McEWEN: My first question follows on a question from the member for Reynell about overtaking lanes. I think this whole initiative has been fantastic, particularly the recent overtaking lanes that have been constructed on the Riddoch Highway and the Princes Highway. Where does that leave us in terms of the longer-term vision, particularly for traffic north of Mount Gambier on Penola Road?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There is provision in South Australia beyond Mount Gambier.

Mr McEWEN: But Mount Gambier is the centre of it. Where are we with the plans for that major route past the airport through Tarpeena?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Under this overtaking lane project, the government has committed \$25.5 million for the implementation of a total of 38 overtaking lanes over a five-year period for rural and arterial roads—that is, state-owned roads. Under this program, as the honourable member would be aware, one overtaking lane was constructed in this financial year along the Riddoch Highway between the airport and Mount Gambier. Now, with the next financial year, work will be undertaken to construct two more overtaking lanes between the airport and Tarpeena.

There are other road works and traffic studies being undertaken in this region—which is at the centre of the universe—of which the honourable member might wish to be made aware. In terms of Transport SA's work program over the forthcoming year, traffic studies are being undertaken with the Mount Gambier City Council focusing on traffic flow and congestion along the Riddoch Highway between Jubilee Highway and Commercial Street. This study is expected to be completed in September 2001. In addition, Transport SA is undertaking planning and development design options for treatments along Riddoch Highway between Wireless Road and Pine Hall Avenue, Mount Gambier. This treatment is expected to include shoulder sealing, lighting, upgrading and improvements to the Burong Road junction.

For some years, I have been aware that the intersection of Wireless Road and Riddoch Highway is of concern. The honourable member has taken me to see this site in the past. Transport SA is now considering installing either traffic lights or a roundabout. The project has been nominated in the past and again this year by Transport SA for federal government blackspot programming.

Mr McEWEN: Given that Transport SA trialled a new speed zone in Nangwarry and the department gave the community a commitment that it would come back early this year and report to a public meeting, and there is pressure to have that public meeting, can you give us an update on that?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, I can. I am advised that Transport SA will have a full report on the speed limit in Nangwarry to give to me and to the honourable member and the community by the end of July. It is a vexed issue. With the agreement of the Wattle Range council, in December 1999 TSA installed an 80 km/h buffer zone within the existing 60 km/h zone on a trial basis. The trial was not very successful. Vehicles slowed down, but only between 73 km/h and 82 km/h. Now Transport SA is considering the broader question of safety through the township, including not only speed zones but the installation of a slip lane for traffic entering the township and improvements to pedestrian facilities. It is these matters that will be in the report to me by the end of July and the subject of further community consultation.

Mr McEWEN: Can the minister give me an update on South-East rail, where we are up to with the tender process and, more importantly, what implications that will have for the land corridor through the City of Mount Gambier?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: We have put out for requests for proposals following an earlier call for expressions of interest from private rail operators to assess whether it is possible to re-establish a viable rail operation in the South-East and therefore reopen the lines and standardise those lines. This follows the earlier sale of AN by the federal government, the return of the land to the state, and the lease of that land initially to ASR, which has since surrendered that land.

In terms of freight in South Australia, particularly when one sees the projections arising from economic development in rural areas for increased heavy vehicle use across South Australia, I have been very anxious to see an intermodal shift to rail. I think it is a real test for us, both in transport planning and investment, considering the road focus Transport SA has long had to look at the benefits of rail offsetting our investment in road, not only from an infrastructure perspective but also that of road safety and the environment.

One of the big tests in the exercise for South-East rail, which I see as absolutely key to our success across South Australia in gaining an intermodal shift, is to win back the confidence of business in rail. Over some years, it has got used to using road, and the road operators have a habit of being very competitive with their costs and I have no doubt that, as rail operators at this moment are exploring with companies options of gaining business, the road operators are out there too, saying, 'Stick with us; we can offer you a better deal.'

It will be a big test of the commitment of the South-East to really want rail as an option for freight and possibly passenger transport in the future. So anything the honourable member can do, together with the Regional Development Board and councils in the area, to say strongly to business, 'We don't want all of your heavy freight on our roads, we wish you to look keenly to the rail option for taking your freight in the future,' will be a very important consideration in terms of the reopening of these lines.

I understand that it will take until August for the assessments of proposals, which will be short-listed, and we will be asking for detailed business cases. All being well, I would hope that we might be able to see a positive decision in terms

of return to rail and the reopening of the line before Christmas this year. In terms of the competitive basis of road and rail, it will depend on the cost of standardisation, and that depends on the speed of trains on the track, which is a vital consideration in terms of competition between road and rail operators. There are a whole lot of factors, and it will not be an emotional or sentimental decision that sees this reopen.

Mr McEWEN: What about the land corridor through the city?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That land has been offered for consideration as part of the request for proposal documents and it may be that the more state land we are able to offer as part of the package may reduce the cost of the operation of rail and make it more competitive to road, or we may be able to offset the cost of standardising the line. I want to keep all options open for negotiation and that includes the potential to maximise the land in the centre of Mount Gambier for the benefit of rail throughout the South-East. We should know all of this before December. In the meantime we are finally keeping it neat and tidy, I understand.

Ms THOMPSON: My question concerns the Spriggs Road precinct in Onkaparinga Hills (Portfolio Statements, page 7.43). About a year ago the Onkaparinga council obtained traffic management advice and undertook a public consultation on introducing a 40 km/h zone for the Spriggs Road precinct at Onkaparinga Hills. That culminated in a postal ballot that determined that the area should be declared a 40 km/h zone. Following the ballot, the Onkaparinga council forwarded its recommendation to the minister.

That was almost a year ago and residents want to know why the decision is being held up at the minister's end, particularly given that the cost of the new signage is the responsibility of the local council. Can the minister advise the current state of the issue regarding the 40 km/h zone in Spriggs Road, where the residents have supported the concept strongly? How many other council areas have sought to introduce reduced speed zones in their area?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Councils across the metropolitan area and, in some instances, the country have requested 40 km/h zones. In each instance, I have not delegated the ultimate approval to Transport SA. In making the decision to progress a 40 km/h local speed zone, I do require from councils a very clear indication of the community consultation process that they have undertaken and a strong indication of community support. I always seek the views of the local member, and I am aware that you have supported initiatives in your council area and they have subsequently been approved. I did write to the Onkaparinga council this week. I signed the letter at about 2 a.m. and I cannot remember the road that was approved; I should be able to provide that information later today. If it is not the one to which you have referred I will immediately get advice from Transport SA because, other than one in Charles Sturt Council which I want the view—

Mr ATKINSON: Chief Street.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: —Chief Street—of the member for Spence—

Mr ATKINSON: And you have it.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Transport SA may have it but I have not yet received it. I am not sitting on any such applications. Transport SA may be doing some further work. I will see what applications are outstanding.

Ms THOMPSON: Does the minister have any idea of how many councils are applying for this; just how widespread is this?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will provide details of all applications that have been approved and others where councils have applied.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions in relation to Transport SA?

An honourable member: Yes, there are.

The CHAIRMAN: In that case the committee will have to vary the program.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Minister, we are happy for you to take these questions on notice because of the time constraints. I refer to Budget Paper 6, Capital Investments Statement, page 27. I understand that \$500 000 will be allocated in 2001-02 to this ongoing program to promote remedial measures determined necessary through the road safety audit process. This same amount was allocated in 2000-01. However, when the minister announced this funding it was identified as an initial amount to address priority treatment as identified by the road safety audits. The minister said:

A new allocation of \$500 000 will address urgent roadworks identified by the audits, prior to the development of a more detailed funding strategy in 2001-02. In the meantime audits have been completed on all Transport SA rural roads and remedial treatment costing many millions of dollars has been identified.

Why then was only \$500 000 allocated for expenditure in this area in 2001-02? We are happy for you to take the question on notice.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am pleased for you to place whatever you wish on notice, either now or through the general *Notice Paper* process.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Will you provide that information by 9 July?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes. This seems easier than some questions that you could have asked.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Well, we have not finished yet.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Peake has an opportunity to put this series of questions under one question. That is what he requested and that is what I have granted.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Waite will have the same opportunity.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The minister's state budget release of 31 May 2001, New Road Projects for the Metropolitan Area, referred to new initiatives to promote pedestrian access and safety, with particular reference to schoolchildren and older road users. The release indicated that these initiatives are being progressed for funding as part of Transport SA's forward budget agenda. My questions are as follows:

1. What does this latter statement mean?
2. How much is being allocated in 2001-02 for the government's Safe Routes to School program?
3. How many schools will receive the program in 2001-02?
4. How much is being allocated in 2001-02 for the government's Walk with Care program for older pedestrians?
5. How will these funds be distributed?

I think the member for Spence has other questions.

Mr ATKINSON: A few years—

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Is this on notice?

Mr ATKINSON: No, I would like the minister's answer now. The minister made a splash a few years ago about proposed improvements to the Britannia roundabout. A news conference was called, and sophisticated computer models

were demonstrated to the media and, I believe, published in the *Advertiser*.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That gives them credibility.

Mr ATKINSON: I could not really comment on that: I used to work for the *Advertiser*. To date, nothing has occurred. What is proposed to be spent next financial year on the Britannia roundabout, what was spent this year and, with respect to the latest proposal for the roundabout, what will be its impact on the parklands?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: A lot has occurred in recent times in the planning process in working with other parties, such as the Adelaide City Council, the racing industry and Major Events, because of future uses of Victoria Park. That has been quite a complex process, as other people have determined the future of Victoria Park and what is required. We would not wish to compromise any of those issues by roadworks that did not provide flexibility with parkland issues in the future. In addition, we have to be very careful to make sure that any project of ours has minimum impact on the precious parklands. Some of the options first proposed (notwithstanding exchange of road reserves and the like) did have a greater impact than some would see as acceptable. So, that is another issue that is being looked at further.

The final consideration and budget bid process was over to me. I have determined not to put this project forward at this moment, because it was quite clear to me that, because of the disruptions on the eastern side of the city arising from the major Portrush Road upgrade, to undertake the roadworks scheduled at the Britannia roundabout at the same time would turn it into almost a three year bottleneck, with a speed limit of 40 km/h, and it would be a nightmare for general traffic and freight through that area. Certainly, the government is keen to advance the Britannia roundabout as part of the inner and outer ring routes of Adelaide, but at budget bids I did not present the project this time for cabinet to ratify. However, it is still on the agenda.

Membership:

Ms Bedford substituted for Ms Thompson.

Mr SCALZI: Thank you, Mr Chairman—

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: This will be a probing question.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the member for Peake that he confines himself to making reasonable comments. Otherwise, he might be disciplined.

Mr SCALZI: My question relates to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.10.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Mr Chairman, I am not sure what you see as acceptable standards of behaviour but, if we want to make progress, and with goodwill, with questions on notice, perhaps the performance could be better.

The CHAIRMAN: I agree with the minister. My patience with the member for Peake is becoming fairly short. He would recognise that the government has the numbers in the committee, and he might be disciplined accordingly.

Mr SCALZI: I am quite comfortable, as a former teacher.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I warn the member for Peake.

Mr SCALZI: We have a focus from outside. Two years ago, the government gave a commitment to upgrade all school crossings on arterial roads by June this year. This year, a further school zone was added to the program, following the successful merge of the Newton and Hectorville primary

schools in my electorate, now the East Torrens Primary School. Currently, the planning and design work is being carried out for the pedestrian crossing on Reid Avenue. Will this pedestrian crossing be completed before the end of the school year, and how many school crossings across the state have been upgraded under this program overall?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: To speed up the answer to this question, I insert, in statistical form, an outline of the 103 sites that have been identified for upgrade in terms of child safety on our roads, and this table outlines projects completed or under way.

No.	School	Treatment Type	Status
1	West Beach Primary	PAC	Completed
2	Evanston Garden Primary	PAC	Completed
3	Xavier College	No zone	Completed
4	Nuriootpa High School	Traffic signals	Completed
5	Upper Sturt Primary	Koala	Completed
6	Loxton High School	PAC	Completed
7	Murray Bridge High School	PAC	Completed
8	Tailem Bend Primary	Zone removed	Completed
9	Murray Bridge Pre-school	Ped refuge	Completed
10	LeFevre Peninsula Primary	Koala	Completed
11	Meadows Primary	Emu	Completed
12	Glossop High	Zone removed plus car park	Under construction
13	St John's Lobethal	PAC	Completed
14	Willunga High School	Koala	Under construction
15	Bordertown High School	Koala	Completed
16	Stirling North Kindy	Koala	Completed
17	Watervale Primary	Koala	Completed
18	Clare High School	Zone removed plus car park	Still being negotiated with DETE
19	Glendale School	Emu	Completed
20	Oakbank Kindy	Zone removed and signs erected	Completed
21	Waikerie High School	PAC	Completed
22	Balaklava High School	PAC	Completed
23	Horizon Christian School	Koala	Completed
24	East Fleurieu School	PAC	Completed
25	Birdwood Primary School	PAC	Completed
26	Houghton Primary School	Zone removed and signs erected	Completed
27	Basket Range Primary	Zone removed and signs erected	Completed
28	Kersbrook Primary School	Emu	Completed
29	Kingscote Area School	Existing crossing	Completed
30	Quorn Area School	Koala	Under construction
31	St Joseph's Peterborough	Koala	Completed
32	Robe Primary School	Koala	Completed
33	Millicent North Kindy	Koala	Completed
34	Ramco Primary School	Koala	Under construction
35	Allendale East Area School	Koala	Completed
36	Manoora Primary	Zone removed and signs erected	Completed
37	Penola Primary School	Koala	Completed
38	Morgan Primary School	Koala	Under construction
39	Euduna Area School	Koala	Completed
40	Walleroo Primary School	Koala	Under construction
41	Penong Primary School	Koala	Completed
42	Kalagadoo Primary	Koala	Being reviewed at the request of the school
43	Saddleworth Kindy	Zone removed	Completed
44	Warooka Primary School	Koala	Completed
45	Springton Primary Schol	Koala	Under construction
46	Gumeracha Primary	Koala	Under construction
47	Palmer Primary	Ped. refuge	Under construction
48	Jamestown Community	PAC	Under construction
49	Penneshaw Area School	Koala	Still under discussion with National Trust
50	Yorke town Area School	Koala	Under construction
51	Kulpara Primary School	Zone removed	Completed

No.	School	Treatment Type	Status
52	Alford Area School	Zone removed	Completed
53	Robertstown Primary	Zone to be removed on main road	Under construction
54	Pt Broughton Area School	Koala	Under construction
55	Snowtown Area School	No zone	Completed
56	St Columbas Yorketown	Zone removed	Completed
57	Auburn Primary School	Koala	Completed
58	Cambrai Area School	Emu	Under construction
59	Port Kenny	Emu	Completed
60	Elliston Area School	Koala	Completed
61	Cleve Area School	Ped. refuge	Under construction
62	Marree	Zone to be removed	Completed
63	Oodnadatta	Zone to be removed	School yet to respond
64	Yalata	Zone to be removed	Completed
65	Lenswood Primary	Zone to be removed	Being negotiated with school
66	Langhorne Creek Primary	Emu	Under construction
67	Millicent High School	Koala	Completed
68	Mt Burr Primary	Koala	Completed
69	Andamooka School	Zone to be removed	Being implemented
70	Cadell Primary	Speed zoning changed	Being implemented
71	Murray Bridge Lutheran	Zone to be removed	Being reviewed with school
72	Meningie Area School	Zone to be removed plus car park	Under construction
73	Our Lady of the River	Zone to be removed	Completed
74	Pinnaroo Area School	Zone to be removed on main road	Under construction
75	Waikerie Kindy	Zone removed	Completed
76	Gladstone High School	Koala	Completed
77	St Jakobi Lutheran	Zone removed	Completed
78	Tumby Bay Area School	Ped. refuge	Completed
79	Tumby Bay Kindy	Zone removed	Completed
80	Mintabie Area School	Zone to be removed	Being implemented
81	Coorabie Rural School	Zone to be removed	Completed
82	Yorke town Kindy	Zone to be removed	Completed
83	Nepabunna Primary	No zone	Completed
84	Mylor Primary	Koala	Under construction
85	Yunta Rural School	Koala	Being designed
86	Moonta Primary School	Koala	Being designed
87	St John's School, Belair	Not known	
88	St John's School, Belair	Ped. refuge	Being reviewed with the school
89	Goolwa Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
90	Pt Elliot Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
91	Waikerie Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
92	Echunga Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
93	Two Wells Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
94	Kapunda Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
95	Mt Bryan Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
96	Melrose Area School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
97	Kangarilla Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
98	McLaren Flat Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
99	McLaren Vale Kindy	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
100	McLaren Vale Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
101	Two Wells Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
102	Willunga Primary School	Emu crossing	Completed prior to 1999
103	Reid Avenue	PAC	Discussions with key stakeholders

The government's objective was to have all these projects completed by the end of July this year, but it has now been extended until the end of October 2001. In the meantime, I have been advised that the cost of the crossing for children at the Reid Road area is some \$100 000, and the location of

the crossing on Reid Road is now being considered between Transport SA and the Campbelltown council, as Reid Road is a council road. This matter will also be considered by the local community—and I understand that the honourable member also has a view on the matter, and that will certainly

be taken into account. Rather than being completed by the end of the school year, I understand that, if all goes well in terms of the consultation process, it is scheduled to be installed and operational by Monday 15 October, for the start of the last school term.

Mr SCALZI: I note that Transport SA is responsible for a project managing two major federal government investments in roadworks in metropolitan Adelaide. The first project is the upgrade of Portrush Road, which will be welcomed by constituents in Hartley (and, no doubt, also constituents in Norwood) when the work is finally completed. What is the time frame for the completion of this project?

Mr ATKINSON: Which line in the budget is this?

Mr SCALZI: Budget paper 6, Capital Investment Statement, page 26.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The work is being undertaken in three stages: stage 1 is Greenhill Road to Kensington Road; stage 2 is Magill Road to The Parade; and stage 3 is The Parade to Kensington Road. Construction of stage 1 is anticipated to commence this October. In the meantime, there has been a lot of relocation of works and detailed designs required to plan for this major project. Construction of stage 2 is anticipated to commence in January 2003 and construction of stage 3 is anticipated to commence in July 2003.

A number of issues are still to be resolved, including a possible service road at Loreto College and a pedestrian crossing at William Street. A former member of parliament and member for Norwood, Mr Greg Crafter, is working through those issues with us. He is representing the college, I understand. Hopefully, we will be able to resolve some of those matters promptly; but that is the schedule of works and it is that schedule of works and the disruption generally that has also had a bearing on my consideration of the Britannia roundabout project.

Mr SCALZI: I will ask a question on behalf of the member for Norwood as the opposition members did not ask on her behalf. In relation to the Port River expressway, what is the time frame for the start and completion of work to construct the road and rail bridges and connecting roads?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Again, this is a staged project. The first stage is the road works from Salisbury Highway to the South Road connector to Ocean Steamers Road, valued at some \$53.34 million. This is to be undertaken as a RONI (Roads of National Importance), with shared funding between the state and federal governments. We have gained a commitment of \$18.5 million from the federal government and we are just seeking some more funds. Perhaps Mr Argent might add to that. You had better be successful in your negotiations.

Mr ARGENT: The original estimate for this particular part of the project was \$37 million and we were able to achieve a 50 per cent commitment from the federal government. We have every reason to believe that, given some of the difficult geotechnical issues that have been encountered in the preliminary planning work and, as the minister has just indicated, as the cost has increased, there is no reason why we would not expect to achieve that 50 per cent of the total cost that is now estimated.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: We anticipate a different type of contract when we seek private sector support or interest in building this road connection—a type of contract that would transfer more of the risks in terms of design and construction to the private sector, rather than the risks being retained by Transport SA. We would be seeking to take stage

2, I think, late this month or next month in terms of its registration of interest and assessment. Stages 2 and 3 are the bridge projects and they will be undertaken by private sector funding with some state government investment. We envisage, I understand, that the start of the construction on the road and rail bridges and the connecting roads as components of stages 2 and 3 will be December 2002 and completed early 2004.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 6, page 25, 'Capital Investments Statement'. I trust that the member for Spence is listening.

Mr ATKINSON: I am.

Mr SCALZI: I note that, from next year, the government will introduce a new metropolitan traffic management works program, which includes vast priority plans at major interstate intersections in the metropolitan area. What is the nature of these plans and at which intersections will the works be undertaken in the coming year?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Essentially, to save time, I have addressed some of those matters in answer to a question asked earlier in the committee stages and, because of time pressures, I will provide direct answers at a later stage.

Mr ATKINSON: Minister, can you confirm that the cost of custom plate numbers has increased by \$40? The cost last year was \$150 and the cost this year for the same service is \$190, and this does not include the GST component.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Hartley knows that interjecting is out of order.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I think that, for consistency and credibility, the interjection asked for a budget line.

The CHAIRMAN: It is entirely up to you, minister, to answer the question as you wish.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: For that level of detail I can either provide a reply for the honourable member or ask Mr Frisby, as the Registrar, to provide an immediate response.

Mr FRISBY: A range of special numberplates are available to the public from Transport SA which are, in effect, contributing revenue directly to the road fund and which are driven by market prices rather than regulatory fees that are set for the recovery of taxes for road damage, and the custom plates are one such plate.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: They are market driven?

Mr FRISBY: They are market driven. The worth of those plates was established in 1985 when there was a public auction of numberplates to establish the market price. Those plates have not been adjusted by CPI since, but only occasionally—

Mr ATKINSON: Since 1985?

Mr FRISBY: Since 1985 they have not been adjusted by CPI. They have been increased intermittently as a result of what market research suggested the market could bear.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: They probably have not yet caught up with inflation over that period.

The CHAIRMAN: As this line has concluded, the member for Stuart has requested that he be allowed to ask a question. Is the committee happy with that?

Mr ATKINSON: No. We have already had the member for Schubert doing this. The government has asked more questions than the opposition in this bracket. So, we are moving on. It is my request that we move on to the PTB.

Members interjecting:

Mr ATKINSON: Mr Chairman, you said that there would be no exceptions.

The CHAIRMAN: I advise the member for Stuart that the advice I have been given is that it is at the convenience of the committee. I ask the committee what its view is.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I support the member for Stuart's request.

Mr SCALZI: I second that.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee has requested that the honourable member's right be adhered to. What is the position? Those in favour say aye, those against say no. I believe the noes have it.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The compliment will be repaid.

Mr ATKINSON: When? You will not be in the next parliament.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I have already warned the member for Peake; I do so a second time. The honourable member is aware of the consequence. The consequence is that if the honourable member is warned and is then named the committee, in essence, will be disbanded until tomorrow. I remind the member for Peake that he puts at jeopardy not only his questions but every other question that might be asked.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Stuart, please. I remind the member for Peake that, in essence, if he proceeds down this line the committee will be suspended and all questions from his side will then be negated. I remind the honourable member of that and, if necessary, I will proceed down that path. Minister, do you wish to change the committee to Passenger Transport Board questioning?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Ms H. Webster, Executive Director, Passenger Transport Board.

Ms H. Haselgrove, Director Contracts, Passenger Transport Board.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Because of time pressures, I will incorporate in *Hansard* my opening statement, as follows:

The Passenger Transport Board (PTB) budget for 2001-02 is \$251 million, comprising Operating Expenditure \$244 million, Capital Investment \$5.9 million and Repayment of Borrowings \$1.1 million.

I am pleased to report that for the 12 months to April 2001 patronage across the metropolitan public transport network increased every month compared to the corresponding month the previous year—and overall by 3.5 per cent. This is the first sustained increase in decades.

Last Month (May) patronage increased again by 5.1 per cent—which is tremendous news leading up to increased service frequencies to be introduced in July and September this year.

Overall, the PTB has forecast a further 2 per cent increase in patronage to 30 June 2002—and certainly every service and infrastructure initiative proposed for the coming year and beyond is designed to gain and retain customers.

The competitive tendering of metropolitan bus services during 1999-2000 has resulted in savings of \$7 million per annum—and as promised in the Government's 1993 and 1997 Passenger Transport policies, the savings are being re-invested in the delivery of services Statewide, for example:

- More weekend and night services, slashed by Labor in 1992, are being restored;

- On rail, weekend daytime services on the Gawler and Noarlunga line will be doubled, with additional weekday peak period services introduced on the Gawler, Noarlunga and Belair lines;
- From 8 July 9 new high frequency Go Zone routes along arterial roads will be introduced, bringing the total number of Go Zones in metropolitan Adelaide to 18; and
- From September, metroticket services will be extended from Aldgate to Mount Barker and beyond.

The PTB's Capital Investment Budget provides for the installation of timetable information at all train, tram and bus boarding stops across Adelaide, additional Park and Ride facilities and improved security at interchanges.

By 31 December this year, the metropolitan bus fleet will comprise 359 modern, fully accessible buses, all equipped with refrigerated air conditioning. This represents nearly half the fleet.

As already announced, fares on metroticket services will rise from August by an average of 3.1 per cent.

From 1 December 2001 all metropolitan taxis will be required to install video security cameras—and in the meantime, more Access Cab licences will be issued.

In the forthcoming year the Government will also address a number of important equity issues in the delivery of country bus services—that have long been enjoyed by metropolitan operators and passengers—including the introduction of a 50 per cent concession on the purchase price of a ticket for all people who are unemployed and the removal of the 2.5 per cent route licence fee paid by operators.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: During last year's estimates the minister reported that the following performance criteria were used in the bus service contracts: delivery of passenger service on time running; customer and public safety; fare compliance; management of infrastructure; timetable production and distribution; handling of passenger inquiries and reporting; fraud prevention; quality assurance; employee management; and service review and improvement. Will the minister provide a report on the performance of each contractor in relation to the following: first, details of financial penalties and bonuses where applicable; and, secondly, the number of missed trips since the introduction of the privatised services?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I can provide some of that information. I am not quite sure whether I can provide a break down in terms of every contractor, but overall I can. In terms of some of the reporting standards, the honourable member would be aware that the contracts provide incentives for increased patronage. So, there is a real financial gain for the contractors to be out there winning passengers. Equally there is a penalty for non-performance, and that in turn is a reason for performance to be a focus of all the bus operators, because they literally pay for it if they have missed trips, have late runnings or the services are not operated at all.

I can advise that, in terms of the bus services, since the contracts commenced on 31 March 2001, reported penalties were 4 116. The PTB applies different defective service amounts, and that came to 1 203, and translated into dollars it is \$291 610. That sum was withheld by the PTB from contract payments. At the same time contractors have received additional payments for their success recorded over the past year for increased passengers and patronage. That dollar figure I do not have at the moment but it is substantial considering that there has been a 3.5 per cent increase overall on public transport, particularly since the new contractors. So there are some gains and losses by the contractors in terms of good performance and penalties for missed services.

I have information regarding the number of inquiries. Complaints represent only .5 per cent of total information line and information centre customer contacts. The honourable member asked a whole lot of questions about safety and display units. To provide the parliament with the full

information it would be best if I make a considered reply rather than little grabs of information.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: What is the anticipated cost of the introduction of access cab vouchers for people with blindness? Is there provision for it in this year's budget? What did the access cab voucher system cost in 2000-01? What is the anticipated cost for 2001-02?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It is about \$9 million. The cost of the SATS (South Australian Transport Subsidy) scheme, which provides two levels of help for people with physical disabilities, is either a 50 per cent rebate or return on all fares up to a maximum of \$30 or a 75 per cent return. A report has been undertaken to assess the operation of the SATS scheme and to consider the issues in relation to legally blind persons. That report has been undertaken by the Passenger Transport Board with assistance from an officer from the Disability Office.

I have received that report but have not yet assessed it. I would be happy for it to be released when I have done so. I have asked a couple more questions and that information has been provided to me, so I cannot rule in or out the extended eligibility for legally blind people in this coming financial year, but I can indicate, with the benefit of the information I have sought, that the issues have been strongly canvassed. I will be able to make a judgment on that and possibly take the issues to cabinet and release the report to the honourable member shortly.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Will you take the rest of that question on notice?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, I will.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I am concerned as I understand that negotiations are presently under way between the Adelaide City Council and the Passenger Transport Board on the future of our taxi ranks in the CBD. I am advised that the casino rank is due to close. Will the minister confirm that this is the case, particularly in relation to the casino rank, and what is the PTB doing to ensure that ranks will not close or diminish in the city?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Ms Webster can respond about what the PTB is doing, but I can advise that the government's strong view is that we must have taxi ranks available in the city areas. It is one of the city's responsibilities. I have not been told that there is to be no access outside the casino and I know that it is a popular area for patrons. I am not sure if that specific matter is being discussed or whether a decision has been made—certainly I am not aware. I will follow it up. Ms Webster may be able to add more and, if not, we can get advice promptly for the honourable member.

Ms WEBSTER: The Passenger Transport Board has ongoing discussions with the Adelaide City Council to ensure that passengers can get access to ranks. Some people within the council feel that ranks should be moved further away from venues, but it is very much our strong view that they should be moved closer and conveniently for passengers and taxis. I cannot comment on the specifics of the casino rank, which I do not believe is under threat.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I have a supplementary question—I know you have been very generous in the past, Mr Chairman.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Waite.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Thank you for your consistency, Mr Chairman.

Mr ATKINSON: I move:

That the member for Peake be entitled to ask a supplementary question.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Come on Michael—fair is fair.

Mr ATKINSON: I have moved a motion, sir.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Mr Chairman, I know there is a motion, but can I help here? I know there are time constraints: I am a relaxed minister and generally know my subject. If I do not know it I am happy to get answers if members want to put their questions on notice. This is not a competitive process for me. I am happy to be accountable. You have ruled, sir, that it should not be a supplementary, but later at the end of the session if you want to put that question on notice I am relaxed about taking that.

The CHAIRMAN: I advised earlier that questions can be put on notice at any stage and that is the process that can occur. Does the member wish to proceed with his motion? I believe that it would be more easily resolved to put it on notice.

Mr ATKINSON: If the chairman is proposing to allow the member for Peake to ask his question and for it to be placed on notice, I would be willing to withdraw the motion.

The CHAIRMAN: That is my ruling.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: My supplementary question on notice is: will the minister provide any correspondence that the casino has had with the Passenger Transport Board about the taxi rank outside its premises?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.10. I am interested in the issue of patronage of metropolitan public transport facilities. I have the Belair line—a valued asset—and a number of bus routes running through my constituency. I am interested in why, over the past 20 years, different reasons have been given for the decline in patronage each year up until now. We have suddenly seen an increase in patronage. I would be interested in the minister's advice on what factors have been identified for that increased patronage in the past year and how the government is monitoring customer response generally to public transport services and using that feedback to improve services overall.

I am particularly curious as to whether the increase in patronage is a consequence of the better policing of fare payment, that is, that we might have been carrying those passengers all along but they were not paying—I do not know. It is certainly pleasing to see the increased patronage and we are delighted to see that in our area and the better services. I would be interested in the minister's explanation as to where it has come from and what we are doing to make it better.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I have no doubt the competitive tendering process for new operators in terms of buses has made a big difference in public perception of public transport. We also have more new buses, which provide greater comfort for passengers. With the new services nine 'go zones' provide a greater frequency of services on those nine routes, which we know is what customers want: more frequent services in addition to greater safety, security and affordability. We provide all that. In terms of the trains, certainly across the public transport system the 3.5 per cent rise to April this year, compared with the corresponding 12 months, has been greater on trains, so there is no doubt the ticket checking has made a contribution.

Mr ATKINSON: It is one of the best things you have ever done.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: And passenger service attendants—you told me that I did all right there, too.

Mr ATKINSON: Yes, I have praised you repeatedly.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: And when the more frequent services come in on your line you may praise me again.

Mr ATKINSON: The Grange line?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: No, on your line: don't you use—

Mr ATKINSON: Grange-Outer Harbor.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: You use the Grange-Outer Harbor line. Well, we cannot have those more frequent services immediately because we are resleepering that line. It would be stupid to have more frequent services when there may be some disruptions because of the resleepering process, but you will get a quieter, better trip without interruptions in future with concrete sleepers and not wooden ones.

Mr ATKINSON: I have noticed already from Woodville to the city.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, there is a big difference. Just inside \$3.5 million is allocated next year and with some carry over we should be spending \$5 million on the resleepering of the Outer Harbor line this coming financial year.

Mr ATKINSON: It was quite nostalgic to hear freight trains on our line on the first time for a few years: they were there to do the resleepering.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes. While increased safety and security has certainly had a benefit, there is no doubt that we have gained more regular full fare paying commuting customers and that is not an area in which we generally have problems with fare evasion. Our assessment is that safety and security has definitely made a contribution, but the biggest increase in train patronage has been the regular fare customer base and not the concessions, including students or pensioners.

I further add that petrol prices must have had some impact, but we were beautifully poised to maximise the issue of fluctuating petrol prices. There is no doubt that in public transport it is hard to get a kick in terms of a winner. We were poised at the right time with everything coming together, including fluctuating petrol prices, so I will take any winners I can in terms of public transport because it is a jolly hard portfolio in which to please everyone all the time.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: And planning.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will not even comment on planning yet. I table for interest the results of a survey of 22 000 passengers across all contract areas and public transport modes which was undertaken in March this year. It is fantastic to see that, compared with the previous survey, overall satisfaction rates have risen markedly and that 90 per cent are now satisfied or very satisfied with on-board safety. In terms of overall satisfaction, 82 per cent gave the trip a satisfied or very satisfied rating. That is excellent in terms of benefit for taxpayer subsidy which is invested in public transport services in this state.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: My second question relates to park and ride facilities (Capital Investment Statement, Budget Paper 6, page 24). What plans does the government have to invest in the provision of more park and ride facilities across the metropolitan public transport system in the next financial year and beyond? I am really interested in the Mitcham Railway Station, which has the potential to capture

a lot of commuters from road to rail. The minister may not be able to provide specific advice about Mitcham, but generally can the minister expound?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There is provision in the capital works budget for next year for major improvements to be made at the Mitcham station in terms of upgrading that existing park and ride facility. I agree with the honourable member that there is land there, it is conveniently located on the plains but midway between the city and the hills, and it is a prime site for an interchange. That work will be undertaken this year. I am also pleased to say that that work will be undertaken in advance of any work that may be proposed for Belair Road. So, if there are roadworks on Belair Road, we may be able to get more people to go to the car park and use public transport. I reinforce the point that I made before: no roadwork decision is made without some consideration for public transport impact in terms of integrated planning for transport.

At the Paradise and Klemzig interchanges—this will be of interest to the member for Hartley—additional car park facilities are currently being investigated. Additional car park spaces will be constructed where possible to cope with the high demand for car parking at the interchanges. Park and ride facilities have recently been constructed at Panalatinga Road, Crafers and Aberfoyle Park. There will also be an investment in the Golden Grove park and ride facility. It is proposed to provide 180 commuter car park spaces at a cost of \$450 000.

I advise that, in terms of the Klemzig station, not only is the government providing park and ride facilities but the member for Hartley may also be interested to know that construction will commence on 25 June this year at an estimated cost of \$130 000 to provide safe direct access between the car parks and the bus stops on both sides of the O-Bahn corridor. For too long it has been a living nightmare in a sense that, in order to go to the other side of the track, people (if they are able) have to go up steps, across the roadway and down the other side to access the train. It was poor planning initially, and we will now make sure that we rectify that matter with the investment of \$130 000 from 25 June.

Mr SCALZI: I thank the minister for that welcome news for both Klemzig and Paradise, as many of my constituents have concerns about parking and use the O-Bahn because it is a very good system. I refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements Volume 2, page 7.41. Many taxi drivers are particularly concerned about pressure being exerted by the Productivity Commission under the terms of the national competition policy for the state government to increase the number of general taxi plates and generally deregulate the industry. The member for Peake might be interested in this. What is the government's response to these pressures and related concerns of taxi drivers and owners?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Like the honourable member, and taxi drivers and owners generally, the government is not impressed with the arguments that have been put forward under national competition policy principles and, in particular, by the Productivity Commission. I think that is generally the view of state governments across Australia which are ultimately accountable for service delivery. In terms of passenger safety and cost structure issues as well as social justice matters, all of which were canvassed in the Halliday report last year on the state of the taxi industry, I agree that there is no basis for the increase of general taxi

licences. Therefore, the government has no plans to increase beyond 997 general taxi licences.

We have, however, a big and growing issue in terms of the need for Access Cabs. We have an ageing population with increasing mobility difficulties. This matter was raised in answer to a question from the member for Peake a moment ago. There is big and increasing demand for Access Cabs. We are concerned that the 70 Access Cabs that we have at present are not even able to meet the demand for school trips for kids in the morning. Over recent years, Access Cabs have brought down waiting times, but there is evidence now that waiting times have stabilised or are going up and that at various times we are not providing what I think a fair society should provide.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Therefore, the government will accept a recommendation from the Passenger Transport Board for 15 more Access Cab licences to be tendered from July this year. As part of and complementary to that exercise, we will be working with Access Cabs to address certain issues. The member for Peake interjected about some other issues. We will have to deal with some of the underlying issues with the operation of the Access Cab system. I am very aware of that, but the operation of the telephones, the allocation of trips through the Access taxi company, does not explain why we have a number of taxis that do not operate at certain times so that we are not meeting the demand.

I know that I have an obligation to listen to and act according to the needs of taxi drivers, but I feel that I have a bigger obligation to the most vulnerable members of our community: people with a disability and the ageing. I will not sit back and tolerate these trips where people are kept outside in the winter for sometimes excessive periods of time.

Mr Koutsantonis: Two hours.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Sometimes for two hours. I would not want that to happen for an able-bodied person or a young person like the member for Peake or even for me, but when you are in a wheelchair and vulnerable, we need more Access Cabs, and the government will be issuing these licences, through tender, so that we can better meet our social and humane obligations to people with disabilities. Very briefly I add that a new advisory committee is being established with Maurice Corcoran as the liaison officer.

[Sitting suspended from 1.01 to 2 p.m.]

Mr SCALZI: I had a supplementary question to the questions about taxis. With respect to access cabs, I was pleased that the minister addressed the concerns of the increasing demands for the elderly. As the member for Spence would be aware, the electorate of Hartley has a significant number of elderly people.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: That is correct. It was a supplementary question, and I said that the minister has answered that.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I will ask about improved safety and security for customers. It is dealt with in Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements 2, page 7.5. The minister touched on it when she responded to my question about increased usage of the rail system. I have the Belair line running through the electorate of Waite. Certainly security is often stated by constituents as a major reason for their using or not using the system. Could the minister explain the

initiatives put in place to improve safety and security for customers using the network particularly at night?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It has been a major focus for the Passenger Transport Board, TransAdelaide and operators generally over the past year. On the rail system, the 'Safer Stations' program has been introduced and I could advance on that during examination of the TransAdelaide lines.

Also I am particularly pleased that, through the competitive tendering of the bus service, funding has now been made available to provide for a security officer and the employment of a passenger service assistant (PSA) on all trains after 7 p.m. and roving teams of PSAs during the day. Honourable members may be interested to learn that the transit police based at the Adelaide Railway Station will be relocated following investment by the PTB to move them to a much more visible presence and position on the concourse rather than tucked behind the back of the station in their current northerly position.

It may be of interest to members that the bus operators are also fully involved in security work on buses, and over very recent times they have invested on a trial basis in the installation of video security cameras in buses. Southlink, based at the Lonsdale depot, now has 40 buses equipped with video surveillance cameras. Torrens Transit has installed two and is currently investigating the cost of installing security cameras on its entire fleet, while Serco also has two installed and is looking at the cost for the 400 buses that it leases from the government at the present time. This is all part of the increasing emphasis by government, through its agencies and the private and public sector operators, to improve security to give added peace of mind to passengers and then, in turn, to see our patronage lift further. We have a lot of competition with the motor vehicle and we have to provide not only safe, comfortable and affordable services but prompt services, and that is our goal overall.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I refer the minister to the Portfolio Statements, page 7.14—southern O-Bahn. The minister made a recent announcement that the government would not proceed with a southern O-Bahn. The minister said that she was examining other public transport options in the context of the budget, which would address the obvious problems in rapidly developing southern suburbs. Apart from the announcement of 50 new buses, which would be prioritised for the outer suburbs and the Adelaide Hills, the budget does not seem to include any financial commitment to any other new initiatives or public transport options for the south. When will the minister provide details of her plans to address the public transport problems of the southern suburbs as she promised? Will the 50 new buses promised increase the size of the bus fleet?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It is a replacement of buses, not an additional number of buses, so the ageing bus fleet will be replaced with new buses that are accessible, fully air-conditioned with refrigerated air-conditioning and, in most instances, CNG powered, although in this instance some will be diesel powered because of the longer hauls and power issues in the south and Adelaide Hills.

In terms of southern transport initiatives, the development of an interchange at Bedford Park is actively on the agenda and that is being addressed across the portfolio and will be one of the matters considered as part of the long-term investment strategy for public transport that I have indicated will be released before the end of this year. In the meantime, service improvements have been made to Goodwood and

South roads in terms of bus services, there has been an improvement in bus service frequencies in the outer south as part of Southlink's commitment to improvements to services, and there are imminent further frequency improvements on the Noarlunga railway line.

I am keen to see a relocation of the Oaklands Railway Station to make it more relevant to the Marion Shopping Centre, and it is certainly due for renewal. If we can incorporate that as part of redevelopments in the Marion domain, that would be a worthwhile initiative. South Road is now a Go Zone and improved and extended bus services are proposed for Hallett Cove and Sheidow Park from 7 July.

Mr ATKINSON: What would you do with the Oaklands station?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Just move it down a little closer to Diagonal Road on the existing line. When I say 'relocation', it does not mean abandoning the site altogether but relocating it closer to where people are more likely to use it as part of going to Marion, making it more relevant to a regional centre than having it some distance back where nobody really sees it or actively uses it in association with the centre.

I am hoping that, by doing this, we might be able to embarrass Westfield into some contribution, but embarrassing Westfield is not an easy exercise. I think that major regional shopping centres like that or other private sector developments, such as the possible state aquatic centre, as part of a public financing initiative (PFI), should look at investments in public transport, because we help them. We should be looking at not only private sector options for investment in public transport but also private sector commercial developments contributing to public transport infrastructure, as I understand Gandels is doing to some extent at Elizabeth as part of its redevelopment of the shopping centre. It is a good corporate citizen and I hope that Westfield will adopt the same approach. I am sure they contribute to the arts generally, but I would not mind them contributing to public transport, too.

Mr ATKINSON: The new metropolitan bus service contracts have been in operation for a bit over a year. You have previously reported to parliament that \$7 million per year over 10 years has been saved by contracting out. What is the expected financial result for next financial year of the contracting out and can the minister provide to the committee a breakdown of the source of the savings and where in the public transport system the savings will be redirected as promised by the minister? We are also interested in the result for the current financial year.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The result for the current financial year will have to wait until after 30 June, of course, but I believe that I have outlined to parliament the broad areas of saving, but I will check *Hansard* and come back with a more detailed answer for the member. The average annual saving is \$7 million. The extra passenger service assistance that I have just highlighted for employment on the rail service for ticket barrier checks and added security at night is being paid for out of savings in the bus contracts.

I may have mentioned previously the 50 per cent concessions on ticket prices for people who are unemployed using country bus services, which also comes from the savings on metropolitan bus services, as does the removal of the licence fees for country bus operators and a number of the service improvements on rail and bus that we have announced in more recent times, including the more frequent bus services and the increase in Go Zones from 9 nine 18. We needed to

save the money to reinvest. We argued for that, and cabinet finally agreed that Treasury would not get all our savings and that we could reinvest them. I was pleased.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand that, during the course of the last financial year, the executive director of the PTB (and saviour of the Barton Road closure), Ms Heather Webster, undertook overseas travel (including visits to London and Paris) of four weeks' duration, presumably on government business. I understand that Ms Webster delivered a paper in Paris. Can the minister confirm the purpose of the trip and its duration? What was the cost to the PTB? And can the minister table a copy of any papers delivered by Ms Webster while in Paris and a copy of the travel report, if there is one?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am happy to obtain that information for the member. The PTB board recommended the trip to me and I approved it. I do not have the terms in front of me, but I will provide them, along with the paper given and any subsequent report.

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That is what I will endeavour to do. I will gather as much information as I can by that time.

Mr ATKINSON: Will the minister detail the organisational and management changes that have occurred to the PTB to accommodate the new private operators? For example, where the PTB once dealt with one operator, it now has to accommodate many more. What was the total number of employees in 1993 under the old State Transport Authority, compared to present levels this year? What saving does that represent in costs?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I do not know that we are comparing like with like. That will be a bit of an exercise, because the honourable member may be aware that the PTB arises from the Passenger Transport Act, which also took in the old Office of Transport Policy and Planning and also the old Taxi Board. I will try to get what I can so that a valid comparison (if it can be made) is provided to the honourable member.

Mr ATKINSON: Much was made of the government's decision to allow the introduction of a 1 per cent levy in 1997 on all taxi fares to enable taxi operators to fund safety measures, such as video surveillance and global positioning. Although the installation of the technology was to be mandatory on 1 July this year, I understand that the uptake by the taxi operators has been slow, which suggests, perhaps, that there is not demand for the scheme. How many cameras have been installed by taxi operators? What is the total revenue collected by taxis as a result of the application of the safety levy since 1997? What are the penalties on taxi operators for non-compliance?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I have released a statement today, which will be of interest to the honourable member, that the date for the installation of taxi surveillance cameras, which I had earlier announced would be compulsory from 1 July, has now been extended to 1 December. This commitment by the government for regulation to make it compulsory for the installation of video cameras arose from recommendations of an elected group of representatives of the taxi industry. It was their belief that, of all the options in addition to global positioning systems, video cameras should be installed in taxis. The camera can be activated if the taxi driver believes that there is a need to do so.

Since that recommendation from this group representing taxi drivers and operators was made to me, and the government commitment to make compulsory the installation of

these cameras, technology has changed an enormous amount. These cameras are now much smaller, they are more discreet and they are digital. This has been a debate for some months, and rather than opt for the 1 July date it was better to put it back to make sure that we have the benefit of the latest equipment, not equipment that would easily and quickly be obsolete.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The task force was elected by taxi drivers. The report has been released and is in public circulation. I can provide all that. There was a ballot of all drivers to elect representatives. The options will be for payment or leasing arrangements. With respect to the levy, 1 per cent is \$800, and this would then be shared in some form between the driver and the operator. That is the normal way in which these things are undertaken in terms of any fare collected. So, they have been collecting sufficient sums of money for some time. I am told that the fee for leasing these video surveillance cameras is about \$18 a week (and this includes the rental plus the downloading charge) and that they would cost some \$2 000 to purchase. So, I suspect that most people will lease them. They certainly have had funds accumulating for some time, which would enable them to do so. I will go through the other matters that the honourable member has addressed and provide further answers to those matters.

Mr ATKINSON: I refer to the minister's announcement that \$440 000 had been allocated to improve access to public transport for people with disabilities. One particular constituent has had ongoing service difficulties with Serco in the southern suburbs and its failure to provide reliable, workable ramps for people with disabilities. After a series of letters exchanged over the course of a year between the minister and my colleague the shadow minister on behalf of that constituent, the minister signed a letter to the constituent on new year's day this year—I am very impressed that the minister was in her office—

Mr McEWEN: She works very hard.

Mr ATKINSON: —she does—apologising and explaining that the service difficulties will not happen again. The letter also mentioned that, at that time, Serco incorrectly logged the inquiry, which is another cause for concern. I was disappointed to learn that the situation has not improved and that difficulties continue to persist—as recently as Anzac Day. My questions are: have any financial penalties been charged against Serco for its failure to deliver on its advertised access route, which leaves commuters with disabilities stranded? How are service difficulties and failures reported, and quality control maintained, if it appears that internal company controls do not operate adequately?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There is a variety of ways in which contract performance is nominated. Certainly, the company must lodge regular reports, and contractual discussions are undertaken on a regular basis. The PTB engages inspectors. There is public feedback, which I can tell the honourable member, in public transport, is always active. If someone—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: —and blunt—is not happy generally one hears about it loud, clear and immediately. I indicated earlier that there are provisions in the contracts for penalty payments for missed trips and the like, and equally there are benefits for increases in patronage, which there have been. I have been advised that, in recent times, the PTB has purchased emergency mobile ramps for bus

operators because there has been some difficulty with the functioning of the electronic ramps from the middle entrance to the bus. In terms of the new buses, I think that there is to be front access, not middle door access and—

Mr Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, front door access. It will be a fold-down manual ramp, which I have seen operating in other states and which I am told is fail proof. It functions without difficulty, so that an operator can not only promise but also deliver an accessible service. We tested these ramps and the middle door electronic access ramps with the disabled community widely. We should have trialled them on unkerbed roads, hillsides and a range of other areas because they are sometimes temperamental when conditions are not perfect in terms of the right height for the kerb.

It is also difficult for bus operators often to get right into and square onto the kerb for these ramps because many selfish motorists do not give consideration to bus drivers and passengers. There is a range of reasons why it has been frustrating in other than ideal conditions for these ramps to operate. We are opting for front door, manual operated flip ramps so that the bus driver does not need to leave their seat if there are difficulties with the middle door because, for safety and security reasons, we do not want the bus driver to leave either the till or the bus unattended. If it can all be done from the front door, the drivers can attend to the passengers, undertake all their other responsibilities and not leave the bus unattended.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no further questions. Is it the committee's wish to allow the member for Stuart to ask a question?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Stuart.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Minister, as you would be aware, as would the Passenger Transport Board, unfortunately it appears that, with respect to the Adelaide, Port Augusta and Leigh Creek air service, the Port Augusta-Leigh Creek service is about to cease due to lack of patronage. Can the minister give any information about any action that may be possible to assist the operator of the mine, the community and the airline operator with a view to maintaining at least some air service to that part of the state?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Air Services South Australia did advise Transport SA some weeks ago that, as a result of fuel prices and other matters, it had become uneconomical for it to operate, and I think that I was able immediately to provide that advice to the honourable member. I indicated at that time that I would ask the PTB to investigate whether there was a way in which we could look at resurrecting the bus service to the area because of tourism interests, the Aboriginal community and a variety of matters. Premier Roadlines has been approached. That company ceased to operate its service to that area some years ago when there was an average of only two passengers per trip and it was completely uneconomical.

I am advised by the PTB that Premier Roadlines and the PTB have not received any inquiries for travel to Leigh Creek in more recent times, or since Airlines of South Australia indicated either that it intended to abandon the service or that it had ceased operating the service. I would say to the honourable member that this issue of regional airlines is a big problem for this state. Some of the costs are almost out of the reach of most budgets. It is a big impediment for people living in regional areas and it is certainly an impediment for tourism and access. However, if the government were to

support a subsidy arrangement to Leigh Creek it would be inundated across South Australia, and for good reason.

We receive constant calls for some sort of support for the Port Lincoln area and further to Ceduna. It is a vexed question and I share the honourable member's worry about the issue of fuel prices, which has turned some marginal operations into unprofitable operations.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Will the minister advise the committee whether the Passenger Transport Board, or other officers of her department, have been investigating the possibility of preventing people having kangaroo bars on their vehicles? This is a vexed question in rural areas and, from time to time, perhaps well meaning but misguided people talk on the radio—

Mr ATKINSON: I have heard that there are many.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I repeat: well meaning but misguided people talk on the radio and want to ban or restrict the use of these particular safety devices on vehicles. Could the minister assure the committee that neither she nor the Passenger Transport Board have such plans?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: No; this is a lateral thinking question. It is a creative question under the Passenger Transport Board line. This matter just highlights the difference in issues and perceptions between country South Australia and the metropolitan area. In terms of pedestrian deaths on our roads, there is no doubt that the fitting of bull bars and oversized bull bars to the vehicles of many people who live in the metropolitan area in their comfort zones in the eastern suburbs is just unreal in terms of what is needed for protection of those vehicles in the metropolitan area. In the country, bull bars fitted to vehicles are an absolute matter of life and death, yet we also know that the bull bars have been the reason for pedestrians who are hit dying rather than surviving.

Across Australia investigations are being undertaken by Standards Australia to look at this issue of the fitting of bull bars and whether they can be lighter and whether they can be made of a different type of material. The same issue applies, I understand, to fishing rod holders and other obstacles that protrude from a vehicle. I certainly can undertake to the honourable member that I and the government have no plan to ban the fitting of bull bars to vehicles, but we are looking at standards in terms of bull bars for new vehicles—not retrospectively applied but for new vehicles.

We are undertaking that exercise as part of a nationwide project knowing that New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland have already adopted some bull bar standards. Those states have large outback areas and would share the honourable member's and his constituents' concerns. I think that those standards may be relevant to consideration in South Australia and nationally.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Will the minister advise whether the Passenger Transport Board has any plans to allow its inspectors to have unlimited powers? The minister is aware of my concern about the attitude and activities of inspectors. Can she give me an assurance that these people's role is not to make life as difficult as they possibly can for citizens who are at a grave disadvantage when issued with an on-the-spot fine or a summons by any government department.

I think it is appropriate that we have on the public record—and I am aware of the minister's attitude as it is on the public record—the aim of the inspectors. The minister would be aware of the most unfortunate action that took place concerning an innocent constituent of mine who was nearly the victim of an outrage. I raise the matter because it is

appropriate that everyone in South Australia should be aware of the attitude of these people and the rights that they have to protect themselves against excessive and arrogant use.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I think it is an omnibus question, both in terms of relevance to the portfolios and the issue at large. I am aware that the honourable member has difficulty from time to time, as do his constituents, with the role of inspectors. My understanding is that no PTB inspectors operate outside the metropolitan area, so he can at least be relieved that they will not worry him.

In terms of Transport SA inspectors, they have an important role to undertake. The manner in which they undertake that role may be an issue from time to time, and the inspectors generally have been alerted by me to your concerns. They issue warnings and do a number of things to work with the general community. What I think has to be recognised here—and I cannot speak on behalf of every inspector and their behaviour in every instance—is that they play an important role in trying to work with the people who generally seek to work within the law.

The law is there for various reasons: in terms of weights, measures and masses on the road it is there to make sure that heavy vehicle drivers do not do what they wish with any truck or with any load size at any time and tear up the roads. Generally a rural community would wish to see roads in good repair, and our inspectors have a job to make sure that we can support that community wish. That is the general role.

In addition, there are responsibilities for inspection of vehicles with defects. Sometimes they can be over conscientious: I accept that. Generally, we are trying to understand the sensitivities of rural constituents to over-conscientious inspectors and work around that. The honourable member I think will find that sometimes there are people whom he upsets as well, and sometimes inspectors might upset some people. That does not mean that you are a bad person or that they are either.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I understand that I upset some people, and probably also the minister from time to time. I thank the minister for her comments—

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: And at least for her honesty. Even if you do upset me from time to time, generally you are okay.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Huxley, Acting General Manager, TransAdelaide.
Mr J. Sandford, Manager, Rail Services, TransAdelaide.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: My opening comments in relation to this area are as follows:

Following a restructure of the organisation last year, I announced in December 2000 that TransAdelaide has been awarded a five year contract for the provision of rail and tram services in the Adelaide metropolitan area, with the option to renew for a further five years based on performance. TransAdelaide is now energetically concentrating on ensuring it is a robust, cost competitive and customer focussed organisation for the provision of rail and tram services in Adelaide.

During 2000-2001 there has been an increased emphasis on safety and security. The implementation of ticket checks at the Adelaide Railway Station, the provision of a passenger service assistant and a security guard on trains after 7 p.m., together with improved lighting and security surveillance at SAFER stations has led to increased rail and tram patronage and a marked reduction in petty vandalism. Patronage to the end of May 2001 for trains and trams was 6.7 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively, with a significant increase gained on night time services.

TransAdelaide has now commenced planning for the second round of SAFER stations—plus other measures to improve the

comfort of passengers—ranging from the refurbishment of railcars and trams to re-sleepering of the Outer Harbor line. Other major capital projects planned for 2001-2002 include phase one of the replacement of TransAdelaide's computerised Central Train Control System—\$8 million over the next two years—and an investigation into private financing arrangements for the trams on the Glenelg line.

In addition, new train and tram services will commence from 8 July 2001—including an extra 86 train trips—as part of the Government's reinvestment of the bus contracts savings back into public transport services. All further service frequency improvements are dependent on rostering and timetable updates, which in turn rely on the outcome of the current enterprise bargaining negotiations.

Overall, TransAdelaide is committed to providing improved train and tram services—as part of the Government's agenda to increase patronage across Adelaide's public transport network.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: My question relates to the Estimates Statement, page 9, and concerns redeployees. What is the present total of former TransAdelaide workers currently on the redeployment list? I appreciate that these redeployees are no longer on TransAdelaide's books. What was the cost of managing this redeployment program during 2000-01? What is the projected cost across government for 2001-02? Of the workers who have been redeployed, how many have been relocated to permanent long-term positions and how many have gone to temporary positions of employment?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I know the shadow minister for transport recently asked me the last question in the Legislative Council. The reply has been prepared and I think is on the way. I do not have a copy of that with me at the moment, but I will check that out in terms of that information.

The redeployee costs were taken into account by Treasury when it assessed the whole-of-government costs and savings arising from the bus contracting and competitive tendering process. As I say, this is only one component of costs and savings overall which realised average savings of \$7 million a year. The original redeployee cost estimate was \$8.3 million. The actual cost is less than that, but I do not have that figure with me. I know it is less because we have fewer redeployees than estimated by Treasury when it conducted its initial calculations. Therefore, our redeployee costs are less.

For the benefit of all members I will incorporate in *Hansard* a statistical table outlining the number of TransAdelaide redeployees, full-time equivalents from the bus business, the Treasury estimates as at 23 April 2000, and the calculated 20 per cent reduction every year to 30 June.

TransAdelaide Redeploys (FTE) Bus Business

	23 April 2000	30 June 2001	Jan 2001	11 April 2001	19 June 2000	30 June 2001	30 June 2002
Treasury Estimates	1126.63	226				180	144
Actual		226	189	114.6	99		

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I highlight that as of yesterday's date (because this was a predictable question) we had 99 full-time equivalent bus redeployees, and Treasury's estimate for 30 June 2001 was in fact almost double that, being 180. We are well under what Treasury calculated it would be for 30 June, so therefore our redeployee costs and costs generally are greater than the estimates.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: So you will provide the rest of that answer on notice?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: My second question relates to the Baulderstone Hornibrook proposal. I refer to Estimates Statement, page 9 and the proposal for the redevelopment of light rail electrification. On what basis did the government reject the proposal, and will the minister table the government's response to the company? Secondly, has the government investigated the cost of the anticipated electrification of the light rail system and, if so, what are the estimates?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Hornibrook Baulderstone have seen me and I think they have also met with Mr O'Loughlin and possibly the Premier and others. They would like the state government to hand over the rail system to them—not the private sector generally, just to them. I told the Premier no. The contract is with TransAdelaide, between PTB and TransAdelaide, for the operation of the rail and tram system in the metropolitan area of Adelaide. It is a five year contract with a five year right of renewal, and I do not intend to be in breach of the contractual terms, although there are bases for the parties to pull out.

I think people should be made aware of the bid as presented to me on the table. It would be handing the assets and also the fare structure to Hornibrook Baulderstone, as I recall. We have an integrated fare structure which is a very

important part of our public transport system here, and I do not intend to abandon that.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The Premier generally listens to me and sometimes agrees—more so than some ministers tell me that he agrees with them.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I refer you to the TransAdelaide contractual arrangement with Goninan and Co. Ltd for the provision of rail car maintenance and related services. I understand that the contract commenced on 23 April 2000 for three years with the annual right of renewal for four years. I refer to page 19 of the 2000 annual report. Will the minister provide a report on the contract performance to date, and will she detail the contract performance criteria?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Perhaps Mr Huxley may wish to address those questions. Although he was not acting general manager at the time, the board approved the contract.

Mr HUXLEY: The 12 months is now up for the contract, so it is subject to a review. As part of the post implementation review, we have engaged KPMG to advise us as part of our internal audit, to look at the performance of the review and how it performed over the 12 months. We are still waiting for that review and the board will be looking at that in July. At this stage I do not know the outcome.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: In the meantime, I know that Goninan and Co. were uncomfortable about the cleaning aspects of the contract and employed a new cleaner from December. Generally our customers and TransAdelaide management have been much happier. Generally everybody is delighted with the Goninan refurbishment of five of the rail cars. There are to be eight refurbished, but the quality of the work is particularly good there. Mr Huxley has more to add.

Mr HUXLEY: There are monthly reliability meetings and there are a number of performance measures they have to comply with each month and we do a regular audit of them.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements volume 2, page 7.14.

Mr ATKINSON: Are you sure you have not asked that one?

Mr SCALZI: No, I have not asked this one. If the honourable member started to concentrate instead of trying to pick up things that fall off a truck, perhaps we would get on with it. Further to the minister's opening statement with regard to the five year contract negotiated with the Passenger Transport Board and TransAdelaide for the provision of rail and tram services, what measures have been established to monitor the performance of the contract and to assess the option to extend the contract for a further five years?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am pleased to advise in response to the honourable member's question that the five year agreement was entered into by TransAdelaide and the PTB on 21 December. It was backdated to commence from 24 April 2000 with an option to renew based on performance for a further five year term expiring 24 April 2010. The renewal is subject to TransAdelaide meeting the renewal performance benchmark test. For automatic renewal TransAdelaide needs to achieve 10 out of a total of 12 of the performance benchmarks for each of the 12 months prior to TransAdelaide issuing a renewal notice. I am told that, during the term of the contract, if TransAdelaide achieves less than nine of the 12 performance benchmarks, the Passenger—

Mr ATKINSON: Fewer!

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am not sure whether it is a legal term because it is taken from the contract.

Mr ATKINSON: If it is in the contract it is wrong.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Spence has plenty of time to ask a question.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am not fussed whether it is less or fewer but, if it achieves only nine or fewer of the 12 performance benchmarks, the Passenger Transport Board may terminate the contract. For the first 12 months of the contract TransAdelaide alerted me to the fact that it achieved an average of 10 out of the 12 renewal performance benchmarks. For the past two months, in March and April 2001, TransAdelaide achieved a perfect record: 12 out of 12.

Mr SCALZI: Again I refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements volume 2, page 7.5. Recognising the average growth in patronage of 3.5 per cent across the Adelaide public transport network over the past 12 months to April 2001, what contribution have rail and tram services made to the overall increase?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There has been an increase in patronage on rail, which exceeds that of the public transport system generally, so that is why we know that the fare evasion system is working: because the average of patronage overall to the end of April was 3.5 per cent, but over the same period on trains the increase in patronage was 6.7 per cent and for tram services it was 3.1 per cent. I suggest to the honourable member that the increased fare compliance has certainly been a factor. We know in particular that we have recorded a major increase in night service patronage and, while we know we are getting new passengers, as that is the anecdotal feedback, we also know that the security guard and the PSA working those services are now collecting fares from people travelling at those times, and that is important.

It is particularly important for our train drivers and workers to know that the work they are doing is actively encouraging patrons and that that figure is being recorded, so we can more easily identify that rail is performing across the public transport sector. With the falling patronage on rail it has been hard through the validating system to justify it and for the work force to get full value from the work it has been doing. At least with correct validations we have a correct record on which to make those judgments in future.

Mr SCALZI: The ability to have bikes on trains helps patronage, and I am sure that the member for Spence would appreciate that service.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That is right.

Mr SCALZI: I am a keen cyclist myself.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I know you are a keen cyclist. The PTB and TransAdelaide have made provision for free bicycle carriage on trains other than at peak hours, and as part of the cycling strategy review this matter of free access for bicycles at all times has been raised and is now being considered by the government.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements volume 2, page 7.14. As part of the government's plan to increase service frequencies in July this year, what improvements are proposed across the rail and tram networks?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: We are proposing to introduce some 'go zones'—the high frequency zones on the tram line—so that all year round the timetable will provide for a 15 minute service Monday to Saturday, 7.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 20 minutes frequency on Sunday and public holidays. In terms of the Noarlunga centre and Gawler central lines, weekend and public holiday services will operate from key stations every half hour instead of hourly, and every week day the evening peak services on the Noarlunga centre and Gawler central line will gain additional services so that they can run approximately every 15 minutes instead of half hourly. It is these sorts of improvements to frequency that we know will be valued by customers, because that is what they tell us through their feedback and we can predict greater use with greater frequency of services.

On the Belair line, there will be additional a.m. peak services which will double the current frequency and halve the waiting time. On the Outer Harbor line, weekend services at key stations will operate on a half hourly timetable instead of hourly, but only when we have completed the re-sleepering.

Mr ATKINSON: I understand that TransAdelaide has introduced procedures to 'thoroughly examine and report upon all SPAD signals passed at danger incidents on TransAdelaide services'. Will the minister provide a report on the number and location of SPAD incidents, if any, which occurred in 2000-01, and will she detail TransAdelaide's internal procedures which are designed to avoid these potential rail catastrophes?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: This question relates to trains going through a red signal. I know that there were some incidents because of slippage and brakes. I will provide that information.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Mr Chairman, are all questions on notice required to be answered by 9 July?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Is there a penalty for not answering those questions by 9 July?

The CHAIRMAN: The standing orders request that they be answered by 9 July.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: If you are going to ask for 1 000 years of history or even 10, if we have to go to the archives—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Okay.

The CHAIRMAN: The standard procedure is that that should happen, but there are occasions when that is difficult to do, and clearly that is understood by the parliament. That completes the TransAdelaide line.

Membership:

Ms Key substituted for Mr Atkinson.

Ms Ciccarello substituted for Mr Koutsantonis.

Additional Departmental Adviser:

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

The CHAIRMAN: Does the minister wish to make an opening statement on the Office for the Status of Women?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Again, to save time and not because I am not interested in the subject, I insert my opening statement in *Hansard*, as follows:

The Budget for the Status of Women Program for 2001-02 is \$1.66 million—which includes \$502 000 allocated for the Women's Information Service and \$100 000 for the Women's Advisory Council.

Over the past year, the Office for the Status of Women has been active across government in promoting policies and programs to improve the status and well being of women in South Australia—as highlighted in the production of the annual Women's Statement 2000-01, in hosting of the Women in Business Summit last Friday, in relation to stemming domestic violence and child abuse, and overall in providing support for women when seeking information about services.

Specific activities that will be undertaken in 2001-02 include:

- Production of financial information for young women.
- Establishment of a Young Women's Standing Committee for the Women's Advisory Council.
- Expansion of a new service by the Women's Information Service providing electronic banking options for older women unfamiliar with banking technologies.
- Expansion in the delivery of information services to women in rural, remote and regional South Australia.
- Promotion of best practice models for balancing work and family, including family friendly workplace initiatives, flexible working arrangements and vacation care.
- Promotion of women for appointment to boards and committees, including from South Australia's diverse cultural groups; and
- Production of the 2001-02 Women's Statement on initiatives being pursued across government to enhance the status of women.

Women's studies Resource Centre

- A two year agreement with the Women's Studies Resource Centre Group Inc. was signed on 1 November 2000 and will remain in force until 30 June 2002.
- Support during this period will include:
 - an operating grant of \$11 500 p.a., increased from \$10 500 to cover GST
 - a library technician 1.0 FTE at ASO2, \$39 934
 - rent up to \$10 863 per annum
 - access to courier, email and technology support.
- This support is in return for services provided by the Women's Studies Resource Centre to school and TAFE institute staff and students.
- An audited statement for the year ended 30 June 2000 shows a net surplus of \$8 470.
- During contract negotiations, the group was encouraged to develop a user pays strategy to ensure that the centre has a more secure future, including contributions from the universities, which are also significant users of the resources.
- The lease for the resource centre's current premises in North Adelaide, which was due to expire on 30 June 2001, has been extended for a further 12 months.

Budget Information

1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
\$133 090	\$69 133	\$62 297	\$62 297 Indicative only

Ms KEY: I refer to Budget Paper 5, volume 2, page 7.68, and the Portfolio Statements, page 7.39. How many people are employed in the Office for the Status of Women and what are their duties and salary levels?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will ask Ms O'Loughlin to reply.

Ms O'LOUGHLIN: There are three policy officers, one executive officer on our Women's Advisory Council who does that part-time and who also looks after boards and committees, and there is a trainee.

Ms KEY: And what are their duties and salary levels?

Ms O'LOUGHLIN: I will take that question on notice.

Ms KEY: I refer to Budget Paper 5, volume 2, page 7.20 and the Portfolio Statements, page 7.39. What is the expected cost of providing the Women's Information Service's outreach services to rural, regional and remote communities during 2001-02?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will take that question on notice, but you can never spend enough on such work.

Ms KEY: I refer to the Portfolio Statements, page 7.39. What is the current caseload of complaints that is being handled by the Equal Opportunity Commission compared with 1993?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The commission does not report to me, but I will refer the honourable member's question to the Attorney and bring back a reply.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 3, appendix C, pages 1 to 10 and the Portfolio Statements, page 7.39. What is the whole-of-government cost of the preparation of The Impact of the Budget on Women and what is the overall budget impact by department on each of these initiatives?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will have to get that information. I can certainly get the publishing costs and the production costs generally. The information from the department is that it is part of its normal accounting and performance process. I am not sure whether it is separately costed; it is just part of the general work program.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 5, the Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.20. Will the minister outline the role played by the Office for the Status of Women in the staging of the businesswomen's summit last Friday and whether or not it is the government's intention to support further initiatives of this kind for women in business or generally for women in our community to canvass issues of interest?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The Office for the Status of Women initiated the inaugural Conference for Women in Business, which was held last Friday. The office previously worked with 15 businesswomen's groups to plan the conference. Because we had 15 women's groups involved with business issues in this state, I suggested to the Office for the Status of Women that we should get these groups together to show their force of numbers and strong presence to the wider business community in South Australia. I am pleased that Ms O'Loughlin and others in the office took up this suggestion so promptly. The Women in Business Conference arose from their work in gathering the full force of these women's groups together.

Ms Bedford interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Florey have a question?

Ms BEDFORD: Well, I am asking one that relates to this matter.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There was a conference fee. There were costs and sponsorship and we have not done the reconciliation yet, but if I cannot get it by 9 July I will let the member know that that is the case and provide it at a later date. Some 240 women attended and I am very keen to see that initiative in this form happen on a biannual or even annual basis, which was the buzz at the conference. The business women present gained a lot, not only in their own associations, the 15 that I talked about, but also individually to give them heart, confidence and reassurance of the work they do in the wider community.

I attended a considerable amount of time myself and it was just what I needed, the tonic I needed. There was a wonderful ambience and it highlighted the support that you gain from women, from working with them, with no offence to Mr Tim O'Loughlin and the rest. I found it personally and professionally rewarding, and I am quite confident that all present had the same feeling. It would be nice to have that reinforcement more often.

Mr SCALZI: My wife attended and she said it was a worthwhile conference. In reference to the Budget Statement, Appendix C, page 2, how many women currently serve on government boards and committees and what change has been experienced in women's membership on government boards and committees over the past year?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: During the calendar year 2000, a total of 372 women were appointed to government boards and committees. Of these, 248 were new appointments and 124 were reappointments. I am told that the Attorney-General was not the best performer on this count but that he has improved. He has had three years to achieve this, not just one, so his figures are a bit disappointing. The figure has improved from 23.5 per cent in June 1998 to 35.9 per cent on 1 April 2001. Overall, the proportion of women on government boards is 33.4 per cent and that is by far the highest in Australia.

Mr SCALZI: I have a supplementary question, and I know that the Multicultural Communities Council would have an interest in it, as would many women from diverse backgrounds. Has the Office of the Status of Women progressed an executive search to identify women from diverse cultural backgrounds to serve on government boards and committees?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, it has. This executive search was commissioned by the Office of the Status of Women. I understand that a final report will be provided to me and to ministers generally in terms of appointment positions in July, which is good. I thank Mr McSporran for the advice in terms of women on government boards that, overall, some 1 270 government board and committee positions are held by women.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.22. Has the Women's Information Service experienced an increase in the number of women using the service in the last year, either by visiting the shopfront or by telephone contact?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Mr O'Loughlin has provided me with the advice and the answer is yes. The Women's Information Service predicted an overall increase of 7 per cent but actually achieved a 12 per cent increase.

Mr SCALZI: Along with all government achievements.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, which is fantastic to see. I acknowledge that the number of women who have

visited the shopfront in Station Arcade has risen by 14 per cent from 22 633 to 25 852; telephone inquiries rose by 6 per cent from 7 576 to 8 022; and there was a 40.5 per cent increase in inquiries from women in rural areas. The most dramatic rise, although I do not know from what base but it must have been low to achieve this figure, was 169 per cent in the number of women who contacted the service by email. It is great that they are doing so. It has been just a bewilderingly wonderful success seeing the Women's Information Service work from the shopfront at Station Arcade and I get great pleasure morning and night when I leave the office to see women of all ages and colour using all the equipment and the service generally, and increasingly seeing some men do so also.

Ms CICCARELLO: Following feedback from women about providing public transport and wanting the provision of safe, affordable and accessible transport, several steps have been taken in order to realise this, including surveillance cameras, mobile phones, ticket barriers and providing extra staff on TransAdelaide services. Can you tell us what is the overall budget cost of the safety measures in public transport?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will have to get that figure for the honourable member.

Ms CICCARELLO: I refer to Budget Paper 3, appendix C, pages 1-10, and Human Services, Portfolio Statements, page 7.39. It is stated that women with mental illness will benefit from the \$2 million provided to implement the recommendations of the mental health review. What specific recommendations relate to women and how much has the Department of Human Services allocated in that area?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That is a good series of questions. Again, I do not have that to hand but I will follow up promptly.

Ms BEDFORD: I refer to Budget Paper 5, appendix C, and Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.39. What is the cost of production of the Women's Statement—yet another glossy advertising project by and for the government—and what is the cost of preparing the whole-of-government initiatives to enhance the status of women?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I must have been given advance notice of the member's questions, because when I answered the last question I thought that I was answering this question. I will have to go back and sort out *Hansard*, I think, in terms of working out what I said before and what I should have said in answer to this question.

Ms BEDFORD: They insist on an answer at this point.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That is why I am going to work it out.

Ms BEDFORD: I refer to Budget Paper 3, appendix C pages 1-10, Education, Training and Employment, and Portfolio Statements page 7.39. How much has been provided in equity grants focusing on areas in which women have traditionally been under-represented and in which there are considered to be good employment opportunities, and will the minister outline these good employment areas?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will take that question on notice.

Mr McEWEN: I have taken the time to read appendix C, Impact of the Budget on Women, and I note that the minister talks about the focus on young women—obviously, our future leaders. Will the minister tell us a little more about how we will involve young women and develop their leadership skills?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: This, clearly, is an important issue—in fact, all young people in South Australia

are an important issue, as we seek to ensure that we do not become an old person's society. I am very keen to see the Office for the Status of Women—and, generally, women's activities—focussing increasingly on younger women, and seeking deliberately to hear what they say and what they need in terms of their staying in South Australia in the longer term.

The Office for the Status of Women is supporting the Women's Advisory Council to establish a focus on financial independence for young women. A lot of work has been undertaken over the past year to see how young women gain their information. It is not, as one would traditionally believe, through the printed papers—although I see that the *Advertiser* is working pretty hard to try to build up its readership amongst young women—but, increasingly, it is through the internet and information cards. We plan, on the advice of young women, to use the means that they tell us in terms of providing the information that they need.

We will begin in terms of financial independence, because it is really quite alarming how low any financial issue is on their agenda (other than spending). If they want to start a business or in some way provide for themselves—for example, whether they want to build a house or pay rent—in terms of their security and peace of mind in the long term, they should start at a younger age (and I think from school age) to gain a greater understanding of the value of saving money, expenditure and investments.

Ms BEDFORD: I refer to Budget Paper 3, appendix C, pages 1 to 10, Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts, and Portfolio Statements page 7.39. Under Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts, what measures has the government undertaken to encourage women's involvement in decisions about the built environment and urban design and nominated urban regeneration projects?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: We have undertaken a number of things. We have certainly increased the number of women on our advisory and decision-making panels through planning. In terms of DEPAC (the Development Policy Advisory Committee) and the Development Assessment Commission, when I first became minister some three years ago I do not think there was a woman on either of those panels—we may have had one out of 15 members. That situation has changed within three years, and today there is a gender balance, and I am pleased about that. We do not have enough women in Planning SA—in fact, there is a paucity of women in senior positions.

I can assure the honourable member that, in terms of consultations about urban regeneration and other planning matters at local community level, we must engage more women more often, because women do tend to use the community, the services and the local environment much more than men. Therefore, their input must be actively sought to ensure that our planning and communities work for the benefit of women. I find it interesting that, whether it is the housing association or most other bodies that make decisions about the built form and the urban environment, those decisions are made by men, and we just have to change that.

Ms BEDFORD: Sir, I have a supplementary question. What sort of emphasis is being placed on indigenous women participating in such a fashion?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The first step has definitely been just to engage women without worrying about cultural background or age. That has been the first focus. We have not deliberately gone out, as far as I understand it, to be specific about Italian, Greek, indigenous, and so on. We have just—

Ms CICCARELLO: Is it skills-based selection for the panels?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, it is definitely skills based, because it is defined in the act what categories of skills base—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: And competency based. The act defines the category of interest, and I must provide the category of interest for the recommendation of cabinet and to the Governor. When one looks, one will see that there are women there: it is just that people have not looked very hard in the past.

Ms BEDFORD: I refer to Budget Paper 3, appendix C, pages 1 to 10, Premier and Cabinet, and Portfolio Statements page 739. Women represent only 20 per cent of employees in the Public Service at senior management level. Budget statistics indicate that OCEP funded places for leadership development will be allocated to both males and females, with an intention to distribute 50 per cent of places to females. What is the total amount of funding that has been allocated, and what is the target of increased participation of women by 2002?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will have to obtain that information for the honourable member.

Ms KEY: I refer to Portfolio Statements, page 7.39. What proportion of the minister's time, and that of her staff, was spent on dealing with the saga of the prostitution bill—I imagine it would be quite an amount of time? Does the minister believe that the failure of the bill will adversely affect women working in the industry? How does the government propose to deal with this adverse effect, since it seems to be impossible to pass any prostitution reform bill in this state?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I spent countless hours last year and this year—and possibly earlier—working with government ministers on the preparation of the four bills that were introduced to the House of Assembly, and I thought that considerable care was taken in the debate in the other place. I would not be encouraging the government at this stage to advance another bill or bills because, although it is a conscience vote, when you look at government members and the way they voted, I do not think I would waste my time suggesting such a course of action until after the next election.

I still feel raw about the experience of the outcome of that vote and I must say I have a tough hide. Over the years you develop it, but I have not fully recovered from that experience. In terms of my own sense of perspective, I would just like to thank the Hon. Carolyn Pickles and the Hon. Sandra Kanck in particular for being a wonderful support in a time of need.

Ms KEY: As a supplementary question, I would be interested to know whether, perhaps after the next state election, there may be a need to have some sort of forum to decide where to from here? As I said in my question, those workers in the industry are still vulnerable and have no advances and in some cases will probably be in a worse position. I would compliment you as the minister looking after the Office for the Status of Women on a whole lot of areas, but in particular on these bills, and make it known in this place that certainly your colleagues in the other place understood the difficulties that the three of you were under in the Council.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I think I should leave for a cigarette or something before I say something I might

regret. It was a watershed for me and I had not anticipated that. What happens to you in politics, particularly in a job that is demanding—it is demanding and I do put my heart and soul into it—is that sometimes you develop a thick skin deliberately to let you move on. You cannot dwell, because there is just so much asked of you. You move on.

Sometimes you need something as sobering and emotional as a prostitution debate to really get you back on the streets yourself (no pun intended), in a sense, to mix it, because you can lose it. You are so busy trying to do everything and be something to everybody that you forget what might have driven you into parliament in the first place, and that is respect and representation for people. There are so many other demands, you sometimes forget that.

It was a watershed for me. As uncomfortable as the subject may be for many people, I would like to think that the last debate will see us rethink what should be done for a group of people in our community whom I think we have made more vulnerable as an outcome of our consideration of this issue, and that makes it very distressing.

The CHAIRMAN: Whilst I will not be here in the next session, I hope that you will be encouraged by many of us to continue your work in this area.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Ms K. Massey, Executive Director, Arts SA.
Ms C. Treloar, Director, Arts Industry Development.
Mr J. Andary, Director, Lead Agencies and Planning.
Mr G. Kling, Manager, Budget and Financial Planning.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I should also acknowledge Mr Chris McSporran, Manager, Portfolio Finance, Department of Transport and Planning of the Arts. I have just learnt that he is about to head to Treasury. I hope that he will not give away all my secrets, but that he might gain some to feed back at some later stage. I think that Treasury is trying to tap him. As I have made it my practice today, rather than read it in, I will incorporate my opening statement for Arts SA 2001-02.

2001-02 is the second year of Arts+ 2000-2005—the government's five-year strategy for investing in the arts and South Australian artists.

Funding for the arts in 2001-02 will be \$89.4 million. This figure includes capital items which vary from year to year, as well as a provision for accrual items such as provision for employee entitlements—an amount of \$10.8 million in 2001-02.

Since the government was elected in December 1993, more than \$70 million has been spent on capital works (an average of more than \$10 million per annum), and a further \$55 million is committed to capital works between now and 2003. This commitment meets our 1993 and 1997 arts policy undertakings to redevelop all the state's cultural institutions along North Terrace by 2004. Currently, the \$41.2 million redevelopment of the State Library is underway. A further \$12.5 million is committed to redevelopment of the Festival Centre.

In the forthcoming financial year the government will invest \$2 million to substantially upgrade the Natural Sciences building at the SA Museum. This investment complements the government's decision this year to provide \$1.2 million over the next three years to fund six new research positions at the Museum—and overall is designed to establish the Museum as a world class research institution.

Next financial year, the government will also invest a further \$750 000 a year for the next three years (an extra \$2.25 million) to advance the state's audio-visual industry—as part of our Film and Audio Visual Strategy released last year—to consolidate South Australia as a national base for independent film making. Unashamedly, the government's focus is to concentrate all the new state government investment in this dynamic industry to gaining more

productions for South Australia, and in turn generating more job opportunities for our crews and artists.

Next financial year an additional \$50 000 will be provided to Country Arts SA to extend its most successful subscription series of touring performances to the Brenton Langbein Theatre at Tanunda—in addition to Mount Gambier, the Riverland, Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Lincoln. A further \$200 000 will be provided to Country Arts SA in 2001-02 (in addition to the \$200 000 this year) to establish, in partnership with local government, a network of first class regional art galleries.

The funding available for distribution to smaller arts organisations for 2001-02, through Arts SA's Industry Development Program, will be increased by \$50 000, bringing the total allocation to \$2.518 million. The allocations for 2002-03 and 2003-04 will be increased by a further \$200 000.

On top of this increased funding, the government is committed to producing an annual Arts Statement, which highlights a 'whole-of-government' program of arts activities being pursued across state government agencies and instrumentalities for the benefit of artists and the wider South Australian population.

Membership:

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

The Hon. M.D. RANN: First, I would like to deal with an issue that arose in New South Wales in February in which the Premier of New South Wales, Bob Carr, announced that the state government in that state would work with the New South Wales Jewish community to determine the history of paintings at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, which could have been amongst the 110 000 paintings stolen by the Nazis from Jewish families during the Second World War. I think that particular reference was made to nine paintings in the New South Wales art gallery where questions—

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure that the leader intends to mention one particular budget line.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Yes, absolutely; I refer to the budget line for the Art Gallery. Particular reference was made to the history of nine paintings about which the Art Gallery of New South Wales had doubtful provenance or gaps in their provenance, that is, it did not have a full list of owners, spelling out dates of purchase. The Art Gallery of New South Wales advised that, as of the end of the year 2000, from its total collection of 40 000 works, 80 fitted into the 1933 to 1945 time frame, and subsequently gallery researchers had reduced the number down to nine of doubtful provenance. Premier Carr said:

Whilst we cannot right the wrongs of the past, art galleries and governments around the world must ensure that art works looted by the Nazis from Jewish families are returned to their rightful owners.

I know that, as the minister would know, this issue affects national galleries across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom and also, of course, others in different parts of Europe. In fact, I believe that in Germany in the last couple of days there have been some discussions about provenance issues. Premier Carr announced that the Art Gallery of New South Wales would follow the example of the National Gallery of Canada by placing digital representations of disputed works on an internet site, and this enabled anyone with knowledge of a particular piece of art to contact the gallery.

I understand that in Ottawa the museum has placed 110 works with gaps in their provenance on a similar internet site. In the United Kingdom the arts minister set up a panel to investigate claims for the return of art looted by the Nazis. Apparently in Britain there are question marks surrounding more than 350 paintings and sculptures. I wonder whether the issue has been addressed in South Australia.

I think it would be important to deal with these provenance issues on a basis that was across the nation, as it is in Canada. Has the minister made any investigations? Is there a policy position by the government to return stolen art works? Is there a policy issue from either the government or the Art Gallery of South Australia relating to placing any paintings that may or may not be in dispute on an internet site? I am aware of none. However, I think that as it is being raised in jurisdictions around the world it is something that we should address here in South Australia.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am not aware of any paintings in the Art Gallery's collection that are in dispute generally, let alone in the circumstances the honourable member outlines. Certainly the chairman or director of the Art Gallery or the board as a whole have not alerted me to this. I have just checked with my office and inquiries have not been made; and again with Arts SA the issue has not been raised by any member of the Jewish community here, Australia-wide or internationally. As clearly a large amount of work has been undertaken worldwide, I think if any painting was in dispute in the Art Gallery collection we would have heard about that by now. If it ever does arise, I can assure the committee that the Art Gallery and the government would work through the issues in the manner that has been outlined by Premier Carr or other governments internationally.

It is very interesting because, whether it be the Elgin marbles or some early Aboriginal work and sacred objects that are in the British Museum and elsewhere, it raises questions about the rightful ownership of material in state or international collections. It is a vexed issue. I think it can be equally argued in those circumstances where items have been compulsorily acquired without consent. That broader issue is a vexed one.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: We are talking about stolen and looted in the context of the Holocaust by the Nazi regime. I think it would be good if the Art Gallery of South Australia, supported by the government, would diligently pursue efforts to establish the history of any art works in dispute.

My second question refers to Portfolio Statements page 7.37. I refer the minister to the \$1 million shortfall facing the Festival of Arts. Can the minister outline the state government's funding allocation to the festivals for 1998, 2000 and 2002? When did the minister first become aware of the festival's financial problems, particularly given that the advisor to the minister is a member of the board? What mechanisms, if any, has the minister put in place to ensure that similar financial failures do not recur?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Some months after the last festival the board announced that there was a shortfall. That deficit increased as a result of the last festival, but there is no shortfall now because it has been covered in a joint agreement reached between me, Arts SA and the board of the Adelaide Festival. In terms of the next festival, it has no impact on funding other than the acknowledgment of the increased funds which the festival has received for film and other activities. An agreed position has been reached in terms of festivals beyond 2002.

The member mentioned the board membership of Ms Janet Worth, who is an Arts SA employee and who was seconded to work with me as arts adviser. Ms Worth is no longer a member of the board at her own request because of perceived conflicts of interest which she would argue had no basis, and so would I. If I was going to put a package to the board to address funding situations, it seemed wise that Ms

Worth was not a member of the board. There have been other board changes as well.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: By way of supplementary question and to assist, my point is not so much about conflict of interest issues but, given that you had your arts adviser as a member of the board, when did you first become aware of the financial problems facing the festival?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: An issue was raised by the board some months after the festival and I remember a phone call I received at home from the chairman of the board two or three months ago on 21 February this year.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Obviously, there has been a great deal of concern about the Adelaide Festival Centre. Again Jamie Porter, a leading South Australian Liberal Party member, was the chair of the Adelaide Festival Centre.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: What do you mean 'again'. Are you suggesting that there is an association between the chair of the festival and the chair of the Festival Centre Trust?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: No.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am just wondering.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: If you let me finish the question, I am sure the point of clarification will emerge. I am sure that you are concerned about the blow out in the budget of the Adelaide Festival Centre, and there was a series of problems with various shows that were due to be put on and were not put on (obviously inquiries are going on currently in terms of the Economic and Finance Committee). You had Janet Worth on the committee of the Adelaide Festival of Arts. I would have thought that that was an early warning system for a minister to be aware of financial problems. You had Jamie Porter, who was chair of the Adelaide Festival Centre at a time when millions of dollars were blown away. When were you first made aware of the substantial blow out in funding, the substantial debt issues, relating to the Adelaide Festival Centre in relation to a number of shows like *Showboat* and various other shows?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I paid the estimates committee the courtesy back in 1998 of forewarning that there were issues that I had just been alerted to about the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust and productions that the trust had invested in and indicated that we would be addressing issues by public corporation status and, when the issues had been fully revealed, some funding arrangements. I find it very curious that the Labor Party members, some three years after I gave all the forewarnings to this estimates committee, now take an interest in a political way in matters which, if they were genuinely interested in the arts and the welfare of the Festival Centre, they should have quite rightly questioned at that time. It is reasonable to expect me to be completely accountable for these issues.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It is a political path they are pursuing. If there was a genuine interest in the Festival Centre Trust—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: You are cheap. He is more worried about having a cigarette than he is about the Festival Centre Trust because he is not even prepared to listen. If he was genuinely interested in the matter he would have shown some interest in the matters I raised in 1998. I highlight, too, that these matters have been fully addressed in the annual reports of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust on two occasions since then and not pursued by the shadow

minister as issues. But now he thinks he is going to find a political angle and, cheap as he is, he will take that angle.

The arts community does not see that it is a political issue: it has a genuine interest in the welfare of the Festival Centre and respects the fact that we are seeking to work through issues in a high risk business. The stakes are big. You can win through investment and you can lose through investment. These investments did not come off as they did not come off on occasions with Bannon or Levy when they were ministers for the arts during the Labor days. It is not always easy in this high risk business to pick the winners: sometimes you win and sometimes you do not. On these occasions with two productions in particular there were losses. The Festival Centre Trust is now out of that high risk end of the production business and Mr Ian Kowalick has been engaged by me and Arts SA to do some work looking at some structural and financial issues at the Festival Centre Trust, and I anticipate receiving that report from Mr Kowalick by the end of this month.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I will move onto the issue of the film corporation. I refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.25. I note the minister's decision to allocate an additional \$750 000 per year for each of the next three years to the SA Film Corporation as part of the film and audio visual strategy adopted in 2000 by the government. I understand that the benefits overall anticipated to flow from this specific investment in digital production, on top of increases in creative film funding provided to the SA Film Corporation in recent years, should provide considerable dividends to the state. Will the minister explain what is intended with that investment?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The government has undertaken a film and audio visual strategy for the state and it was adopted in the year 2000. It has been pursued by the government in two stages. For this financial year additional funding was provided and will be provided on an on-going basis—\$1.2 million for the creative development and feature film processes at the film corporation, both the script development and production investment.

This coming financial year the government will be investing the sum that the honourable member referred to, namely, a further \$750 000 for each of the next three years, and this is to branch out through the film corporation from feature film production and documentaries to more digital, multimedia based creative development of productions, including educational films, computer games and the like. We have an extraordinarily strong and able group of people in industry in South Australia who are at the leading edge in production of digital multimedia work and we want to recognise and see how we could support them to advance the creative development in South Australia and export generally. That is the basis for government support for the film industry in the broadest sense.

I highlight also that this comes on top of creative development funding of \$1 million annually provided a couple of years ago, and the \$3.5 million revolving fund investment, and they have been important in generating what is anticipated to be \$65 million this calendar year of economic development and some 463 jobs on an annual basis through our investment added to in recent years for film in the broadest sense.

Over the last two financial years the government has invested \$1.5 million in the Adelaide Festival for the production of four feature films. Peter Sellars was keen to see that this be a special component of his 2002 Festival. A case

was put to me and that funding will be delivered to the Festival. That is so because it does build on some outstanding work generated through the SA Film Corporation and our independent film sector in recent years. So, we are having a real resurgence in film production in South Australia and with pride South Australia can claim to be the base for independent film making in Australia, and we aim to keep it that way.

It is a very competitive world and the government has unashamedly in its investments in film and related activity in South Australia put all our money into production and the generation of jobs for our crews and artists. We will not be distracted in terms of other investments. I know that there are suggestions about film festivals and a whole range of things, but we will put it into jobs and build on what we have successfully generated in terms of a base for independent film making. We want ongoing work opportunities for our crews and our artists, not one-off events in terms of film.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I move to the issue of the West End and Hindley Street, and refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements volume 2 at page 7.37. I know that the government has supported the idea of the arts taking a leading role in the revitalisation of the West End. I would be interested to hear what provision has been made in the budget for that and whether there is a plan to transform the West End into a cultural district. As part of that, could the minister tell me of her position on the proposed relocation of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra from ABC Collinswood to Hindley Street? Is that something we would be supporting and providing for in the budget?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It has been fantastic to see the arts play a lead role in the revitalisation of an area of our city that was in the too-hard basket for a long time. The arts do have the most brilliant power to encourage people to see things differently and pursue issues and bring out the best in people. This is why we have used this power of the arts, working with the Adelaide City Council and the West End Association, to revitalise this end of the city. It is thrilling to see that, in addition to the Adelaide Festival and Arts SA moving into Hindley Street, there have been recent big investments by TAFE in terms of the Roma Mitchell Centre for Education in Light Square, while the University of South Australia is bringing in more students and courses from its campuses at Underdale and elsewhere to North Terrace.

Music Business House has been established at the Lion Arts Centre on North Terrace, and 38 arts organisations studios have moved into the Hindley Street area in recent years. Most of that commitment in terms of numbers has been from the private sector; in terms of dollars, I suspect that it has been from the government sector.

The announced relocation of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra from the ABC at Collinswood to the Time Zone building in Hindley Street has been strongly backed by the government. As part of the Nugent inquiry, a funding and incentive line called the Reserves Incentive Scheme to build business in the arts was promoted. That scheme is essentially to encourage major performing arts companies in Australia to build up their level of financial reserves. In South Australia, Mr O'Loughlin, the then head of Arts SA, together with other officers and me as the minister, presented strong arguments that South Australia should be considered differently in terms of the guidelines for the reserve base funding, because we did not have the head offices nor the audience base to generate the income to build up those reserves but, if we could do that through marketing and

merchandising and general positioning, we should be given credit for those initiatives.

Therefore, the move of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra from Collinswood to the city has not only been supported in emotional and passionate terms but also in financial terms with a cash flow of \$220 000 to set up the orchestra and help with removal costs. This money is to be repaid promptly by the orchestra from any matched commonwealth funding that is made available to the ASO through this Reserves Incentive Scheme.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Budget Paper 5 and the Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.37. As part of the capital works program to redevelop the Festival Centre, I note that various arts companies will have to relocate to the northern end of the Adelaide Railway Station. What works (and over what period) are proposed as part of the redevelopment of the Festival Centre including the associated works at the adjacent Adelaide Railway Station?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am pleased to outline a range of works that are scheduled for the Adelaide Festival Centre over the next 12 months. The King William Street entry and Festival Drive upgrading and alignment works are scheduled to commence in October this year and conclude in February just prior to the next Adelaide Festival. The foyer, amenities and public area upgrading works, including the new retail cafe, external lighting, signage bar and Bass spaces and the upgrading of the Festival Centre foyer generally are scheduled to commence in March 2002 just after the Festival and to be completed by June 2002. The drama centre and the western wing upgrade works including the building of a new educational room, toilet upgrading, installation of a new lift and fit-out works for staff, etc have already commenced and are due to be completed just before the next Festival in February 2002.

In the meantime, a lot of work is being done on scheduling the relocation of the various arts companies to the northern end of the Adelaide Railway Station building. That includes the State Theatre Company, the Australian Dance Theatre and the newly formed National Children's Performing Arts Company. It is expected that the renovation of the northern end of the railway station will be completed by September/October this year. Already we have started work to remove the Transit Police from that section and bring them onto the concourse opposite the ticket barrier gates at the railway station so that they have a strong visual presence in terms of safety and security measures. For that reason, they will also have operational efficiencies.

When the Transit Police move out of the northern end, the work will commence for these companies. I understand that the member for Hartley has a strong and continuing interest in this series of works because of his membership on the Public Works Committee. For the record, I would like to acknowledge the interest that he has taken in this project and his support generally.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I refer the minister to the electricity price crisis that is currently facing the state. In doing so, I acknowledge the announcement today about the whole-of-government arts strategy and the fact that it has been announced by the outgoing head of the Australia Council. I understand that some of the minister's ministerial colleagues are not quite sure what it means, but I think it is worth noting that it has been announced today by the retiring head of the Australia Council, who congratulated the minister on this whole-of-government strategy. I am sure that the minister was pleased to hear that.

I refer the minister to the electricity price crisis that is currently facing the state. Whilst there has been a great and deserved focus on the impact of the price hikes on industry, I think it is worth noting that the state's flagship arts organisations are also suffering financially. I understand that the Museum, the Art Gallery and other cultural institutions in the city are among the top 10 consumers of electricity in the CBD even though the government has received a favourable deal (it claims) from AGL compared to South Australian industry. Certainly there is a great deal of anger from industry about this. Government agencies still face increases of about \$6 million each year over the next five years. At the same time, these organisations are also being hit by the impact of the GST.

Will the minister say whether all agencies within the arts portfolio are amongst the state government sites negotiated by the government with AGL for the supply of electricity or do they have to make separate arrangements, and what is the quantum of each? Will the cost of the operation of the agencies under the arts portfolio rise during each of the next five years, and will these additional costs be met by cuts to existing programs or agencies?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The honourable member said that the Art Gallery, the Museum and the like have been hit by the GST. They do not pay the GST, so I would like to correct that point in terms of the honourable member's statement. To suggest that they have been hit by the GST and on top of that have electricity payment issues is not correct.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The minister just said that there was no GST, then her adviser told her that they do pay the GST on normal transactions. I was not talking about abnormal transactions. Is the minister in control or not? I know that she is embarrassed about the blow-out in the Festival Centre Trust and appears to have confidence in Jamie Porter—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warned members earlier today—

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Seriously, the minister should know—

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am not embarrassed about the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust. I have been upfront since 1998. The embarrassment is yours, the fact that it has taken you three years to understand the issue and, when you wish to understand it, it is in political terms and not in terms of respect for the art form or the risks that this major arts organisation has to understand. The board and the management are aware of your interest and the grubby nature of it.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Did you say—

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: No, what did you say about the management?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Did you say that they want to be changed? Is that what you said? It is outrageous that you are attributing political motives to the board, you said about grubby political matters—

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I said they understand your belated interest in this and so does the management and, as I say, it is a grubby interest.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I look forward to meeting with them after the election.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: What do you wish to do now?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I look forward to meeting them after the election. Do you understand that?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I understand when you take your free tickets to the functions that you do meet and talk with them.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: And so do you.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I pay subscriptions. The honourable member talked about electricity charges.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It is a pantomime when you see Mr Rann perform. In terms of electricity charges, the government has already indicated coverage for health and education services, and there has been a statement by the Treasurer that the cabinet will be considering whole of government impacts shortly. As part of that process Arts SA-funded organisations and the gallery and other state institutions will be considered.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I have a supplementary question. We have just had an announcement about an all of government deal with AGL in terms of electricity prices. I asked the minister whether the cultural institutions, including the museum, Art Gallery and other cultural institutions in the city, which are amongst the top 10 consumers of electricity, are part of that deal with AGL or whether they have to go their own ways.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: As the honourable member should know, they are instrumentalities of Arts SA. They are set up as public servants and they report through Arts SA so, therefore, I made the statement that any impact on the agencies, and I added the Art Gallery and the museum, would be considered by the government in about two weeks. That means that I have well and truly answered the honourable member's question.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Going back to the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust and the Adelaide Festival Centre, there has been considerable concern among the second tier performing arts companies that the hiring charges for the Adelaide Festival Centre and its various performing areas are too expensive and, although this issue is clearly wrapped up in the bigger issue of debt, can the minister say whether the centre is re-examining its hire charge rates? I wonder whether the minister, for the record, could say what she said before about Ian Kowalick's consultancy, which I understand she said was about \$30 000. I understand that he has completed his report and made recommendations. What are those recommendations?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Your understanding is wrong. The report has not been completed, nor have I received it. I can assure the honourable member that the Festival Centre is one of the lowest charging venues in the country for comparable facilities and, from time to time, on the basis of the case put to it, it waives fees or reduces fees, but its actual rental fee structure is one of the lowest in the country.

It has big overheads because we ask a lot of it in a whole range of ways, from the programming activities to general maintenance and management. The honourable member should think with some care about these issues, because providing more funds to the Festival Centre might lead it to subsidise its operations and thus subsidise the companies, and it may be that these companies should be and are most properly using other venues, although I have been particularly pleased to note in more recent times the agreements reached by the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, independent theatre and others, so an increasing number of our arts organisations are utilising the wonderful facilities at the Adelaide Festival Centre. It may

definitely not be appropriate, irrespective of cost, for all arts organisations to do so.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: There has been some speculation about the possibility of the Festival of Ideas becoming an annual event and an announcement may be made at the opening of the Festival of Ideas next month, particularly following the success of the inaugural event, which I am sure the minister would agree with me was an outstanding success. Is the government prepared to provide financial support for an annual event and, if so, what would that be? In explaining that, can the minister tell us how much funding the Festival of Ideas received from Australian Major Events for the first event and how much it will receive for the 2001 event?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will have to seek from the Adelaide Festival, which is responsible for the operation of the Festival of Ideas, its budget and sponsorship and whether it was from Australian Major Events or other sources. The Festival of Ideas was an outstanding success and I took up with the advisory committee and the Adelaide Festival board the possibility of an annual festival and what issues would be associated with it. At that time, the very strong and unanimous view of the advisory committee, headed by Greg Mackie, through his recommendation to the board, was that it be a biennial festival and, at this stage, that is the government's intention. That is noted in the government's Arts+ document, our investing strategy for arts and artists to 2005.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to the Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.27. I understand that, following government commitment to allocate \$500 000 this financial year to the Adelaide Festival Centre for the staging of the inaugural Cabaret Festival, the minister has since announced a continuation of this funding base. Why is this so and what terms if any have been attached to the extra funding?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: This Cabaret Festival came about for a number of reasons: a wish by the government to support extra programming activities at the Adelaide Festival Centre; a further enthusiasm by the government to see audience building generally for the arts; and an idea put to me by Mr Frank Ford that there should be some consideration by government of support for cabaret generally, as Australians traditionally had been strong, and were again very strong, in cabaret (and that was obvious from the acclaim that artists were receiving around the world), but that we were not celebrating their skills and their success in the form of a cabaret and festival anywhere in Australia, and South Australia could take the initiative in this matter.

For all those reasons, the government invested \$500 000 in the Cabaret Festival through the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust this financial year, and it was a fantastic success. There were some 40 000 attendees. The box office target was reached halfway through the festival. I am informed informally that the final box office income was \$634 000. Some splits will have to be owed to presenters, and shortly I will be receiving final figures. It was a punt, prior to receiving final figures, for government to invest a further \$500 000 in the presentation of an annual Cabaret Festival, but there were reasons for doing so.

One reason was the enthusiasm of sponsors. We wanted to be able to say to sponsors, 'This was not just a one-off activity. You have really enjoyed this. Come on board and support us for the next three years,' and we could extract a better deal and larger sums of support from sponsors if we struck immediately at the conclusion of the festival. Secondly, artists just had the best time. They loved the audiences, the

theatre space, the attention they gained through the media and their support of each other, and it was important to get their commitment, in many instances, to return to future festivals. We were able to do so if we again struck quickly, and we did.

However, in providing further funding for the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust for the Cabaret Festival to be held annually until 2034, there are conditions attached. There is a strong sponsorship incentive component, and I have advised the Festival Centre Trust that it is able to use this \$500 000 to leverage sponsorship for the Cabaret Festival and, in return, retain all the government funding offset by sponsorship for other creative programming arts activities at the centre at other times of the year. So, out of that \$500 000, if it can gain a lot more sponsorship it can use the balance for other creative programming at the arts centre. I also advise that Mr Frank Ford has agreed to continue as chair of the advisory committee, and I think that is great news also.

Mr SCALZI: I ask the next question on behalf of some of the country members also, with reference to country arts subscription seasons. I refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.26. Whilst I applaud the government for its strong focus on increasing arts activities in country South Australia, both in terms of touring exhibitions and performances and increasing opportunities for participation generally (and that has been relayed to me by the country members), will the minister outline the progress made by Country Arts SA in promoting its subscription series at various performing arts venues across South Australia?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Country Arts is supported by the South Australian government for this subscription series, which was initiated about three years ago and which is the only subscription series of touring performances offered in any state or territory in Australia. At the current time, the total number of subscribers is 1 145, compared to 751 in the year 2000. This increased figure includes 225 new subscribers for the Port Lincoln Theatre season, which began this year. The government invested some \$80 000 in launching an extension of that series to Port Lincoln. It is thrilling to think that this government's emphasis on support for Country Arts and participation by country people in arts activities has now seen attendances at our regional theatre performances climb to 13 900.

This figure will climb further and break the 14 000 mark when we see, from the start of next year, the touring season extended to the Barossa Valley, with the use of the theatre facilities at the Brenton Langbein Theatre at Tanunda. Interestingly, that theatre has seating for 800, compared to the 500 that we have at our regional theatres in Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Whyalla and the Riverland. So, next financial year the government is investing \$50 000 to extend the season to the Barossa Valley, and that figure will increase to \$80 000 for the full subscription series in 2002-03.

Mr SCALZI: Sir, I have a supplementary question. No doubt, the minister is aware, from recent press reports, of the difficulties faced by performing arts companies nationally in selling subscription tickets. Is the State Theatre Company experiencing similar difficulties with its current subscription series?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I am told that the State Theatre Company subscription series of plays for 2001 has been a phenomenal success and has attracted a record number of subscribers. The subscribers for this year have reached 4 201, which is the highest number since 1991, when John Gaden was artistic director. So, it is an enormous compliment to Rosalba Clemente, as artistic director, the management

team and the board. I understand that that figure is about 53 off the highest subscription number ever, which was in about 1986, the second highest being the John Gaden season in 1991. So, we are up there, and only a small number is needed to break the barrier for all time.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, I am sure.

Mr SCALZI: All the fair-weather arts supporters.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, I am sure that that is so.

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

Mr SCALZI: At least we don't pussyfoot around. I now refer to the South Australian Museum (Budget Paper 6, Capital Investment Statement, page 23). Further to the minister's tabled opening statement, will the minister outline the government's decision to invest \$2 million to upgrade the Natural Sciences Building in the South Australian Museum next financial year, and the importance of this development in the context of the government's overall commitment to upgrade all the state's cultural institutions along North Terrace by 2004? Again, as a member of the Public Works Committee, I have seen the upgrade that has taken place in the museum—and many members were at the opening this year.

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There is no charge; I am sure that the honourable member could drop in when she is riding by.

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Good.

Mr SCALZI: Minister, could you elaborate on the \$2 million upgrade of the Natural Sciences Building?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes. The government commitment was to invest in the redevelopment of state cultural institutions along North Terrace: the Art Gallery, the Museum and the State Library. We had years of Labor neglect to catch up and we have. They have been difficult times.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That is right. For me it has been fantastic to see the Art Gallery—all three stages—advanced by this government: the Museum front of house (the special provisions made for the Mawson Antarctic Collection and, in particular, the Australian Aboriginal Cultures Collection); and the start of the redevelopment of the State Library, which is under way now with the earthquake remedial work already in progress on the Jervis wing. To augment all of that major work we are now going behind the scenes at the Museum and upgrading the Natural Sciences Building.

Way back in 1979, when I was working for Murray Hill, the then Minister for the Arts, this development was advanced as part of the proposed upgrade of the Museum. The Natural Sciences Building was built. Labor then abandoned the whole scheme for the upgrade of the Museum. It has been fantastic for me to be a part of keeping faith with the Museum, the staff and the wider public. This \$2 million exercise, as I say, develops back of house in terms of opening up to the public access to the extraordinary collections which we have there and which are little heard about or appreciated.

This year the government has provided some \$390 000 per annum for the engagement of six world-class scientists to work at the Museum on areas of special activity—DNA and the like—to see how we can promote the research and development value of those collections for scientific pursuits

and possibly for parasitology, a range of academic interests, as well as some that may have profound effect through DNA work and research in the future.

This \$2 million investment is very much promotion of the South Australian Museum—front and now back of house—as a world-class facility to ‘unashamedly’ exploit the value we have in gaining Dr Tim Flannery as Director of the Museum, his scientific expertise and, finally, to reinforce the investment overall on North Terrace with our cultural institutions. We will now see the upgrade of the road and footpath space of North Terrace commence outside of the area of our cultural institutions—not way down to the east or west of North Terrace. That work will start centrally to complement the investments already made in the cultural institutions.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I want briefly, before asking about the whole-of-government art strategy, to reflect for a moment about statements made earlier. The minister has attributed political statements to the board and management of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: No, no.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The minister said that they knew what a grubby exercise the Labor Party was involved in in questioning on this issue. Seeing \$10 million of taxpayers’ money go down the drain is legitimate reason for the Economic and Finance Committee to ask questions and for this Estimates Committee to ask questions without abuse from ministers, the board of the Festival Centre Trust or senior management. I will be contacting the board and senior management tomorrow to ask whether they stand by the political statements attributed to them under privilege by the minister today because, if they want to be involved in politics, they will be. However, I want the minister—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Hang on; I am asking her a question.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order, the minister and the leader!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Can I ask my question?

The CHAIRMAN: No, you cannot.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order, the member for Waite!

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I also remind the member for Hart that he is not a member of the committee and that if he wishes to comment he ought to be on the committee. I make it clear to the leader that this committee, and all other committees, have proceeded reasonably well without political statements. I request that that continue to be the case, otherwise I will take into my hands the position I have as chair.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In its budget submission to the Treasurer this year the Arts Industry Council called for the following:

That all government departments include in their budgets a line which is to be employed in using artists and designers. This should be accompanied by the development in each department, as each department of the state government [and presumably also agencies and statutory authorities], an arts policy which would provide guidelines for the disbursement of funds to local artists and designers.

I am aware that the Queensland government has a whole-of-government arts strategy (a similar scheme) in operation, which ensures that artists also get to benefit from capital works expenditure, and I think that something similar was also done in Western Australia. I also understand that the

Adelaide City Council is doing its bit with a ‘percentage for art’ policy. I think that its commitment is 1.3 per cent. Would the minister provide the financial contributions and details of the various projects across all portfolios of the whole-of-government arts policy, which was announced by Margaret Seares today on ABC radio? Will the minister tell us how her whole-of-government art strategy will work and detail the financial contribution across all portfolios?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: This is pathetic. Margaret Seares did not announce anything. The Arts+ statement released in June last year advised about the whole-of-government arts statement. It is common knowledge across the arts industry—but it appears to have only just registered with the shadow minister for the arts—that the inaugural statement will be released tomorrow to the arts industry, and—

An honourable member: It is old hat.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: No, it is not old hat, but the announcement of the preparation of this statement appeared in the Arts+ statement, which I released in June last—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes, I will take that on notice and provide a reply to the honourable member. Margaret Seares, not in any statement today but I appreciate her support, when she spoke to the Press Club lunch in Canberra last week, talked about this statement because she had been well briefed and had taken an active interest, as do arts people around Australia, in what South Australia is doing in terms of promotion of the arts.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: By way of a supplementary question, I guess that regional Australia has been the focus of public policy debate for many years now, and with good cause. I am concerned that the suburbs, which are just as neglected, do not become forgotten in the rush. Could the minister, in obtaining those details for us, also explain the level of expenditure proposed for 2001 and 2002 for suburban and community arts projects? Also, by way of getting back to the committee and to assist its proceeding in a cooperative way, could the minister explain how the \$10 million shortfall for the Festival Centre will be funded? Could the minister spell out how that will be funded?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There is no shortfall. An agreed position has been reached, and that was outlined in the annual reports, if the honourable member wished to read them. As I mentioned before, if you were really interested in the subject—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: That has all been outlined. As to loans and grants, I have provided that same advice. I am not too sure who tries to represent the arts in the Labor Party—perhaps it is the spokesperson in the Legislative Council—but I do invite the honourable member to refer to the annual reports, to my estimates statements of 1998 and to other advice I have given through the Legislative Council in—

Mr Foley interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: You say it is a scandal.

Mr SCALZI: On a point of order, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is a point of order.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Just be very careful before you want me to dig about the Labor Party and risk funding in the arts.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Minister, there is a point of order.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Nothing is necessarily a scandal in the arts—

The CHAIRMAN: Minister—

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW:—when it comes to high risk production.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, there is a point of order.

Mr SCALZI: Mr Chairman, the member for Hart is not part of the committee. Therefore, I consider his interjections to be out of order.

Mr Foley: I apologise, sir.

Mr SCALZI: If he is to come here, he should sit quietly like the rest.

Membership:

Mr Venning substituted for Mr McEwen.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Following this year's highly successful and always enjoyable WOMAD, there was some speculation about the event's becoming annual in order to protect it from being stolen by the eastern states. Will the minister report on the status of WOMAD and whether the festival will remain biennial or become an annual event? If so, what would be the increased cost to the government of an annual event?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There would be no cost increase necessarily to the government. There has been no proposal put to me by the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, which has the agreements with Peter Gabriel in terms of the intellectual property.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I refer to the position of Director, Projects in Arts SA. I understand that the position was advertised and Ms Worth, the minister's policy adviser, won the position. However, I believe that the minister and Ms Worth came to an arrangement whereby Ms Worth would continue to work for the minister up until the election and then presumably take up the position in the public sector. Can the minister explain or confirm the arrangements, and can the minister also confirm that the position of Contemporary Music Consultant was filled without going to tender and that the appointment was made as a permanent public service position without the appropriate processes, as is being alleged in some arts quarters?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: This is a public service appointment matter. The honourable member should know that ministers are not involved in these matters. Mr O'Loughlin may wish to comment.

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: The position of Director, Projects was subject to a normal call within the government. A number of applications were received, including one from Ms Worth, who was an employee of Arts SA. There was a competitive process and it was subject to panel recommendation and Ms Worth was the recommended candidate. Arts SA and the minister arrived at an arrangement under which Ms Worth was seconded to the minister's office prior to taking up that position. In the case of the contemporary music adviser, the position was advertised. I cannot remember the level, but it is a non-executive position. It was subject to the normal processes as well and an appointment was made.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to the Australian Children's Performing Arts Company (Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements volume 2, page 7.3). The government has announced the formation of the new Australian Children's Performing Arts Company. What are the plans for the

company, including any proposals to tour performances to regional South Australia?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The plan to launch this company and invest in it handsomely was outlined in *Arts Plus*, which I released on behalf of the government last June. It contains our long-term plan for investment in arts and artists. It should be recognised that the launch of this company is recognised Australia-wide as the first big investment in the establishment of a new company in Australia for some years, which is special in itself.

It is particularly special that the focus is on children. I have a very firm belief—which was reinforced in me some time ago by people from Sweden who said that what is good enough in terms of quality of production, venue and the like for adults should be good enough for children—that what too many kids are served up is second rate. There is the belief that young people need not have the best, but that is not a view I hold.

This company will be funded to the tune of \$1 million a year. We are now discussing possible support with the Australia Council through the theatre fund. In terms of the inaugural board, we have fantastic support from a number of most able people headed by Andrew Killey, chair of the company. Kate Fowler has been appointed creative producer and she has already taken up that position. She brings a wealth of talent and enthusiasm to this position. The recruitment of General Manager should be completed by early July 2001.

It is intended that the first production will start in July of next year and that the program of works will not only be performed in the theatres of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust but also from time to time will tour South Australia and nationally. The company will be at the northern end of the railway station together with the companies to which I referred to earlier, the State Theatre Company and the Australian Dance Theatre. I cannot emphasise more strongly the thrilling circumstances that the creation of this company provides for South Australia generally, arts in particular and kids overall.

Mr VENNING: My question is in relation to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements Volume 2, page 7.37. I note the government's five year investment plan for the arts to 2005. *Arts Plus* features a commitment to develop a 10 year plan to establish a network of regional art galleries across South Australia. I note the success of the Riddoch Art Gallery in Mount Gambier. I also know of the early discussions that you are having with the Barossa council in relation to a proposed Tanunda Art Gallery. I know that we are well advanced there and that we are still waiting on council's input. What progress has been made to date to implement this initiative?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: An amount of \$200 000 has been earmarked for the first year of this initiative. Expressions of interest have been called from councils generally. This was the case after the preparations of guidelines for funding. Ms Treloar might recall this, but I think the guidelines were prepared by Arts SA together with Country Arts.

Ms TRELOAR: The guidelines were prepared by Arts SA in conjunction with Country Arts SA.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There has been a general call, not limited by a deadline, for councils to seek, according to the guidelines, the funding that is available. There are opportunities across South Australia—in Whyalla with the remodelling of the Middleback theatre which is adjacent to the Country Arts SA theatre, and in Victor Harbor, Nara-

coorte, Burra, Murray Bridge, the Copper Coast and the Barossa council. I would strongly recommend that the Barossa council move fast because I know that there is interest from a variety of fields and it should not assume that it has the only option that we should be considering in terms of funding support.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Following on from that question about art galleries in the country, it has been my observation over recent years that you have steered your funding and focus more towards getting the arts out into the regions and the communities rather than having iconic, large companies tied to Adelaide and not really getting out there. I have been looking through the budget papers trying to find it for this year, but last year you funded Co-Opera. I am sure it is there again this year, although I cannot find it.

I think that also underpinned the subscriptions for the State Opera Company. I note that with the re-organisation of the Australian Dance Theatre and the Leigh Warren dancers, that they, too, have been getting out more. I sense that you have refocused your strategies within the department deliberately to do that—to get these performances, the art galleries that we mentioned earlier and these other performing arts out there to help people interpret the changes going on in the community. Can you comment on that and confirm whether that is so, whether that is part of a deliberate process to spread the money, talent and the arts around more broadly in the community?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It is, without an apology, a most deliberate program. What is interesting is that it has been recognised by the federal government, because we get some 17 per cent federal funding for regional arts activities based on the strength of those activities in this state. So what we do well, we do better. Where we invest we are attracting further investment to maximise our arts activities in country areas.

When this emphasis was first advanced it seemed to be received rather uncomfortably by some people in the arts. It was wonderful to see Robyn Archer, and now Peter Sellars with the next festival, taking the festival beyond the boundaries of the Adelaide CBD, let alone the metropolitan area to the country. I see that the Fringe festival also will now take its activities out to the country areas of South Australia next year. This is on top of Country Arts SA and the subscription series that I mentioned before.

Even the Art Gallery is resuming its touring activities. Once Ron Radford, as director, recently got out to the country it was not so bad after all. He was exceedingly well received, I understand, which came as somewhat of a surprise to him. He is keen to see more touring of works. If we can have climate control in more of our regional art facilities we will be able to ensure not only touring of works by the Art Gallery but potentially touring of national collections, which I think will be fantastic.

Country people pay taxes and should have a greater share of our collections. It is very important to make sure kids in particular in country areas are made aware that there is a big world out there and that the arts can open one's eyes through various experiences at any time. It is important that they value our collections and also have the widest of experiences brought to them. I assume that they have to come to Adelaide for those experiences.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I refer to the Junction Theatre Company. Although Junction recently received project funding from Arts SA, essentially it has been defunded and probably will be forced to close its doors. I understand that

in order to fund a forthcoming production it has been having quiz nights, raffles and so on. Will the minister provide attendance figures and the number of performances for the theatre companies funded by the industry development small organisations panel, and will the minister detail the process of appointing peers to Arts SA's peer assessment panels? Has the minister considered a register of peers nominated from the arts community similar to the Australia Council model?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Peer assessment is a process I have followed faithfully in terms of arts and funding and the recommendations are received through Arts SA by me for membership of those peer assessment committees. I suspect anybody at any time can make themselves known to Arts SA and to the project officers who forward recommendations to me for membership of those committees. I have faithfully followed the recommendations of these committees over the years in approving their recommendations for grants. I may have a personal opinion on some of the recommendations from time to time, but I have not exercised that personal opinion. I have often questioned the basis of the decision but not changed the recommendation.

In terms of Junction Theatre, I certainly have not received any recommendations from Arts SA for project funding for Junction or any other company this year. I know it has applied, so the leader may be getting muddled with a special offer provided by Arts SA to Junction to complete its projects rather than to pursue a project that it applied for. That was \$40 000 one off funding in that instance for administrative support necessary to manage the funded project subject to certain conditions.

The Junction Theatre and Friends of Junction have asked me to make an exception for them that I have never made for any other group that has not been supported for funding. It is important in the instance of Junction to get this into some perspective because two years ago it lost federal funding. They knew the rules that apply here and it applies consistently to the organisations about gaining federal funding on an annual or triennial basis from the Australia Council as a condition of funding from South Australia. I keep in mind Vital Statistix, which lost federal funding, was supported by the state for a couple of years as it got its act together and has been an extraordinary example of production quality and support in terms of audience numbers. It has really resurrected itself from a low moment. Junction could have learnt a lot from that example, but it has not taken that same path.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Many small companies often argue for the need for three year triennial funding because they spend so much of their creative time filling in forms and spend a massive amount of time on that. Many of the smaller arts companies continue to be very concerned with the move to financial year funding arrangements. This issue was raised last year, but I do not believe that anything has been done to address their concerns. Will the minister explain what action is proposed for 2001-02, if any?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I have been advised that about 30 per cent of the 31 smaller companies funded under the arts development line through Arts SA are triennially funded. I agree that triennial funding is a big advantage in terms of forward planning for work programs and productions and for the engagement of artists. In terms of financial and calendar year funding, it is an issue but it is also mixed up with the way in which Treasury wants to account across government. We are pursuing this issue with Treasury. It is not one of its highest priorities in setting budgets and, once it sees some fall out of the net it wants to capture across

government it does not like the precedents set. We have not had the success the smaller art organisations may have wished at this stage, but it is still being pursued.

Certainly health promotion through the arts grants are based on a financial year funding base. In terms of the smaller organisations and arts development funding, the government next financial year will increase by some \$50 000 the funding available and subsequently in 2002-03 and 2003-04 will increase funding, bringing the total to \$251 800 next year with the addition of the \$50 000, and for 2002-03 and 2003-04 there will be a further \$200 000 in each of those financial years.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: In relation to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra—and I am sure we all agree that it continues to go from strength to strength—I refer the minister to the recent announcement that the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra will be relocating to Hindley Street, which fits into the arts-led revival of the West End. I understand, however, that there are some industrial issues that need to be resolved including the players losing their free car parking which is available to them at Collinswood. The minister can take this question on notice. What is the total cost of the relocation of the ASO; what part of that will be borne by the state government; and will the minister report on the state of play regarding these outstanding industrial issues?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I refer the honourable member to an answer that I gave to an earlier question on the same matter about state support for the orchestra. Industrial issues are matters to be resolved internally by the ABC. There is nothing in which I would be involved in anyway. All I know is that the players and the representatives of the company whom I have met have indicated that there is wholehearted support for the move. Ian Denbeigh is a musician on the board. He represents the musicians' interests to the board and he has spoken publicly about the support of the musicians for this move. Regarding the issue of carparks, my view is that more people might catch public transport, but the carpark issue is to be resolved internally, not by me.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated to the arts has finished. Are there any further questions?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I would like to make a few remarks.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I would like to also. I thank the Chairman for his forbearance and I thank the minister for the courteous and articulate way in which she answered questions. I look forward to meeting and working with at least some of the patient officers who are here.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The feeling is not mutual in every sense. In terms of the—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: You couldn't be nice if you tried to.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: You should hear what your members say: they put up with you, but they do not like you. I would like to mention two matters. It is interesting that when the men in the Labor Party come in here they cannot sit still or be polite but, when the women came in to deal with the Office for the Status of Women, the atmosphere was very different. I may have difficulties in my own party, but thank God I am not a woman in the Labor Party.

There were two occasions when Mr Rann deliberately—for what reason, I do not know—twisted matters. I think that is disappointing in terms of the accuracy of the record and the cooperation that I have tried to provide to this committee.

Every member will acknowledge that. I would never have implicated the board or the management in the way in which the honourable member has suggested. Never would I change *Hansard*.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I have never sought it, and I never would. I have worked with the board and the management of the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust for many years. The grubbiness was directed to you, and only to you, because only you would that hat fit. There is no way that the management or the board would ever believe for one second that I would accuse them in the way in which the honourable member has twisted the situation.

Secondly, in terms of the GST, I think the honourable member did it deliberately. I do not know whether it is because of testosterone or whatever, but he got restless again. I cannot account for what it is in him, but he gets excited about things. In terms of the GST, I would like to explain that the North Terrace institutions and the major arts companies do not charge GST on the tickets they sell, but they do pay GST on the materials they purchase as—

The Hon. M.D. RANN: You said that they didn't.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: No. What I said was that it is not a burden to them, because they are reimbursed for these costs. They claim the costs as input credits. Therefore, it is not an issue for them. That is what I clearly had to explain in more detail to the leader, rather—

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I had to explain to the leader what he deliberately did not want to understand, because it is not the budget impost that he claims it to be for the Art Gallery or the Museum. To infer that and then say that there is electricity on top of that is factually incorrect. Clearly, I needed to explain it to him in more detail for the record.

The CHAIRMAN: For the committee's edification, I am told that as you get older and wiser your testosterone level falls.

Membership:

Ms Key substituted for Mr Rann.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr N. Savery, Executive Director, Planning SA.

Mr P. Smith, Director, Development Planning.

Mr D. Ellis, Director, Strategic Planning.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will insert in *Hansard* without my reading it the opening statement for Planning SA estimates 2001-02. It is as follows:

The budget for Planning SA for 2001-02 is \$24.6 million and includes an appropriation of \$12.77 million, plus fees and other income sources.

The budget also includes a capital investment of \$800 000—for development of the electronic lodgement and transfer of development applications and implementation of the electronic system for land division applications—in partnership with Local Government Association and the relevant sections of the development industry.

\$6.3 million is budgeted in the Planning and Development Fund for Strategic Open Space projects including implementation of the Parklands 21 Strategy, which I released earlier this month, together with the establishment of a Coast Park along the metropolitan coastline over the next 10 years.

Overall, the government is committed to restructuring Planning SA so it plays a pivotal role in the development of long-term strategic planning for government—and our community at large—and, in turn, works with local councils to progress relevant and contemporary development policies and plans.

Next financial year, Planning SA will provide greater encouragement to the integration of good urban design considerations in all aspects of development processes. A grants program is proposed for strategic urban design initiatives. In addition, a State Government Urban Design Charter will be developed.

In the meantime, strategies are being refined to stem urban sprawl and energise inner and middle ring suburbs. Demonstration projects for urban regeneration will be scoped this year. Residential demonstration projects will be sponsored and a framework for implementation of urban growth management policies will be constructed. All this work advances the government's initiatives over the past year to protect significant trees in the metropolitan area and advance good residential design principles.

In addition, following the amendments to the Development Act late last year, Planning SA, in partnership with local councils across South Australia, will implement the System Improvement Program—with particular emphasis on promoting improvements to Development Plan policies and streamlining the development assessment procedures.

Further goals for Planning SA in 2001-02 include:

- Participation in the implementation of Stage 1 of the North Terrace project.
- Working with the Land Management Corporation and local councils to advance the further redevelopment of Port Adelaide.
- Updating the 1996 Industrial Database through the census of industrial land in the Adelaide Statistical Division and Mount Barker
- Implementing regional area plans; and
- Prioritising energy efficiency in building design.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, minister.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: This is a particularly interesting period for me, representing Waite, the Mitcham area. I have an important question to ask on residential design and demolition controls, and I refer to Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.17. I have been working for a couple of years with the mayors of Unley and Mitcham on ways to stop our beautiful old buildings from being demolished and replaced with, in some cases, unattractive, and, in other cases, not unattractive contemporary buildings. It is very sad to see the change in the nature of some of these suburbs, particularly the ones I represent, as a result of poor planning controls.

I wrote to you, minister, late last year and very early this year about that and asked you to look at this issue. I now thank you for your February announcement of a package of measures to help metropolitan councils accelerate their preparation of clear and current policies to guide future housing development in their area, with incentives ranging from demolition controls to grants funding. The view that we have developed, and I have developed, is that demolition controls are important, because we need somehow to increase the powers of councils to influence how developers approach their projects.

Can the minister provide the committee with some feedback? What has come back to the minister from metropolitan councils on the package she announced in February and, in particular, the undertaking to commit to the preparation for authorisation of a residential PAR that incorporates good residential design and neighbourhood character issues so that we can help the old character suburbs retain their character?

The CHAIRMAN: Before you answer, minister, it is important to recognise a former Deputy Premier who is in the gallery at the moment. It is nice to see him here.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The goal of the government in terms of framing the residential PAR package was to secure from councils which, under the Development Act, have the responsibility and power to manage residential development, a commitment to updated residential policies, relevant policies that incorporate good residential design principles and neighbourhood character factors. That was

important so that residents knew what was going to happen down their street and to their investments and so that the development industry was also aware of what would or would not be acceptable in terms of their work. The goal of this package was to have updated residential PARs across the metropolitan area.

Essentially, that has been achieved but not all the councils have needed the lures of demolition controls or applied for them or the grants funding. Advice in terms of regulations and a ministerial PAR will be gazetted by 29 June, which will involve sign-offs by at least 15 of the 18 metropolitan councils in terms of their statements of intent, some five or six councils will have demolition controls in addition to the Adelaide City Council, and more will have grants funding to undertake that detailed, street-by-street neighbourhood character work. I am confident that this will be of advantage to the electors in Waite and give councils more power, but the honourable member should not be guaranteed that Mitcham council is cooperating.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Thank you for your responsiveness on that issue, minister. My next question concerns significant urban trees. This is another important issue in Waite and I have been discussing it with Mitcham and Unley councils. As a result of your work, minister, last year in parliament we passed legislation to protect those trees. I understand that six metropolitan councils subsequently applied for interim controls. I would be interested to learn what work has been undertaken by those councils to include significant trees in their development plans and, in particular, I understand that the minister has not endorsed a request by some councils, including Mitcham council within the seat of Waite, to provide a long-term blanket cover for all trees 1.5 metres in circumference and all other South Australian native species, and I ask why that is so.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: In terms of the blanket cover of trees between 1.5 metres and 2.5 metres in circumference, I have not agreed to it because I believe it goes well beyond what parliament contemplated. If the issue is to be pursued longer term, the matter should be brought before the review of the legislation that the parliament has requested be undertaken some two years after the gazettal of the significant urban trees act and regulations.

In the meantime, I have extended until 1 July 2002 the time frame for councils to incorporate into their PARs significant trees greater than 1.5 metres in trunk circumference or trees that are of special indigenous species, so they have another year to do that. It was envisaged that those interim controls would apply to 1 July this year, but they will extend for one further year. That will be gazetted tomorrow.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: My third question concerns stormwater management policies and, again, it is a particular issue in my area, which has part of the hills face within it. We get the full torrent of water racing down the hills into our local suburban district when it comes and it is clearly a problem right across the metropolitan area. How is the government seeking to assist councils and the development sector to address this important matter more effectively in the future? I note particularly that we have constructed the Urrbrae wetlands within my seat as part of that management process, but there are obviously other devices that the minister might like to explain to us.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The government, through Planning SA and with the Patawalonga and Torrens water catchment management boards, has prepared a stormwater infrastructure planning package. That went out for public

consultation from 22 March to 25 May. I was told just a few moments ago that we have now received 22 submissions on this matter from councils, government agencies and industry groups. The submissions are generally supportive with comment on matters of detail. The proposal now, with the benefit of that public consultation period, will be to develop any refinements, and DPAC will present it to me for authorisation. Mr Smith, as Director, Development and Planning, may know the time frame, but from listening to members of the committee on both sides it appears that they want you to move fast.

Mr SMITH: I anticipate that the matter will be put to the government for formal consideration after the Development Policy Advisory Committee completes its review of submissions. I expect that it will be presented to government in a month or two.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Hopefully we will get it authorised promptly.

Ms KEY: I refer to Output Class 3, Planning and Development, at page 7.17. I am concerned about the duplication of these functions. Elsewhere in government I understand the role of planning, but I am concerned that we are seeing a duplication of functions that I understand come under your responsibility elsewhere. The minister may be able to explain why an urban resources branch has been established in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. In addition, Premier and Cabinet also contains a major projects branch with urban development functions.

It also duplicates a major projects division between DAIS and the Department of Industry and Trade, and such things as—and I think people know my views about the Patawa-longa development and the Barcoo outlet, but we will let that go at this stage—the Pier Hotel redevelopment and Holdfast Shores, the Riverbank project, and the Botanic wine and rose project. These all seem to be looked after by many agencies at the same time. Why are all these agencies involved in major projects and why does Planning SA not have the lead on this? Are you sure that, in looking at different agencies being involved in major projects, this has not led to any needless waste or confusion with people understanding who actually has responsibility?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It is a fair question that the honourable member asks. The major projects branch within the Premier's area of responsibility is site specific. It will take on a particular project. The major projects that Planning SA and the Development Assessment Commission are responsible for under the Development Act are those related solely to assessment of planning considerations. So, our role is very specifically defined by the act and cannot be confused, even though through the major development process we may be looking at a specific project only in planning terms. Beyond that, if it is a crown development, the premier's department would take it on, so it is very clear in public sector terms.

As to the urban resources branch, I understand that it is more the development of infrastructure in which we would not get involved, but I can bring back further clarification. Certainly, in terms of urban regeneration, we will be looking at the planning of nominated projects in the metropolitan area, but we would not be involved in the infrastructure development of those projects.

Ms KEY: As a supplementary question, in talking about urban regeneration, I read with interest your comments in last year's estimates. You have also talked about the possibilities for this urban regeneration projects team. Could you provide

details of the work achieved by the team or unit—I am not quite sure what the term is, although there is reference on page 7.3 and 7.17? You may be able to clarify that easily.

I have been looking at this issue of urban regeneration, and I note a paper written by Trish Hensley from Shelter (SA). She says that the key elements to successful urban regeneration include the development of national and state-based economic and social policies which will redistribute resources to communities which are currently missing out, and involving local residents in creating structures in their commitments, which will promote stability.

Can the minister answer my question (whether it is on notice or now) in terms of what seem to be the key points that are looked at with regard to urban regeneration and the process that is undertaken to assist specific geographical communities to share equity in social, economic, cultural, political and environmental resources of our society? That is what I am looking at with respect to urban regeneration and, judging from the minister's comments last time, I presume that that is the sort of thing she is talking about. In light of the comments that I have just made about the different responsibilities throughout government, it is quite confusing to know who has responsibility for what and who can, perhaps, take on board any achievements.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It is quite clear, through the Development Act, what Planning SA is responsible for. The Premier's department becomes involved in site specific project developments. I am just trying to ease the member's mind: there is no confusion in practical terms. The Urban Regeneration Unit, which was established in the office of the chief executive of DTUPA (Department of Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts), kick-started urban regeneration thinking across government, and officers from the Housing Trust and the Department of Human Services were seconded to this unit.

Now, with the appointment of Mr Neil Savery as Executive Director of Planning SA, that unit is in the process of being disbanded and moving into planning. So, it has kick-started and got the debate going across Senior Management Council and the chief executives across government agencies and, after 12 to 18 months, those thought processes and actions are happening across agencies. That unit will now be disbanded, with that affirmative action effort, and it will be moved into Planning SA, still with the benefit of the contacts that we have made with other agencies. Mr Savery might want to elaborate further on that matter.

There are various definitions of urban regeneration, and that has been made very clear through reading that I have undertaken. I do not necessarily share in every sense either the expression of, or what arises from, the statement to which the member referred. I am very conscious that there are social implications of what we do now (and what I think we do very badly), that is, to ensure that the less resourceful in our community are put out of sight and out of mind—to the farthest extremes of our community—without the resources to support them, the jobs or the infrastructure. I think that it is a very poor way of planning, and it is a poor social and economic system overall.

We have to be careful, first, about limiting urban sprawl and, secondly, about the social ramifications of simply providing affordable housing on the far extremes of the city and then expecting those areas to be safe and free of domestic violence, and expecting that jobs and transport will be available. No wonder there are problems, when we do not take enough consideration of the social consequences of our

planning and policy decisions over time. We will not be able to rectify these problems overnight, but we have to make a start, and Planning SA is doing that through refocussing its activities in house and across government. Mr Savery might want to comment on this matter.

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

Ms KEY: My second question is to do with details of the staff for Planning SA. Could the minister provide details of all the staff, both permanent and contract staff, working for Planning SA, the Development Assessment Commission, both of the workers and the members, and also the Development Policy Advisory Committee? Could this information include job title, job status, whether they are permanent or contract, classification level and location, and also how that fits in with the employment costs that are outlined in the proposed budget?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will take that on notice and provide the information. I alert the honourable member that the appointments come up by 30 June and we are in the process of assessing them, and some changes will be made because of the expiry of terms.

Ms KEY: So, that will come at a later stage?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Yes.

Ms KEY: Thank you. That would be helpful. While I am on that question, I would be interested to receive more detail about what I have now found out is a non-existent urban regeneration unit. Could the minister provide details of the number of staff it did involve and also the costs within Planning SA for that unit which has now been disbanded and may be, as you were saying before the break, reformed?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I will do that.

Ms KEY: My third question refers to, in a way, page 7.17, Planning Policy Initiatives. I must say, minister, that in many cases I have found it very hard to source some of the questions I wanted to ask you. I am very aware of some of the excellent publications that are made available through your department and am familiar with many of the programs, but because of the way our budgets are now structured it is very difficult to actually come up with direct references. So I hope the minister will bear with me on this one. As I understand it, Planning SA has prepared for you a minister's specification for energy efficiency standards to domestic dwellings. My information is that this information has been around for two years waiting for you to sign. I do not know whether that is the case or not, but I would be interested to know whether I could get a copy of this document, or, if there is some secrecy or problem with it, what that problem is.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The material was presented by Planning SA to me sometime ago. It was taken to cabinet for consideration. It was believed by cabinet that any initiative in South Australia should be undertaken in conjunction with work that was being pursued at a national level. I am aware that the Australian Greenhouse Office and the Australian Building Codes Board have entered into a memorandum of understanding in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through mandatory code standards through the Building Code of Australia, and that recently the Australian Building Code Board released a Directions Report on the incorporation into the Building Code of Australia of minimum technical and performance requirements for energy efficiency in residential and commercial buildings. It is the nature of that reform that I am keen to advance: that South Australia works in conjunction with a national building code

and not in isolation to that. The government, Planning SA and I have a commitment to seeing much greater energy efficiency introduced in buildings, but we want to see that as part of a national reform.

Ms KEY: I understand that, at its recent meeting (I think in March), the Local Government Association moved the following motion:

The Local Government Association supports the establishment of a mandatory energy efficiency assessment system as part of the planning approval process for all building development in South Australia.

Also, the documentation available at that general meeting indicates that it is believed that there should be a formalisation of energy efficiency as part of the process for development proposals, not just in residential buildings but in all buildings. Could the minister comment?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: There are two parts to my answer: first, broadly, I support the thrust of the LGA motion to which the honourable member has referred; and, secondly, the Good Residential Design package, which the government has issued and which we want to see incorporated in residential PARs by metropolitan councils—and as the honourable member would be aware from earlier questions the government is seeking to accelerate, and we will have more advice on this by 29 June—does incorporate a number of energy efficiency issues.

As I mentioned in my earlier answer, the Australian Building Code Board is advancing minimum technical performance requirements for energy efficiency; so I believe that an enormous amount of work, plus goodwill, is there. South Australia could make a decision to go it alone. However, I think that, in terms of the standard, it is better to advance this important issue across Australia, and that is the way in which government at this time has decided to progress the issue. There is no lack of will or commitment: it is just that, in terms of process, we believe it should be undertaken as part of a national process through the Building Code Board and other processes that I have mentioned. It could well be advanced in terms of part of the assessment of applications, and that would naturally flow from the Building Code Board's minimum regulations and technical specifications.

Mr SCALZI: My question relates to energy efficiency. I refer to Budget Paper 5, Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 7.17. How is the government addressing the increasingly important issue of energy efficiency, especially in residential buildings?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: In addition to the answers that I gave just a moment ago, I can advise that the Good Residential Design Guide issued by the government does promote energy efficiency through design measures in land division and residential buildings. The government is strongly committed to advancing this issue. A working party has been developed to address these issues in consultation with the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association and the Office of Energy. I reinforce that that working party is in turn feeding off and feeding into the Australian Building Code Board, which is looking at minimum technical and performance requirements for energy efficiency in residential and commercial buildings.

Mr SCALZI: I refer again to budget paper 5, the Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 718. Last month the minister released the Parklands 21 strategy, including the coast park initiative. I strongly support this move: it expands the highly popular Torrens River linear park development, part of which runs through the electorate of Hartley.

Ms CICCARELLO: And Norwood.

Mr SCALZI: As the member for Norwood interjects, it also runs through the electorate of Norwood—as well as many other members' electorates. How does the government intend to progress this bold and visionary strategy and fund the linear park open space initiatives proposed for metropolitan Adelaide over the next 10 years?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I thank the honourable member for his support for Parklands 21, and the implied support from the member for Norwood. It is true that Parklands 21 aims to maximise open space development in the wider Adelaide metropolitan area and to use our natural resources to the best advantage for general community use as well as the management of these areas, whether they be the creeks that run east-west across the metropolitan area or our transport corridors. That is in addition to the north-south links, the greater Mount Lofty Park and the coast park concept that I released on 3 June. Six million dollars is budgeted in the planning and development fund for strategic open space projects, including the implementation of the Parklands 21 strategy and the establishment of the coast park, which I have already announced. I think the member for Colton was pleased that the announcement was made in his electorate and that funds were provided in the Henley Beach area for coast park initiatives.

In many instances the funds provided through the planning development fund will be matched by local council contributions. It is also our intention to seek private sector support, because many open space initiatives also generate a return in land values and property prices. The private sector may well see considerable interest in investing in some of these initiatives—not only the coast park but also more broadly across the metropolitan area.

Membership:

Mr Condous substituted for Mr Hamilton-Smith.

Mr CONDOUS: My question relates to a matter that I think affects the lives of tens of thousands of people, including constituents in the Chairman's electorate as well as that of the member for Norwood. In February this year, the minister announced a package of measures to help metropolitan councils to accelerate the preparation of clear and current policies to guide future housing development in their area, with incentives ranging from demolition controls to grant funding. What has been the feedback from metropolitan councils regarding the package, particularly the undertaking to commit to the preparation of authorisation of a residential PAR that incorporates good residential design and neighbourhood character issues?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I was able to address part of these matters in answer to an earlier question and the government's goal overall is to see across the metropolitan area residential design issues taken into account by local councils in their residential PARs. We have offered a package of measures which generally have been well received by councils and in the next few days we should be able to release a ministerial PAR and general regulations to advance these issues. It will be of great satisfaction to residents generally, as the honourable member said, but also to development industry at large to know what is permitted and not permitted in certain areas.

We prize across Adelaide our quality of life and much of that arises from neighbourhood character. I do not believe because of an individual developer wanting to pursue a

project that we should be undermining or compromising those neighbourhood character issues in any special location, which is why we are advancing these measures.

Mr CONDOUS: Would that then give the councils the power to be able to refuse a development application based on the fact that the demolition of a particular property will detract from the character of that precinct?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Potentially, yes. It is proposed that there will be a requirement for a demolition application, which will not simply be processed automatically before an application is received and that is the process in all metropolitan councils today except for the Adelaide City Council. It is proposed that the application be lodged and approved before the demolition is then approved. We are finding today that demolitions are progressed automatically with nobody—council, neighbour or neighbourhood—having any knowledge of what will go ahead on that site or when.

Ms KEY: I refer to Budget Paper 5, volume 2, page 7.3, relating to rural and regional infrastructure, and to Budget Paper 8, page 7, which is the regional statement. The minister will recall the public outcry over the proliferation of new dumps north of the city and the concerns that the planning process was taking precedence over the government's own strategy for waste management, which recommended only one dump north of the city. The minister will also recall issuing two joint media statements on 21 January 1999 with the then environment minister Dorothy Kotz. The first, headed 'Strict environment deadlines for new landfills', said that the approval for the Dublin and Inkerman landfills, along with Medlow Road, would provide enough waste management capacity for the next 50 years at 750 tonnes per annum.

The second statement said that there was a new integrated waste management strategy to cover the orderly closure of Wingfield and the development of the Dublin and Inkerman sites that would provide landfill capacity for the foreseeable future. Given these statements and the opposition by the local residents—quite innovative opposition, if I recall—what is the government's position in relation to the application for yet another dump north of the city, this time being at Kalbeeba? What advice has the EPA provided on this application and does the government oppose another tip, this time outside Gawler? Does the government have a waste management strategy and, if so, does it in any way limit the number of dumps that can be approved?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: No, the strategy does not limit the operation of dumps or—as we prefer to call them in terms of the orderly management of waste today—landfill operations. The specific development proposal that the honourable member has referred to at Kalbeeba has been lodged by Pacific Waste Management and it is for a solid waste landfill facility just north-east of Gawler. The site is owned by Rocla Quarry Products, which is a private company mining for sand under the Mining Act. The current owner (Rocla) has an EPA licence to landfill and dispose of waste in one of the sandpits which was previously used by the District Council of Barossa and this is currently being used to dispose of casting foundry sand.

The policies in the development plan were amended at the time of the release of the government's waste strategy referred to by the honourable member and the approval of three major landfill developments to make solid waste landfill deposits non-complying in most areas. Legal opinion is being sought on that issue at the present time. As I found with the Road Traffic Act I equally find with planning issues, that lawyers feed off my portfolios in terms of trying to get

around what the government intends, and I suppose it is the right of developers and the legal profession to test to the limit what their clients may wish to pursue. But that matter is being legally contested and advice is being sought at the moment.

The Development Assessment Commission is the relevant planning authority to deal with the application and, if the application proceeds, it will have to undergo a full category 3 notification process involving community consultation. So, the anxieties that I am aware of—as is the member for Schubert whose electorate is adjacent to the site—

Mr VENNING: It is in my electorate.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: It is in your electorate, so you are also aware of the local anxiety. All of those opinions, if this application progresses, will be heard through public notification, which also includes public appeal rights. At this stage or earlier there was an application that this project be considered as a major development and I refused that. By refusing that it also meant that, if the application for the project did proceed, there would be a public consultation process. I wanted to make sure that that was facilitated in relation to this project. I also questioned in my own mind whether it should be assessed as a major project, considering there were other sites to the north of Adelaide, and I did not believe that on an environment, social or economic grounds it could be judged as a major project according to the act. Of course, if it went through the assessment processes—and there would be plenty of hurdles, it would appear, and those are the checks and balances that are available under the act—and if it was ever approved, it would require EPA licences which, in turn, have strict control measures.

I should briefly add that, since the release of that waste strategy, the government has out for consideration by councils at present green waste strategies in the outer metropolitan area. I am not sure of their current status. Mr Smith might be able to elaborate.

Mr SMITH: The proposals for new planning controls over green organic waste disposal are currently out for council and government agency consultation. When that is completed, if the minister so desires, they will go out to public exhibition and full public involvement.

Ms KEY: Today's media carries a report of the community opposition to plans to lift coastal reserve status at Port Prime to allow shell grit mining. Will the minister say whether the government supports this proposal, which is opposed by the Dublin Ratepayers Association which says, very interestingly, that it is sick of being dumped on; and what would be the environmental consequences of planning approval being granted?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: My only knowledge of this project is that it falls within the responsibility of Minister Kerin, the Minister for Primary Industries. Mr Smith may have some further advice.

Mr SMITH: For the proposal to proceed, it would need mining tenement approval under the Mining Act, which is subject to the decision of Minister Kerin as the minister for mining.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: In fact, it may be subject to Minister Matthew as the Minister for Minerals and Energy in the broader portfolio responsibilities of Minister Kerin.

Ms KEY: I understand that all PARs and draft PARs, once released for consultation, are on the internet, which I think is a good initiative, and that also the Planning SA web site is quite accessible to the computer literate. I congratulate the minister for that; it is a big breakthrough. My question relates to a letter that I received from the St Peters Residents

Association (which I believe the minister also received) about the disadvantages of residents in the planning process.

The minister might recall the debate on the Development Act and certainly the discussion that we had about the systems improvement program. One of the crucial issues, certainly for the opposition, was that, first, residents should have maximum opportunity to have access to the planning process and, secondly, wherever possible (depending on the category) residents should have an opportunity to have input into that process. I note that the minister and I share that concern.

What residents tell me—and other residents associations have raised the same issues—is that, in many cases, the plans that are available for public comment are not available outside of working hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. I know that this varies from council to council. For example, some of the councils in the area which I represent have these plans available in the library, so there are extended hours for people to have a look at them. The St Peters Residents Association makes the point that it believes that 'residents are disadvantaged by their inability to make accurate copies of plans submitted to councils for assessment.' The letter states further:

It is not possible for many residents to visit council premises and to make hand-drawn copies or useful notes of detailed builders' or architects' drawings. This makes it very difficult for residents, potentially affected by proposed new developments in their neighbourhoods, to study the proposed designs and to make intelligent and informed representations. . .

The minister will recall that, when we discussed the systems improvement program, I also raised with her some of the concerns of resident groups and individual residents about their inability to take action or appeal. What they saw was a David and Goliath situation with them being in the David category rather than the Goliath category. Will the minister comment?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: A number of issues were raised by the honourable member, and one that should be explored further is that the regulations under the Development Act require that the information must be available during office hours. These regulations arise from the act which was passed in 1993, at which time I suspect email, the internet and web sites were not known broadly. They certainly did not attract the attention of members of parliament in looking at how information could be more broadly available to the wider community. In 1993, the very fact that these plans were made available for public comment and through councils in office hours was probably seen as a sound and liberal approach. However, time has moved on, and Mr Savery, Executive Director of Planning SA, advises me that Planning SA is looking at this matter as part of some general amendments to the regulations under the Development Act to see how we can make these plans more broadly available. This is not a straightforward issue in every sense. In terms of some development applications, architects, for instance, will claim copyright and will not allow them to be sighted, and I can see the member for Norwood and former Mayor of Norwood nodding her head to that.

In addition, under the Development Act, we have made it very clear that there are various categories for notification and appeal, and councils are not in all instances required to even alert neighbours that there is a development proposal next door to them or in their street. This matter was raised with me at the meeting I attended of Save the Suburbs just a few weeks ago. I was made aware that some councils in

Sydney require owners or proponents of applications to put a notice on the front fence to at least alert the neighbours rather than a council having to circulate such a notice to neighbours.

These issues can be explored. As a resident of the city council—and I think this was something the member for Colton introduced when he was Lord Mayor—I know that I am always notified about every development application in the area. Some councils are pretty good at doing this; some councils are pretty ghastly all around; and some councils simply act to the letter of the law. This is one matter that was raised with me by the Save the Suburbs groups. Mr Savery was with me at that meeting, and it is a matter we are exploring. Hopefully, he will have all this advice gathered quite quickly.

Ms KEY: I wanted to mention to the minister that I have also had complaints along the same line about regulation 89 of the Development Act as to when development plans are seen to comply or not to comply, but that is probably a topic for another discussion on the same level. Today I have received a complaint from a constituent in the Port Adelaide/Enfield area about something being seen to comply by the building officers before it has gone to council, and this planning proposal would interfere with a state heritage listing. A whole lot of issues are involved.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: The issue is that, in isolation on the plan, it may comply with the building code or the facts, but it may also have implications for a neighbouring site that is being assessed in isolation.

Ms KEY: Yes, that is right.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Mr Smith and Mr Savery, who are very efficient, advise that Development Act regulation 89 relates to private certification, authorised functions. I refer the honourable member to regulation 89(2)(b), which states:

A private certifier must, in deciding whether to grant a provisional building rules consent, take into account the provisional development plan consent and any condition or notes that apply in relation to the provisional development plan consent, if such consent has been granted.

In effect, and in fact, that means that, if there is a condition relating to a neighbouring property and heritage, that must be taken into account, so perhaps we can refer the honourable member's constituent and the certifier to the meaning, or we could refer the whole problem to Mr Smith!

Ms KEY: That sounds like a good idea.

Ms CICCARELLO: My remarks are more by way of clarification than a question and concern the issue of copyright, which has caused some consternation among residents groups as to why they should not have access to the plans and also to the issue of people not being notified because, if particular developments fit within the development plan, depending on the category, notification is not required. One of the things that my council did and still does is notify the neighbouring residents and that creates an expectation in their minds that they can appeal the decision just on the basis that they have been notified, so it is a very difficult area.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I agree, it is not necessarily easy.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, the time put aside for your examination has expired. There being no further questions, I thank you, minister, and all your staff.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: Are there any questions that need to be put on notice?

The CHAIRMAN: Some questions were mentioned earlier by the member for Peake and they can now be read into the record.

Ms KEY: On behalf of the member for Peake I read into *Hansard* the following questions. I refer to Portfolio Statements, page 7.41. During last year's estimates the minister reported that the following performance criteria were used in the bus service contracts: delivery of passenger services; on time running; customer and public safety; fare compliance; management of infrastructure; timetable production and distribution; handling of passenger inquiries and reporting; fraud prevention; quality assurance; employment management; and service review and improvement.

Will the minister provide a report on each of the contractor's performance in relation to each of the criteria including the following: first, details of financial penalties and bonuses where applicable; and, secondly, the number of missed trips since the introduction of privatised services? I should say that both these questions relate to the PTB.

The second question concerns access cabs for visually impaired people.

1. What would be the anticipated cost of the introduction of access cab vouchers for people with blindness; and is there a provision for this in this year's budget?

2. What did the access cab voucher system cost in 2000-01?

3. What is the anticipated cost for 2001-02?

The third and last question, again with regard to the PTB, relates to the future of taxi ranks—Portfolio Statements, page 7.41. I understand that negotiations are presently under way between the Adelaide City Council and the PTB on the future of taxi ranks in the central business district. In fact I am advised that the casino rank is due for imminent closure.

1. Can the minister confirm this, particularly with regard to the casino rank?

2. What is the PTB doing to ensure ranks are not closed or diminished?

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I thank you, Mr Chairman, for your impartial chairing and for your cooperation and that of your officers. I also thank all members present, but not all who have participated, for their participation and intelligent care and interest in the areas that I am responsible for overseeing.

Minister for Local Government—Other Items, \$461 000

Witness:

The Hon. D.C. Kotz, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms C. Procter, Executive Director, Office of Local Government.

Mr J. Wright, Executive Consultant, Finance.

Ms I. Brown, Director, Strategy and Policy.

Ms J. Wyman, Senior Business Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, do you have an opening statement?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Yes, I do.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to read it or insert it?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: No, there is a portion of it that I perhaps need to identify to the committee. In saying just a

few opening words, I indicated at the last estimates hearings that the government's local government reform program is now in its third phase. With the number of councils greatly reduced and the Local Government Act 1999 largely in operation, the year 2000-01 has seen the functional and the financial relationships part of the reform program make significant progress. A joint state-local government partnerships program has been established with a steering group of officers from state and local government and overall direction by a forum, which I chair, of elected members and senior officers from the state and local government spheres.

A substantial amount of work has gone into the program during the year, with both state and local government completing preliminary surveys of what is done together and a joint scoping study undertaken to provide a shared basis for action planning for new initiatives. In addition, the Outback Areas Community Development Trust has made very good progress through the year in the direction determined for it by government just over 12 months ago, following a review of its operations and its performance. The trust has a new general manager and a two day conference of all the relevant agencies, together with members of many of the Outback communities, recently brought together for the first time at Roxby Downs a large number of people with common and complementary interests in the Outback areas.

The overall aim is to achieve coordinated strategic forward planning for all those providing services and to link that planning with what the communities need and want expressed through their own local planning processes. I believe that the foundations have been soundly laid for this during the past year. As I also indicated last year, work has proceeded with the relocation, or repeal, of the remnant provisions of the Local Government Act 1934, and a Statutes Amendment (Local Government) Bill is before the Legislative Council.

In relation to the budget papers for the Office of Local Government, it may help committee members to know two pieces of background. First, the Office of Local Government was administratively separated from the Department of Industry and Trade towards the end of February 2000. The OLG (Office of Local Government) had been administratively integrated into DIT, and a considerable amount of work was undertaken to separate its financial records and budget information from the records of the department. Some matters arise out of this budget which were not addressed in last year's budget because of these circumstances. It was not possible to address all aspects in the time available, as the budget cycle coincided with the administrative relocation.

The second matter relates to the budget information about the Outback Areas Community Development Trust and the Local Government Grants Commission. The page reference 7.87 in volume 2 of the Portfolio Statements shows the statement of cash flows for additional administered items information for DTUPA. I am advised that the entry for the 2000-01 estimated result and the 2001-02 budget for the Outback Areas Community Development Trust is in error. The estimated result for the OACDT (the trust) should show \$111 000, and the 2001-02 budget for the trust should show \$211 000. The trust's budget has been significantly increased to enable it to maintain Outback facilities without affecting its capacity to support other forms of community development support—just not quite that significantly.

The amounts for the 2000-01 estimated result for the Local Government Grants Commission, which should have shown \$242 000, had been rolled up with that of the trust. Similarly, the Local Government Grants Commission budget

for 2001-02 should show \$250 000. The Grants Commission budget for 2000-01 was included in the Local Government Reform Fund figure that is shown.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the member for Hanson wish to make an opening statement?

Ms KEY: No, sir.

Mr VENNING: Will the minister give the committee a progress report on the government's Local Government Reform Program and, in particular, the state Local Government Partnerships Program?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The government's reform program for local government is now in its third phase of functional and related financial reform. This follows the very highly successful voluntary amalgamations of councils under the Local Government Boundary Reform Board, which reduced from 118 to 68 the number of South Australian councils, and the equally successful rewrite of the Local Government Act, which brought to the local government system a modern, comprehensively updated set of constitutional and operational legislative provisions.

As I announced in mid 2000, a state Local Government Partnerships Program has been established to advance what is the third phase of functional and related financial reform. This program aims to coordinate development of new or, indeed, better ways for state and local government to work together, to improve service delivery to the community and to provide competitive advantage for our state. The partnerships program cannot be taken as a short-term exercise. It is complex, and it is certainly challenging. It is directed at jointly reviewing the roles and responsibilities of both state and local government, and it certainly will work very closely with local councils, state agencies and regional groups to explore the new approaches to working together for the benefit of the state.

A joint management framework has been established for the operations of the partnerships program. This involves, first, the Partnerships Forum, which I chair. Members include the President of the Local Government Association and a number of nominees of the state and local government sectors. This group provides a high level forum for information sharing, discussion and cross-sector dialogue. The forum is supported by a steering group of senior and state local government officers, which steering group has been meeting since last September. The first stage of the Partnerships program has been a state and local government scoping study, a study jointly funded and supported by the state government and the Local Government Association.

The final report of the scoping study, entitled 'Partnering for effective government: Competitive advantage for South Australia', was formally launched jointly by me and by the President of the Local Government Association at the end of March. The report has since been widely distributed to all councils, state agencies and regional development councils, and is available on the Office of Local Government web site. The scoping study was designed to develop a shared understanding of the objectives of the Partnerships program, and to identify practical opportunities and priorities for advancing the reform agenda.

The study report brought out six priority themes that were a focus for further development and looking to joint action, that is, state and local government strategic alignment, community asset management, community safety, human services, information management and natural resources management. The Partnerships forum considered it important to separately identify the area of sustainable economic

development, and this has been added to those six themes that have been listed in that report. The forum also resolved that the theme 'community asset management' should be expanded to include community infrastructure and asset management.

The scoping study proposes an action plan for progressing the Partnerships program. The forum has given initial consideration to a much more detailed action plan and an implementation strategy, and we are looking to this being finalised very shortly. While the Partnerships program is in its early stages, there are already several projects under way or, indeed, soon to commence under the auspices of the program. These include three projects that will be supported by grant funds from the commonwealth government provided specifically to the South Australian state/local government Partnerships program. We felt this was quite a coup.

In early May the federal Minister for Local Government announced a grant of \$100 000 from the Local Government Incentive Program (LGIP) for the Partnerships program. These funds will be directed to the three projects that I mentioned, the first being the development of a roads infrastructure database, which will be managed by the Local Roads Advisory Committee. The member for Schubert will be well aware of the members on that committee, who do quite a substantial and professional job and who will work in conjunction with the Office of Local Government.

The second project aims to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in local government, with a particular focus on the electoral processes, again to be managed by the Office of Local Government and the Local Government Association with the support of the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs. The third project was a regional work force accommodation solutions study, to be managed by the Office of Regional Development under the auspices of the Partnerships program.

The member for Schubert, again, will be aware that there are certain areas of our state that in fact have nil unemployment. Therefore, one of the major problems they appear to have is accommodation for a work force. This is a program for which we were quite excited to get the funds, because it is certainly one that is needed to look at the feasibility studies and really to look at the whole area of how the infrastructure that is now required for this growth in an area that has no unemployment can actually be managed. We felt that all those programs were very worth while and are pleased to think that this was our first attempt at putting programs through the partnership. These three were won almost immediately.

Mr VENNING: I have had discussions with the Mayor of the Barossa Council (who also happens to be the LGA President) Mr Brian Hurn, and also with the member for Flinders, who raised issues with me regarding council amalgamation. On behalf of the member for Flinders and others, my question is: have council amalgamations resulted in more efficient and effective councils in country South Australia; is the amalgamation process still a live issue; and do we foresee any new or further amalgamations or, at least, boundary alignments in the future?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Once again, thank you; that is a very important question. I can tell the member that, with the exception of councils on Eyre Peninsula, the vast majority of councils in country South Australia voluntarily embraced amalgamation during that 2½ year term of the Local Government Boundary Reform Board. The feedback received by the government is that the decision by councils in country areas

to pursue amalgamations was based not only on arguments about immediate efficiency and effectiveness but also on broader ranging considerations. As the member would be aware, the voluntary reform process was driven by important strategic issues facing communities, including the role of responsible governance in an environment of ever diminishing public resources, as well as the greater reassurance being sought by local communities about the impact of globalised international competition.

The member may also be aware that as the Minister for Local Government I have visited all but five of the 68 councils throughout the state. Some councils have pointed out that the amalgamation process has raised community expectations about the performance of local government, and in some cases unrealistically so. Nonetheless, the overall experience has been significantly positive. There seems to be little doubt that council amalgamations in country areas have resulted in benefits to communities by way of improved services, and in many cases savings derived from amalgamation were transferred to improved or new services, as well as the upgrading of assets and facilities for communities.

Some of the benefits specifically identified by country councils following the amalgamations have been: the improved use of resources through the elimination of duplicated council functions; improved asset management strategies and practices, including savings through the rationalisation of surplus assets; improved and more consistent planning and development decisions; improved coordination of both economic and community development initiatives—and they particularly point out the tourist area of development; increased capacity to manage, coordinate and focus expertise on major environmental issues; and increased access for communities to representation and, in some cases, ensuring that communities are now involved in genuine participatory government structures.

Following the extensive council amalgamations in the Mid North, northern and Yorke Peninsula areas of the state, the councils collectively identified the potential for stronger regional arrangements to increase what they saw as the capacity and influence of councils in their role in both economic and community development. This led to the establishment of the central local government region, with some 15 constituent councils. From what I can see, the region has a very clear vision of its potential to provide services to its members in areas such as advocacy, resource sharing, relationships with other spheres of government and integrated local area planning. In the South-East of the state, the Wattle Range council reported that the amalgamation realised some immediate benefits, such as the capacity to employ a number of specialist staff, including development officers in building and planning, and a manager of community and economic development. The council—

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In this case I do not think so; I think this was part of the strategic process that is under way at the present time. The council has now developed extensive corporate and strategic management plans, and the council's vision is that Wattle Range will be a premier region in Australia through productive and forward thinking leadership that is responsive to their community needs, business prosperity, employment initiatives and quality lifestyle and environment. I can assure the honourable member that that is a far cry from what the individual pre-amalgamation councils had even hoped to achieve.

So, overall I can tell you that the structural reform in country South Australia has achieved a balance between economic and social objectives in terms of the savings that were achieved. Employment has been safeguarded and services improved, and there has been community consultation, which was a very concentrated area of the act. This parliament made sure that public consultation was part and parcel of almost every aspect of the Local Government Act. Harmonious transition is talked about as well as encouraging genuine participation, which of course is the basis of democracy.

Mr VENNING: In relation to the level of professional staff which can now be afforded by these enlarged amalgamated councils, there is some criticism that some councils are top heavy. Is there much emphasis on job sharing between councils? Some of these people are very professional and some of them probably could or should be shared between councils. Is that a directive or an initiative actively promoted by the department?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I think the honourable member will find that councils have taken these initiatives fairly well as a matter of an evolutionary process towards meeting the demands of the new act. As you know, the act called for many different things to happen within the first two years, whether it was strategic plans or annual reports to be ready by a particular time, but in areas where obvious expertise was required to be brought in, the honourable member will find that most of the councils in regional areas have moved towards what I spoke about earlier in terms of groupings.

Some of the smaller councils have formed alliances; some call them federations. Each of them look to share some of the resources they have. From that point of view, I sincerely believe from what I have seen on my trips around the state that this type of resource sharing is well and truly actively at work.

Mr VENNING: Traditionally, local councils are seen as dealing with roads, rates and rubbish, and little else—and I had 10 years' experience doing that. Today, councils provide a wide range of services to the communities. Can the minister give us some idea of the economic contribution local government makes to the state and what its financial performance is like?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It is almost a follow-on question from the previous one; it is a matter of what councils contribute to the state. We can say very sincerely that, once you have looked at the financial arrangements across South Australia, local government activities have a significant impact on the state's economy. Local government itself

employs roughly about 7 000 people in South Australia, and 2 500 people are employed in rural and regional areas. Recurrent and capital expenditure by the local government sphere in this coming year is expected to be approximately \$1.2 billion. Capital outlays, which are mainly investment in infrastructure, are approximately 30 per cent of those of state government. The general revenue in this coming year is expected to be approximately \$550 million. Together with own source funding, such as investment incomes and user charges, in excess of 80 per cent of the total council revenue is taken from its own sources.

The commonwealth and state governments will provide grants and subsidies to councils in this coming year and they will total approximately \$150 million. The figures definitely demonstrate that local councils together add up to a very significant feature of the South Australian economy. As I have indicated, local government expenditure is funded in about three separate areas, namely, rates, fees and charges; commonwealth and state grants; and borrowings. The net debt—which of course you have to take into account if you intend to look at the overall financial status of councils—as a whole is approximately \$200 million. But put in the context of local government physical assets, and with estimated value in excess of \$8 billion, local government in this state in an aggregate sense is in a very sound financial position.

The net interest costs in the local government sector expressed as a percentage of its total operating revenue are now running at just over 2 per cent. This is lower than at any point over the past two decades. I should point out also that the local government sector superannuation liabilities are fully funded. If members are interested, I do have a table which I could insert in *Hansard*.

The CHAIRMAN: It is entirely up to you.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: This table has been drawn together by the Office of Local Government.

Mr VENNING: Are you sure that it is purely statistical?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Yes, I assure the honourable member that it is purely statistical. The Office of Local Government has drawn together this information from the finances of all councils in South Australia, looking at a four-year period, and it summarises local government sector finances on a very simplified ABS government finance statistics accrual based format.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The table is purely statistical, sir. Its contents clearly show the very sound financial position of the local government sector as a whole in South Australia. So I am very pleased to be able to table that. There are copies if members would like it.

Local Government Sector in South Australia
Financial Performance Data Based on a Simplified ABS Government
Finance Statistics Accrual Based Framework

		1996-97 \$M	1997-98 \$M	1998-99 \$M	1999-2000 \$M
	Operating Revenue	765	769	805	862
Less	Operating Expenses	809	851	889	936
Add	Capital Revenue	37	54	44	56
Add	Abnormal & Extraordinary Items				
		(1)	(6)	4	2
Equals	Change in Net Assets Resulting from Operations	(8)	(34)	(36)	(16)

Local Government Sector in South Australia
Financial Performance Data Based on a Simplified ABS Government
Finance Statistics Accrual Based Framework

		1996-97 \$M	1997-98 \$M	1998-99 \$M	1999-2000 \$M
Less	Net Cost of Acquisition of Non-financial Assets				
	(See Note (a))	11	(35)	(52)	(31)
Equals	Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(19)	1	16	15

(a) Being capital expenditure, less proceeds from sale of assets, less depreciation.

Ms KEY: It is a wonder with such an economic boom in the local government area that the minister is only a junior minister. It seems exceptional that someone who contributes so much is not a senior minister, as I certainly think she should be.

As the member for Schubert has not had to refer to budget paper references, I will not do so, either, for my next question. I would like to know what is going to happen to the Local Government Disaster Fund—I do not know whether I missed this in your opening statement—beyond 30 June 2001? As the minister would probably know, the Local Government Disaster Fund was created in 1990, and since that time revenue has been accrued, as I understand, through a .005 per cent contribution from financial institutions duty. I also understand that come 1 July the GST arrangements between the commonwealth and the states will abolish the FID.

I wonder, first, what will happen to that fund. I understand that it has been responsible for Ash Wednesday bush fire settlements; floods (I think the member for Schubert last year in estimates commented on the assistance that was forwarded to his area with regard to the floods in February 2000); and we have heard about the locust plague and about all sorts of pestilence, including the European wasp. As I understand it, it is quite a substantial fund, and I am told by South Australian regional councils that the amount involved is currently \$6.5 million per annum. I would like the minister, first, to confirm the amount of money that we are talking about—probably adding to what I would see as a program of rural agrarian socialism being put forward by the Liberals in this state—but also to explain what is going to happen, if anything, if this fund is not going to continue.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I thank the member for the question, and perhaps I should return the compliment in the first instance to the member's opening gambit to her question. It really is nice to be able to come into an estimates committee and have members of the opposition actually ask questions on local government because, as it turns out, for the past 18 months there has not been one question asked of me about local government. I do appreciate the opportunity to hear questions from the opposition. I was beginning to believe that you did not have any interest in this particular area of the state's finances.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It is an important question, and I thank the member for the question. It is generally agreed that the arrangements that were jointly initiated by the Local Government Association and the state government in 1990 to establish the Local Government Disaster Fund have been successful. The fund has now extinguished the very large financial obligations that the member spoke about (and that relates to the former District Council of Stirling) which were

taken over by the state following settlement of the 1980 Ash Wednesday bush fire claims.

The Local Government Disaster Fund, as you may be aware, is overseen by the Local Government Disaster Fund Management Committee. The fund can be accessed for expenditures related to events that are deemed by the committee to be related to a disaster or an uninsurable event. Many of the events that the member spoke about in her question obviously are areas that could be considered by that committee.

Although an approved purpose for expenditure is preventative or mitigation works, the committee to date has not approved any such significant expenditure. The Local Government Disaster Fund, as the honourable member rightly asked in her question, has been funded by a specified proportion of revenue from the state's financial institutions duty. Of course, the honourable member would also be aware that, as part of national taxation reforms, financial institutions duty was abolished from 1 July 2001. The Disaster Fund Management Committee provided a detailed Future Issues report to the Treasurer, the Local Government Association President and me in late January this year.

That report canvassed a very large range of options as sources of income for that fund for future use. The estimated balance in the fund as at 30 June 2001 is some \$36 million. The honourable member is also correct with respect to the amounts to which she referred which, I think, are closer to about \$6 million and which does come into that fund from the federal area. An earlier actuarial report on the fund concluded that, post July 2001, interest alone would and should be sufficient to meet the future claims of the fund from councils.

Before resolving the details of the future operations of the fund, the Treasurer, the Local Government Association President and I are awaiting the results of a survey that was commissioned on the implications of the fund assisting with large scale prevention mitigation works. Until that survey is completed and we have managed to look at whatever recommendations emerge from it, I can offer no details to the honourable member at this point on the future operations of the fund other than to say that it is anticipated that the fund will still continue to operate.

Ms KEY: As a supplementary question: assuming that the scheme would continue, and I understand what the minister is saying about the balance at the moment being quite considerable (although if there is a big disaster \$36 million may not be what is required), has the minister considered any future financial modelling in terms of how the fund may continue, or is she waiting for the results of this actuarial report or modelling?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: As I stated to the honourable member, the actuarial report that was completed post July 2001 did advise that interest income alone should, in fact, be sufficient to meet the future claims on that fund according to

the relativity balances that were taken, together with the expenditure from the past, the increase of the total amounts of the funds and what the future then would depict on relativity comparisons. At this point there does not appear to be any problem with the fund continuing on that basis. Before we make further decisions, we will assess the operational management of the fund after we receive the survey report that has now been commissioned for us all to look at.

Ms KEY: Presumably this information has been made available to the regional councils, because their budget submission last year (November 2000) indicates that this was a big issue for them. Having met with SAROC in the past couple of months, my understanding is that this is still a big issue for them.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: At this point, the President of the Local Government Association has not released that report to councils. I think it is thought that, until we have all of the information and assessed a position, that would probably be the appropriate time to look at what material we have used being accessed throughout the local government area.

Ms KEY: I notice from a leaked document from Mr McCann, CEO of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, that an intergovernment relations branch has been established from the cabinet office, and I know that others have been established previously. What is the relationship between the division of the cabinet office and the Office of Local Government and will the minister assure this committee that this is not a duplication of services already undertaken by the Office of Local Government?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I am not quite sure what the member is referring to. There is certainly inter-relationship agency cooperation, and therefore there are areas where groups are set up to facilitate whatever outcomes those groups are set up for. However, in this instance I am not quite

sure what the member is referring to. It is obviously nice to have a leaked document, but I do not have a copy of that same leaked document. It really means nothing to me at the present time.

Ms KEY: It could be the only advantage of being in opposition. I am talking about the fact that you have an Office of Local Government and I want to know whether there are any functions that Premier and Cabinet are doing that, in fact, duplicate the work that your office does.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: As I have said, not knowing the background to the basis for the questions I can only suggest that in most cases these types of arrangements through Premier and Cabinet relate to state and commonwealth matters. I cannot make any further comment because I am still rather in the dark about the paper in your possession.

Ms KEY: We are talking about state-commonwealth not state-local government.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Once again, I cannot give an absolute on that. It could well relate because we do have inter-related groups within state government—the agencies link with local government. All I can suggest is that there are two areas where an answer would well fit; whether it is within the state-commonwealth range or the cross agency of government with local government.

Ms KEY: Will the minister provide a list of names, titles and classifications of all Office of Local Government employees, specifying in each individual case whether the employees are permanent public servants or contract employees? In the case of contract employees, will you specify the term of contract and when the contract will expire and, obviously, the contract details?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Yes, I do have that list—not to say that we were anticipating your question, of course. I will insert the table in *Hansard* without my reading it. It lists the names, titles and classifications of Office of Local Government employees.

OLG Employees as at June 2001

Name	Title	Classification	Time Hours	Comments
Anderson C.	Senior Project Officer	ASO6	0.8	
Archer P.	Principal Policy Officer	ASO7	0.8	
Bailey R.	Support Services Officer	ASO2	1.0	
Barber B.	Senior Project Officer	ASO6	0.6	Seconded from Transport SA until 28/9/01
Barrett F.	Senior Project Officer	ASO6	1.0	
Crocker P.	Project Officer	ASO5	1.0	
Brown I.	Director, Strategy & Policy	MAS3	1.0	
Dayman C.	Senior Project Officer	ASO7	1.0	Seconded to Dept Human Services as ASO8 from 17/1/2000—17/1/2002
Forder S.	Senior Project Officer	ASO6	1.0	
Gerlach J.	Director, Operations & Legislative Review	ASO8	1.0	
Graham L.	Senior Policy Analyst	ASO8	0.8	Seconded from DPC to 30/6/01
Haslam J.	Senior Project Officer	ASO6	1.0	Seconded to Transport SA to 31/12/01
Hassam M.	Personal Assistant	ASO3	1.0	
Hore C.	Senior Project Officer	ASO6	1.0	
Pham T.	Project Officer	ASO3	1.0	Temporary appointment to 26/2/02
Procter C.	Executive Director	EXB01	1.0	5 year contract to 27/4/03. Tenured
Rimington G.	Senior Project Officer	ASO6	0.9	Currently on leave until 20/7/01
Sarris E.	Support Services Officer	ASO3	0.4	
Skuborg L.	Support Services Officer	ASO2	1.0	

OLG Employees as at June 2001

Name	Title	Classification	Time Hours	Comments
Starr R.	Principal Policy Officer	ASO7	0.8	
Tyler P.	Director, Development Initiatives	ASO8	1.0	
Velardo G.	Support Services Officer	ASO3	0.8	
Wright J.	Executive Consultant, Finance	EXA01	1.0	Seconded from Dept of Treasury & Finance until 30/9/01. Contract. Tenured.
Wyman J.	Senior Business Support Officer	ASO5	1.0	

Statutory Authorities

Local Government Grants Commission

Name	Title	Classification	Time Hours	Comments
Gascoigne J.	Executive Officer	ASO7	1.0	
Kulesza K.	Project Officer	ASO3	1.0	
McKay D.	Research Officer	ASO4	1.0	

Outback Areas Community Development Trust

Name	Title	Classification	Time Hours	Comments
Armistead M.	Administrative Support Officer	ASO2	1.0	
Gollan D.	General Manager	ASO7	1.0	3 year contract from 30/3/01-30/4/04
Pyle J.	Executive Officer	ASO5	1.0	

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, employees are permanent public servants.

Mr CONDOUS: How often do you meet with the Lord Mayor of Adelaide? Is it on a regular basis or only now and again? Are there regular meetings?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I like to believe that I have established a fairly good relationship with the Lord Mayor of the Adelaide City Council. We have had extensive meetings in the past and in most cases they are on a needs basis. There is a very easy relationship; that is, we have a meeting if a matter needs to be discussed. However, with an ongoing issue we would meet quite regularly: it is simply a matter of a phone call and the meeting takes place. I would say that it is a good relationship and on a fairly regular basis.

Mr CONDOUS: What are you saying?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: In the instance of having an issue up front that the state government wants to discuss totally with the Adelaide City Council, which would have been the case with the consultation draft of the Adelaide parklands bill, there are fairly frequent meetings not only with the Lord Mayor but other members of council and council staff. So, in relation to that bill meetings were held fairly frequently. Weeks and days pass very frequently in this business, but I would suggest that it was on a fortnightly to three weekly basis. As you know, that issue has been referred to a select committee, so at the moment there is no requirement to speak so solidly on that issue to the Adelaide City Council. However, issues arise on an ad hoc basis and it is a situation where, as the needs arise, I have no doubt that the Lord Mayor would pick up the phone to my office and I would be able to do the same to him.

Mr SCALZI: My question refers to the European wasp. I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 7.70. This is a serious matter, because it can cause a lot of problems and it has. Will the minister explain the steps the Government is taking to combat the European wasp?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: It is indeed an important question and I thank the honourable member for the opportunity to talk about it. Together with the local government sector, the government, as I am sure all members know, has been

conducting a three part program to combat the European wasp. The state government and the Local Government Association both signed a statement of intent in 1998 to undertake a program of European wasp related research, public education and nest destruction. The funding for the program is sourced from the state government through the Office of Local Government, the Local Government Disaster Fund and contributions made by councils.

With regard to the research aspect of the program, members may be aware that Luminis, the research arm of the University of Adelaide, has been contracted to undertake the work in this area to the value of some \$600 000 over a four year period. The program includes research into baiting and biological control, together with studies on ecology and wasp population modelling. Luminis is due to provide a final report on the outcomes of the research program in June 2002. I found most interesting that an insecticide, which was initially trialled in New Zealand, has been found to be considerably more toxic to wasps than previous chemicals we have trialled and that is now being utilised here in South Australia as part of that baiting program.

Mr SCALZI: Is it not harmful to humans?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Not to my understanding, but it is one of the higher toxin levels used in the battle against wasps that have so far been detected. New Zealand has had considerable problems with European wasps probably for a lot longer than we have and its research over a 10 year period has been significant. It has not yet been able to come up with an absolute answer to this question, but it found this insecticide, which Luminis is also looking at. There was the extensive public education program, which members probably remember—Wanda the Wasp—aimed at alerting the public to the appearance of the European wasp.

That has been completed and the agreed program includes retrospective subsidies to councils for nest destruction and these subsidies are paid from the joint equalisation fund managed by the LGA. The state government has allocated \$70 000 for payment into the equalisation fund for nest

destruction for last year's wasp season and a further \$70 000 will be provided for the coming financial year, which is beyond the term of the current agreement. This will enable the existing funding arrangements to continue until the research program is finalised, so the results of this work can be taken into account when we look at reviewing the future of the European wasp control program. It is proposed that such a review be undertaken during this coming financial year by the Office of Local Government and the Local Government Association. We are all living in some hope that part of the new chemicals and biological controls now being trialled might get us closer to a solution that will combat what is a very significant problem.

Mr SCALZI: Because of the National Year of the Outback in 2002, there is a rise in interest in outback areas of South Australia—and I hope the European wasp does not travel that far. What is the government doing to provide for the prudent and coordinated administration of outback Australia in the future?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Again, it is a very important question because, as members may be aware, the Outback Areas Community Development Trust, which looks at that area that you are talking about, was, in fact, established in 1978 to carry out development works and also to provide services for local community organisations in its area of responsibility, which is those parts of South Australia which are outside of local government, excluding the Aboriginal lands. A major driver in establishing the trust was to provide a vehicle to receive commonwealth financial assistance grants to local communities in the outback areas. The trust was also mandated to make grants and loans to local community organisations, to foster the development of those organisations, to exercise and carry out the functions of a de facto local government body, if you like, in relation to its area and to carry out works that improve, promote or facilitate communications within or outside of that area.

The trust currently provides assistance to 35 local community organisations in the outback area of South Australia. In 1999, 22 years after its establishment, a review panel reported to the government on the trust's operations and its performance. The government's response to the review report resulted in the establishment of new directions for the trust and, in particular, the new directions will see the trust become proactive as well as responsive, setting out strategic management plans for the outback areas—again, helping the communities develop their own plans and integrating and coordinating planning and services across agencies and communities.

To streamline the trust's administration, a strategic planning process has been developed, a performance agreement has been entered into with me as Minister for Local Government and a new position of general manager has been created for the trust. The main focus for the trust in the important forthcoming year will be to assist communities in developing their own strategic community plans. A partnership is being formed at the moment with the Northern Regional Development Board which will, obviously, assist this process.

So, together with the Office of Local Government, the Outback Areas Community Development Trust facilitated a meeting of stakeholders at Roxby Downs on 17 and 18 May for the purpose of advancing the concept of Outback SA. Outback SA is, essentially, an administrative and coordination arrangement and it brings state government agencies that provide services to outback South Australia together in a

single location. Initiated by the trust, the Roxby Downs conference was aimed at developing and clarifying the roles and the responsibilities of the various agencies and groups that operate and provide services within the outback areas. The conference was designed to bring together people involved in service delivery in the outback areas as well as members of the outback communities.

A key goal of the Outback SA conference was to explain the various roles and responsibilities of agencies delivering services and for agencies to hear first hand from other service delivery people and from communities. The trust's action in initiating the Outback SA conference is certainly consistent with this government's decision on future directions for the trust, which sees the trust as a lead coordinating agency for Outback SA.

Eighty-three people from 60 organisations attended that two day conference, and considerable momentum, I am advised, developed over the two days in favour of bringing government and community together on a regular basis. It is now intended that the trust will convene an outback community working party which will produce an outcomes paper, including details on how these suggested new working arrangements could, in fact, function.

So, the conference and the actions that flow from it are important initiatives for the trust and the outback areas of South Australia. I think you will understand from all the comments that I have made about this that this will ensure that the trust will certainly play the leading role intended for it by the state government in looking to secure the needed coordination of outback services for the protection and enhancement of outback areas and the people who live there.

Mr SCALZI: I draw the minister's attention to a recent announcement by the commonwealth government about the level of general purpose financial assistance grants to be made available to local government for the financial year 2001-02. Will the minister comment on the amount of funding that is available for councils in South Australia?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The coming year's federal budget for general purpose financial assistance for local government provides an estimated national allocation of \$1.4 billion. South Australia expects to receive about \$97.3 million. Of this amount \$74.1 million will be in the form of general purpose grants and \$23.2 million will constitute identified road grants. Whilst both pools are untied when paid to local government, they are in fact subject to different methods of distribution by the South Australian and Local Government Grants Commission.

Allocations to South Australia for the coming financial year represent an increase in funds available to local government in this state of some \$2.6 million or 2.77 per cent when compared with the previous financial year. Notwithstanding the increase in funding for South Australia for the coming year, it is of great concern to me that our state's share of the funding compared to that of other states is continuing to reduce. This is clearly evidenced by statistics that show that in the financial year 1991-92, just a decade ago, South Australia received 7.75 per cent of the national local government financial assistance grants, but the allocation for this coming financial year will see South Australia receiving only 7.12 per cent of the national pool of funds.

Mr Scalzi interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: That's right. If South Australia had received 7.75 per cent of the coming year's pool, we would have received an additional \$9.2 million—a total grant of \$106.5 million. When broken down into the two compo-

nents of the financial assistance grants, the state receives only 7.79 per cent of the general purpose grants and it receives only 5.5 per cent of the identified road grants from the national pool. As you can see, this is clearly inequitable.

The general purpose grants allocation is made between the states and territories on an equal per capita basis. Per capita funding cannot take account of the relatively higher needs of South Australia particularly when compared with states such as New South Wales and Victoria. This inequity is compounded in the case of the identified road grants. The federal government is not able to explain how these grants are shared between the states and territories. Its only explanation is that the distribution is historical, an explanation which fails to provide any logic or justification for South Australia receiving the lowest identified road grant whether judged on a dollar per kilometre or dollar per capita basis. Although South Australia has 11.7 per cent of Australia's local roads, we receive only 5.5 per cent of the available funding.

Mr SCALZI: So we fail on both a per capita basis and on the basis of square kilometre of road.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The honourable member is quite right. Whether it is judged on either of those two bases, we still lose out quite considerably and, more generally, South Australia receives less than a per capita share of such funds and a lower per road length amount than any other state or territory. Members should be aware that I, together with other colleagues including the Premier, have been campaigning strenuously to redress this equity, especially as it relates to roads.

I am pleased to say that the commonwealth's Roads to Recovery program has in part addressed this inequity. Under the four year program which commenced last year, 8.3 per cent of the program funds have been allocated to local governing authorities in South Australia. Of course, we will be satisfied only when we can get about the 8.3 per cent in all aspects of allocation that address the inequity that we are talking about.

Mr SCALZI: One would have thought that would happen under federation.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: We could only but hope.

Ms CICCARELLO: In the Norwood council area, a couple of things have happened recently which affect its budget: first, the local government drainage subsidy scheme has been reduced from \$4 million to \$2 million; and, secondly, there has been the introduction of quarterly billing for rates in South Australia. The Norwood council amalgamated with St Peters and Payneham councils and did all the things that were required through the amalgamation process in downsizing, streamlining and passing reduced rates to its ratepayers. Since then, in terms of asset management it has found that one council needs to spend \$2 million on upgrading the drainage system in the former St Peters council area.

There has been an increase in costs and a reduction in funding available to councils. Councils originally sent one rate bill a year, which was able to be paid in four instalments. Then two bills a year were introduced, and that involved a subsequent increase in cost in terms of administration, and so on. It has been worked out that quarterly billing will further increase pressure on councils. How does the minister suggest that the councils will be able to find the extra funding required, other than by increasing the rates or reducing the programs in which they are involved?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The drainage area does not come under the strict area of my responsibility. I do not have the information that you probably would seek. I understand the

honourable member's point. As she would know, from 1 July this year councils must offer their ratepayers the option to pay rates in four quarterly payments. This measure was supported by all political parties when the Local Government Act was debated. I think the honourable member will agree that the intent of the parliament at the time was to provide an equitable base for a significant financial impost on ratepayers—our constituency—across the board. The debate in that area definitely showed that this was something about which parliament was quite serious. Many of our utilities have quarterly payments, and it was felt that local government should comply with a far more flexible system that would allow a better equitable base amongst ratepayers to have a further choice to ease the financial burden in the payment of those rates.

The measure provides a significant benefit to ratepayers by giving them the option of spreading the payment of rates across the financial years. Councils have had some 18 months to prepare for this introduction. It is only an option, but it must be offered, and councils can still offer the single payment option. To encourage early payment of rates, councils can grant discounts or provide other incentives. If the ratepayer chooses quarterly payments, three reminder rates notices must be sent, such as is the law through the Local Government Act. A rating policy summary must be sent with each quarterly rates notice. However, we are looking at the removal of this requirement which is contained in the Statutes Amendment (Local Government) Bill 2000 which is before the Legislative Council at present. Councils can also offer alternative payment options such as four consecutive monthly instalments which ratepayers may choose to accept. Councils can also offer alternatives as long as the ratepayer has the option of quarterly payments with quarterly reminders.

I know that some councils have stated publicly that they are looking at a rate increase of around 2 per cent to cover the cost of the introduction of quarterly rate payments. However, the Adelaide City Council has announced, and I notice from articles in some of today's country papers that a couple of country councils have also announced this, that costs associated with quarterly rate notices will be absorbed. There will be a loss of short-term investment opportunity by councils where ratepayers choose the quarterly payment option but the amount of this lost investment opportunity will be roughly offset by ratepayers earning additional interest on their savings or obviating the need to borrow funds to pay their rates earlier in the financial year.

Of course, the proportion of ratepayers who choose to take up the option of quarterly instalments will significantly affect the ongoing cost of administration and forgone interest, and that proportion will vary from council to council. A number of councils already offer quarterly or regular payment options and councils may find that, after the introduction costs of the first year, processing costs are not much higher than with the previous system. Overall, from discussions that I have held and comments that have been made back to me, a number of councils are looking at absorbing a great deal of the cost. But, once again, it will be interesting to see to what degree people pick up the quarterly option.

Some councils have suggested that between 25 and 30 per cent of people may pick it up and, there again, whatever the proportion is, it is relative to the cost to council or the lesser cost to council. That will be established throughout the next year and probably rationalised the year after. Some councils have had a quarterly rating system for a long time. However,

as I say, apart from the fact that parliament sets the terms for introduction of quarterly payments, the only other method that I have any input into that could alleviate some cost to councils is in the production of the rate policies that have to be sent out four times with quarterly rating. I do not believe that was the intent of the legislation, to put councils in a situation where they had to quadruplicate their rating policy when sending out rating notices.

To that end, the statutes amendment bill that is before parliament at the moment seeks to address and would alleviate the financial circumstances in which councils might find themselves. However, that bill seems to be addressing Barton Road through different members with amendments in the upper house, so while the bill sits there not being addressed it is of no good to councils. Unless those measures are passed by the end of this month, councils will not get the benefit of financial redress through one aspect in which we could assist. While the opposition and the Hon. Nick Xenophon hold up that bill, there is nothing further that I can offer.

Ms KEY: I noticed that in both Budget Paper 5 and Budget Paper 8 there is an initiative, electronic citizens' guide to local government, for which I commend the government because I think it is an excellent proposal. My first question dealing with that guide is whether it is the same initiative. I note in Budget Paper 8, which is what I call the agrarian socialism document—the regional statement—that \$100 000 has been put down for that program, and I wonder whether that is different from what access might be given or money might be paid to develop or advertise such a guide in urban areas. How can the minister ensure that disadvantaged people without access to computer internet connections will be able to access the electronic citizens' guide? How will the government ensure that the citizens' guide addresses the issues that citizens want to inquire about as to their rights and remedies in its development and ongoing improvement?

What are the anticipated costs of the consultants' fees in developing the guide? What assurances is the minister prepared to put on record to protect the privacy and confidentiality of inquiries being made by people who access the guide? Can the Ombudsman be brought into this process to report to parliament about the quality of advice and the appropriateness of issues addressed in development privacy, confidentiality and the appropriateness with regard to continuous improvement in such a guide?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I do recall at the beginning of the question that the member was quite supportive, but by the time the member reached the end of her question I was not sure whether that was the case.

Ms Key interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The electronic citizens' guide is estimated to cost about \$100 000. The proposal is being developed at the present time, but it is looking to complement the government's emphasis in the new Local Government Act on the accountability of councils to their communities for their decisions and activities. As the member would well know, the act addresses in very strong terms the roles and responsibilities of local government but particularly looks at openness and accountability to our ratepayers. This is a means of productively being able to put in easy to read form to members of the public information about the roles and responsibilities of councils and citizens' rights, and perhaps looking at remedies that we have under the Local Government Act.

This is not a means of necessarily addressing the on the ground operational and management problems or issues that may arise through councils. This is a means of taking the Local Government Act with all its flexibility, openness and accountability in an attempt to provide the type of information that the act itself enables to promote the rights of citizens and our residents to access and gain a greater understanding of where they can address a rights issue on their own behalf through an available guide such as this. The member asks about disadvantaged and perhaps disabled people's access to this type of—

Ms KEY: The computer illiterate.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Again we have some very well serviced libraries throughout most of our communities. In fact, even some of our mobile libraries, which still exist throughout many of our constituencies, also have computers on board. There will be a range of access points to be able to access something like the citizen's guide.

Ms KEY: Parliamentary officers?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I do not see why not; if it is on the web, it is open to anyone who at least knows how to operate a computer and seek some information. It is an attempt to look at a very positive means of providing information. Sometimes people feel they do not have an opportunity to understand acts of parliament, especially acts relating so closely to them which contain services and benefits to them on the ground. I would hope that there will be—and I am sure there will be because, once again, consultation is the basis of the way in which we operate; and certainly the Office of Local Government is renowned for its means of tapping into citizenry and community in terms of local councils—a great degree of consultation on how best to present this type of information to gain the best opportunity for people on the ground to have a greater ability to know their rights and, where possible, ensure that they can demand their rights from either their councils or their councillors and have the ability to deal with officers of councils when they need certain information.

I am sure that it will be a very positive thing. I do not know that bringing the Ombudsman into this in any way at this point serves a necessary purpose to provide the type of information that we are looking at—which, in most cases, would be legal interpretations of the act, to provide a clearer interpretive information service to people on the ground.

Ms KEY: Output class 9, highlights for 2000-01, dot point 13, describes published successful reconciliation initiatives in local government. The targets for 2001-02 do not make any reference to this process. Will the minister provide a list of reconciliation initiatives (I know that the minister touched on this matter earlier in her introduction) and those which will, hopefully, continue in the next financial year?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: On 21 November 2000, immediately following the Local Government Association annual general meeting, the President of the Local Government Association and I jointly launched a publication that was entitled 'Examples of working together in South Australia'. The publication is in the form of a booklet, and it showcases some 30 practical examples of activities where South Australian councils and Aboriginal communities are, in fact, working together to achieve beneficial outcomes locally. The activities profiled are certainly diverse. They reflect the many paths to promoting reconciliation and the obvious positive community relations that are part of the outcomes from that. The publication was compiled by the Local Government

Association of South Australia in conjunction with the broader review project that involved the Office of Local Government, the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, ATSIIC and councils.

The booklet is designed to encourage and promote discussion on creative reconciliation activities of councils. Of course, it can be used as a tool to help build relationships that illustrate what, in fact, can be achieved with a willingness to have a go. The production of this booklet, I would suggest, is also an opportunity to pay tribute to those councils and communities that are, in fact, putting reconciliation into practice at the present time. It is very heartening to see that several of our councils have taken on Aboriginal people as community liaison officers. I can assure the member, from discussions that I have had with both councils and the officers, that they are not considered in any way to be token positions. They are, in fact, true and professional employment outcomes for Aboriginal people, and they certainly have been known to produce a great deal of benefit to the community in terms of liaison not only with Aboriginal communities, of course, but with all aspects of local government.

Some of the projects that have been developed with the assistance of Aboriginal liaison officers will benefit not only the community at large but also tourism areas and the promotion of Aboriginal history and culture—which, of course, has a very great educative base to it. I believe that all the people involved in putting the document together are extremely pleased that it can be used as a model throughout other areas (and not necessarily restricted to local councils) to show the case histories of existing operations that have proved to be very successful. So, it was an achievement, and we applaud all those who took part in the production of this document.

Ms KEY: I am not sure whether or not this comes under the minister's area of responsibility, but I wanted to ask about the septic tank effluent disposal schemes (STEDS), and I imagine there would be a cross between the minister and the Minister for Water Resources. Again I am referring to page 7.33 of the Budget Papers but also to the South Australian Regional Council's budget submission of November 2000, which talks about their concern.

I know that concern has been echoed in both general meetings and the annual general meeting of the Local Government Association with regard to the 33-year wait that is anticipated for the STED scheme being introduced, and also the concern that, if there is no increase to the current level of \$3.05 million per annum, basically it is going to be a very slow process. A number of suggestions were made in the submission about how that process could be fast-tracked. When they say 'fast-tracked', they are talking about perhaps a 10-year turnover as opposed to a 33-year turnover.

The submission said that they understand that the state local government agreement runs out in June this year and, as far as SAROC was concerned (and this was confirmed a couple of months ago when I met with that group), no other agreement has been put in place. Is the minister in a position to respond on that program? It was a bit difficult from the regional document to get a clear understanding of what the government's commitment would be in that area. Can the minister comment on the agreement and what the future plans are?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: The honourable member is right in terms of the areas of responsibility that do not overlap specifically into the local government area; neither does it belong in the water resources area, it is actually the Minister

for Government Enterprises. However, I can advise the honourable member that, under what would be classed as the most recent septic tank effluent disposal scheme agreement with the Local Government Association, the state government has been contributing \$3.5 million per year in funds that are administered by the Local Government Association for the provision of effluent disposal schemes in country centres.

Earlier in the year, the Local Government Association made quite a lot of the fact that the waiting list for STED scheme assistance was gaining in length. The Minister for Government Enterprises, who has this area of responsibility, has announced an increase in funding for the next two years, which will be administered under the same terms as the last agreement. The increase takes the state contribution from \$3.05 million to some \$4 million and for each of the next two years. During that time, the minister has made it very clear that the whole basis of the agreement itself would be reviewed to determine whether ways may be found of approaching STED schemes funding that would reduce the waiting time more quickly.

However, the honourable member would have to direct more detailed questions on that particular area to the Minister for Government Enterprises. I can tell the honourable member that I am aware of the submission from SAROC (the South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils), which was forwarded to the Premier and others and which outlined their views on priorities that should affect the state budget.

An important consequence of the recent council amalgamations, as we have talked about tonight, has been the strengthening of the regional association of councils. The submission to the state budget from what is a relatively new umbrella organisation for the country, regional and local government associations is a relatively new way of drawing to the attention of state government the needs and priorities of country councils. As members well know, the state budget is organised along functional lines and SAROC was recommended to take up its issue with the relevant ministers. Obviously there are many ways in which the forward planning of state agencies and local government councils may impact on each other, and obviously the whole area is one of considerable interest to the state and local government partnerships program. It would be unfortunate to constrain the exploration of the range of improvements by connecting the area too closely with SAROC. I would suggest that it is one of many routes for the state government and local government councils to get to know and understand each other's objectives and priorities much better.

At this point, anything else on the STEDS would need to come from the Minister for Government Enterprises, but I hope that covers most of the questions you asked in that area. I thank the officers for their attendance and the committee for its serious and most intelligent questioning.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Rathman, Chief Executive, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr M. Smith, Financial Coordinator.

Mr R. Starkie, Executive Assistant.

Ms D. Robb, Executive Project Officer.

Mr N. Stewart, Senior Project Officer.

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

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Yes, Mr Chairman. This is now my fourth year as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and I wish

to place on public record the enjoyment that I have received from this very challenging portfolio. I have personally felt honoured to accept the opportunities that have been given to me as part of this portfolio to continue a close working relationship with people within the Aboriginal community, and I certainly look forward to continuing it in the future. In the 2000-01 year the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs has again been successful in addressing the many issues that are important to Aboriginal communities. This has included issues that are not directly under the portfolio of Aboriginal affairs but are still highly significant, including health, education, justice, housing and training.

The department faces many tests and confronts them in a way that has provided strong services to the Aboriginal community. I cannot think of a department which would be as open to its clients and which makes itself so accessible to the people it serves. This openness, of course, is a two-edged sword that results in a high level of communication but also creates constant challenges that are successfully addressed by the department.

The highlights for 2000-01 are well documented on pages 7.29 and 7.30 of the Portfolio Statement, volume 2, and they certainly deserved to be placed on record. I should also take this opportunity to highlight the success this government has had with advancing reconciliation throughout the state. Since the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was disbanded in December 2000, the newly established State Reconciliation Council South Australia and the South Australian government have endeavoured to continue the celebration and motivation for reconciliation. Not only did the government make a commitment of \$100 000 to assist the State Reconciliation Council in its development and ongoing administration but it has also given it in-kind support through the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs to help the council develop a memorandum of understanding.

We have had a very successful reconciliation week, which was completed earlier this month. I was invited to jointly launch the week with Shirley Peisley and Dennis Ralph, the co-chairs of the State Reconciliation Council at the Otherwood property in Lenswood, which was most graciously offered as the venue by Roger and Carol Brockhoff, the owners. The week was a time for everyone in the community to come together and support reconciliation. It was a time to explore and acknowledge shared experiences of living in our community, to discover a shared heritage and to understand and respect the local Aboriginal people's culture.

Even though the official events finished on 3 May, I sincerely hope that the message of the week will continue and that people do what they can to advance reconciliation. This coming year will be another important year in the progress of Aboriginal affairs, and targets for the year are identified on page 7.29 of the Portfolio Statement, volume 2.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise that, while the government will be allocating such dedicated resources into supporting Aboriginal people in South Australia, it is just as important that the broader community continues the spirit of reconciliation it has shown and plays a very active role in this area.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to page 7.29 of the Portfolio Statements under output, class 8, 'Aboriginal development, land and heritage', which outlines the government's intention to promote reconciliation and monitor state agencies in the planning and implementation of programs for reconciliation initiatives. Could the minister provide details as to what has

been done to date to promote reconciliation throughout the state?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I think the opening statement would have told the member that this government remains committed to Aboriginal reconciliation and will continue to work to ensure that reconciliation remains a top priority of the state. The state key advisory group, which is convened by the state government through the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, comprises representatives from the Department of Human Services, State Records, the Department of Justice, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Education, Training and Employment, and the Department of Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts.

This group has considered the 'Bringing them home' report and prepared the South Australian government response to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. The group now has the important role of monitoring the implementation of these recommendations. An Aboriginal senior management forum has been established to provide consolidated advice to me as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on a whole-of-government Aboriginal affairs policy. This forum has also been developed in order to reduce the sense of isolation felt by many Aboriginal leaders in executive management, and to establish a recognised body to ensure that policy influence is, of course, maximised.

The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, which came to a close in December 2000, prepared four national strategies with which to advance reconciliation. The South Australian government response was submitted to the council on 9 March 2000. Concerning the draft national strategy to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation provided its final report to the Prime Minister in January 2001. The council's work is now continued by the newly created organisation called Reconciliation Australia. The South Australian government, through the Department for State Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, has provided funding to the newly created State Reconciliation Council South Australia which, as I mentioned earlier, is co-chaired by Ms Shirley Peisley AM and Professor Dennis Ralph.

Indeed, the member for Hartley would certainly appreciate that all the things about which we are talking at the moment he is now a part of, as I had the pleasure of appointing the member for Hartley as my representative on the State Reconciliation Council.

The member is also aware of a memorandum of understanding that has been set up to allow funding provided to the State Reconciliation Council to be utilised. Under the memorandum of understanding I will have responsibility through the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs for the administration of the council budget until such time that it becomes incorporated. So, in line with the community support generated by the council for Aboriginal reconciliation, the State Reconciliation Council is a community-based organisation with a major focus on encouraging the people's movement for reconciliation.

As I have already mentioned, Reconciliation Week through the period 27 May to 3 June was a great success, much of which can be attributed to the assistance from the state government, through the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, provided to the State Reconciliation Council and the many other reconciliation councils and groups throughout the state. In particular, the Department of State Aboriginal

Affairs and the state government promoted Reconciliation Week in South Australia, coordinated events to be held during the week and provided financial and, in some cases, logistical assistance to some events and commemorated the week.

Ms BEDFORD: How much funding?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I am quite happy to repeat that—\$100 000 established the fund through which the memorandum of understanding was signed for an appropriation to cover the expenses of the South Australian Reconciliation Council, as federal funding is no longer available for that particular initiative.

Ms Bedford interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Not that I am aware of.

Ms KEY: My question relates to Budget Paper 8, Regional South Australia, page 39. The last sentence on that page worries me. I have asked a number of people to tell me what it means, and hopefully the minister can. It says:

In this budget the government has allocated \$9.1 million to enable greater harmony and understanding in all areas of the South Australian community on access to land and its resources which may be the subject to a native title claim.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: If the member is referring to issues that are dealt with under the Attorney-General's portfolio as they relate to native title that is not an issue of responsibility under State Aboriginal Affairs.

Ms KEY: It is under '9.4 Enhanced Planning and Coordination at a Regional Level', and it also states:

... government continues to work closely with Aboriginal people...

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Can we have a look at the page that you are looking at? It does not have a relativity at the moment that I can see with our portfolio. Native title is under the Attorney-General.

Ms KEY: I wonder whether the minister could undertake to get an answer from the Attorney-General because, depending on how you interpret it, it could actually be quite a negative statement.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I will undertake to clarify the question, but I certainly believe that it probably relates to the Attorney-General's area.

Mr SCALZI: I refer to Portfolio Statements, page 7.29. Under Output Class 8: Aboriginal Development, Land and Heritage it states that the government will seek to:

Promote partnerships with Aboriginal communities in the advice, planning and development of government service initiatives.

In discussions I have had with the member for Flinders she has raised with me issues regarding regional Aboriginal communities, and on behalf of the member for Flinders I ask the minister: what is being done to address family issues in regional Aboriginal communities?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I thank the honourable member for what is a very important question and one that has put a lot of minds to serious consideration about the ways and means those issues raised by the honourable member can be addressed. The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs has appointed an officer to focus on issues that relate to Aboriginal families. The Women's Families and Youth Officer has assisted many groups and individuals throughout South Australia's Aboriginal communities in regard to family issues. The officer is a member of many government working groups that ensure that relevant issues are raised and addressed.

We also have a direct line between community and government for issues that relate to families. That is the Aboriginal Women's Statewide Advisory Council, which is comprised of community representatives from throughout the state who, again, discuss issues and concerns and projects and programs for Aboriginal people. Several programs to address family issues operate throughout the state, including the Port Augusta Families Project. That has been a very innovative project in its approach to liaising with families who require assistance. The program is about dealing with problems differently to the way in which they have been dealt with in the past.

The Families Project receives referrals to work with families experiencing particularly difficult circumstances. There have been very positive results from the program, including an increase in school attendances, a decrease in medical requirements and hospital admissions, the completion of community service orders, the repayment of debts (especially utility bills), a decrease in gambling and alcohol abuse and, certainly, a more stable accommodation factor for the clients themselves. Other programs with a particular focus on the reduction of domestic violence within Aboriginal communities operate throughout the state in partnership with the commonwealth.

The Ceduna Aboriginal Women's Group runs a program entitled Kunta Wia, which means 'no shame'. The project aims to work with 12 to 17 year-old students known to have some violence in their family background in order to strengthen their culture, their self-identity and certainly their life skills. This program is being implemented through the flexible learning curriculum of the Ceduna Area School. Also, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement in Ceduna operates the Ceduna Community Family Violence Project, which is based on community involvement and overarching for meetings that identify factors contributing to and strategies that can be used to address family violence.

A project plan, I am advised, will be developed from this and key stakeholders in the community will be trained as facilitators to be able to implement that plan. Within the Yorke Peninsula region a project has been developed which aims to develop culturally appropriate support services and which looks at early intervention and prevention strategies through community consultation and partnerships with actual service providers. The project is run by the Goretta Aboriginal Corporation. It involves consultation and educational workshops about family violence. I understand that the community will, through the workshops and other consultation, develop an early intervention and prevention policy.

There is also a project titled Good Protection for Women, which is hosted by the NPY Women's Council in the north-west of the state. The project was developed by the NPY Women's Council. The program necessarily operates in remote communities across the borders of Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia. It is regarded as a model of best practice in family violence prevention. The honourable member's question was very important. A number of projects are continually being developed to look at enhancing the means by which we deal with what can be incredibly complex situations in people's lives.

It again demonstrates the government's commitment to helping Aboriginal people improve their lives and provide for their families. Indeed, I would consider that these are the types of projects we talk about as a very fine example of looking at practical reconciliation.

Ms KEY: My question relates to deaths in custody. Is the minister satisfied with the progress of the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody? Will the minister give a commitment for the future funding for the position of Aboriginal Justice Liaison Officer? I note with some concern that there is a question mark about the funding of this position. Will this program be expanded into regional and remote areas?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: This is a serious issue. I think the member would realise—as perhaps would the member for Florey—the definitions of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. There have been five deaths since 1 July 2000. Prior to that it was reported that a death occurred during a police pursuit in May 2000. There have been no deaths in custody between this incident and 1998. The state government, through the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, has developed a protocol with the State Coroner in the event of a death in custody. The protocol allows the department to review police files after the South Australian police have finalised their investigation, and to review any other relevant documents, reports, agreements and perhaps previous coronial recommendations.

Following these reviews, DOSSA will prepare a written report for the coroner to contribute to the inquest process. DOSSA's role is as a monitoring agency within government outlining potential breaches of royal commission recommendations. The department will distribute its report to all parties prior to the inquest. As is its current practice, the department can pass onto counsel assisting any relevant information, such as witnesses who could assist the coronial investigation. The government also continues to work to implement the recommendations of the royal commission. A key initiative has been the Aboriginal Justice Inter-departmental Committee, which meets regularly to explore different ways to implement those recommendations.

The government, through the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, initiated the establishment of a coronial issues working group as a sub-group of the Aboriginal Justice Inter-departmental Committee. That working group comprises representatives from the departments of correctional services, human services, police and Attorney-General as well as the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, and the Aboriginal Justice Advocacy—a committee which the member asked about in her question and which is chaired by the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs. The main purpose of this group is to establish agency ownership of coronial recommendations, to identify processes for responding to recommendations from an inquest and to encourage greater implementation of these recommendations.

There is also a draft memorandum of understanding between member agencies, and the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs is considering that memorandum between agencies in the context of giving consideration to recommendations that were endorsed in findings of inquests. The MOU sets out agreements in respect of the roles and responsibilities negotiated between the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs and the respective agency. The coronial issues working group is also considering the provision of a family support officer to families who become involved in coronial matters in respect of deaths in custody. As a consequence of an earlier finding of inquest recommendation, the Department of Human Services has instigated a research study into the needs of clients with dual disabilities. So, there is indeed a great number of situations developing not only to take into account the very tragic nature of these deaths but to continue

to put in place support mechanisms that attempt to look at prevention, but when these situations occur a whole process of events will take place.

In relation to the funding of the Aboriginal Justice Liaison Officer, in May 1998 the department agreed to fund the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement for an Aboriginal Justice Liaison Officer to provide executive officer services to AJAC and to provide systems advocacy for Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

The department initially agreed to fund the position for a period of two years, subject to the Aboriginal Justice Liaison Officer, with the support of the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and the department, initiating discussions with potential funding bodies, including the Justice Department, to look at securing ongoing funding. At this point those negotiations are still under way. However, the department has subsequently extended its funding agreement from two years to three years. So at the present time there is no concern with that position because it will continue and will give us sufficient time to continue to look at ongoing funding from other sources to ensure that the work of the Aboriginal Justice Liaison Officer continues.

Ms BEDFORD: As a supplementary question, am I to understand that there have been no deaths in custody this year? The figures you were talking about were for the year 2000, so does that mean that nothing has happened this year?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Since 1 July 2000 there have been five deaths.

Ms BEDFORD: I carry on from the question of the member for Hanson on native title which the minister has undertaken to take on notice. Native title is one of the most important issues to Aboriginal people, going to the very heart of their existence, and there is a great deal of goodwill on the part of Aboriginal stakeholders. It is particularly so in the case of indigenous land use agreements. Indeed, the congress of native title management committees in the broader Aboriginal communities are working hard to come to the table to reach mutually agreed positions. There can be no question as to the resources, both financially and in time, that the Aboriginal stakeholders contribute to the future success of these ILUAs. This has saved and will save the state enormous costs by avoiding court and litigation.

Given all of this, will the minister provide details of funding that has been made available to the congress and to Aboriginal involvement in the ILUA process since its formation? Is there a government commitment to adequate future funding and what role does the minister perceive this process will have in regard to reconciliation?

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: I thank the honourable member for her question. I think that she understood the previous question that was asked relating to native title, because my response at that stage was that this is the responsibility of the Attorney-General, not the department of State Aboriginal Affairs. I am quite happy to take that on notice. I would like, though, to comment that we are all aware of the ILUA agreements which have been very successful in determining outcomes with Aboriginal communities on native claim subjects. Obviously a great many dollars are put into pursuing the legal complications that arise around this whole subject and I am quite sure the Attorney-General will be able to provide you with the amounts as we seek an answer.

I also add that where the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement has become the ratified body to deal with all legal matters relating to native title through the federal government, and the state government through the Attorney-

General's department has picked up considerable expense in promoting and moving through the difficulties and complexities that lead to the ILUAs, the member herself rightly pointed out that if an ILUA can be completed successfully, obviously the other end of the spectrum is the court and litigation costs that come from taking it into a court related area. So, the ILUAs reduce cost and it is to that end that this government will be seeking support from ATSIC to look at providing funding perhaps not at that end of the spectrum, which it intends to do presently, but looking to perhaps encourage some of the funding resources to the other end,

which the honourable member rightly pointed out has the means to reduce the overall cost and get a very positive result for native title claimants as a result of that agreement.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the votes completed. Thank you, minister and your staff.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10 p.m. the committee adjourned until Thursday 21 June at 11 a.m.