

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Wednesday 31 July 2002****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chairperson:**

Ms M.G. Thompson

Members:

The Hon. M.R. Buckby
 Ms R.K. Geraghty
 Mr K. Hanna
 Dr D. McFetridge
 Mr M.F. O'Brien
 Mr I.H. Venning

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

Department of Transport and Urban Planning,
 \$196 791 000

Administered items for Department of Transport and
 Urban Planning, \$13 980 000

Administered items for Planning SA, \$1 151 000
 TransAdelaide, \$8 068 000

Witness:

The Hon. M.J. Wright, Minister for Transport.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Frisby, Manager, Registration and Licensing,
 Transport SA.

Mr T. Argent, Executive Director, Transport SA.

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

Mr F. Steele, Director, Investment and Planning,
 Transport SA.

Mr M. Paholski, Manager, Portfolio Finance, Office of the
 Chief Executive, Department of Transport and Urban
 Planning.

Ms J. Holmes, Assistant Manager, Budget Strategy,
 Transport SA.

Mr T. Delaney, Manager, Finance, Transport SA.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I know most of you are familiar with the estimates procedure, but I will read it all so that we can make sure that everybody is aware of what is happening today. The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and as such there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. The committee will determine an appropriate time for consideration of proposed payments to facilitate changeover of departmental advisers. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed on a timetable for today's proceedings. Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. Members should ensure that the chair is provided with a completed request to be discharged form. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the Clerk of the House of Assembly by no later than Friday 16 August.

I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition time to make opening statements of about 10 minutes each. There will be a flexible approach to giving

the call for asking questions based on about three questions per member alternating each side. Supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule. A member who is not part of the committee may at the discretion of the chair ask a question. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced. Members unable to complete their questions during proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion on the Assembly *Notice Paper*. 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, it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length.

All questions are to be directed to the minister, not the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a 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—but not today. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to appendix D, page 2 in the Budget Statement and part 9, pages 9.1 to 9.80 in volume 2 of the Portfolio Statements. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Yes. The accrual expenditure budget for Transport SA for 2002-03 is \$510.1 million, with an operating budget of \$375.9 million to be spent on delivering outputs and \$134.2 million being allocated to investing works. When adjusted for the effects of depreciation, the operating budget is \$236.4 million. In cash terms, the government's investment into building, maintaining and operating the road network will be \$223.6 million in 2002-03, compared with the corresponding figure of \$228.4 million for 2001-02. The \$4.8 million reduction between 2001-02 and 2002-03 will be met entirely from cost efficiencies being applied within the department. By keeping the transport budget in line with previous years, the government is signalling the importance it places on transport for building a better society and a better economy. However, there are two areas where the state is falling behind the rest of Australia and where this government is determined to catch up.

The first area is planning. The Department of Transport and Urban Planning is the largest investing agency within government yet, unlike the other states, there is no medium to long-term plan. The government intends to fix the problem by having a draft transport strategy in place by next March. The plan will encompass regulation, policy and operational matters and seek to address all transport modes, that is, rail, road, sea and air. The plan will be integrated and will consider metropolitan and regional area needs. It will ensure that transport decisions have social access and equity on an equal footing with economic development.

A small unit has been formed to prepare the necessary research and to establish the consultative arrangements with stakeholders. I look forward to advising the parliament of its progress. The second area in which South Australia has been asleep at the wheel is in road safety. Averaged over the previous 10 years, South Australia today is 10 per cent below the national average, with only the Northern Territory and Tasmania performing worse.

My recent statement in the house indicated that this government's first priority in road transport is safety. From 2002-03 onwards, a minimum of \$20 million per annum will be set aside for investments that are specifically safety driven.

These investments include \$5.4 million of new funding in 2002-03 consisting of an increase of \$1.7 million in shoulder sealing, the single most effective investment in road safety. By 2003-04 the investment in shoulder sealing will have doubled to \$6.8 million. There will also be a \$3.5 million injection for state black spot investments. The remaining \$15 million in the Safer Roads program includes existing programs of \$3.4 million for shoulder sealing, \$6 million for overtaking lanes, \$1.9 million for three safety driven investments, \$3.3 million for minor safety works and \$500 000 for issues raised in the safety audit, such as guard fence replacement.

The budget investment to improve road safety is the first step in a comprehensive strategy to improve our safety record. The second step, an overhaul of road safety regulation announced in the house on 17 July 2002, complements the capital spending on road safety initiatives. The government's commitment to road safety is far reaching and includes our promise to establish a community road safety fund. In addition, I have asked Transport SA to review its road safety promotion and education material and to work closely with the education area and the police to coordinate a comprehensive communications package.

Finally, all the safety initiatives will be drawn together by the transport strategy that I have already referred to. It is important to recognise that the new priority given to road safety in the budget has come at a time of budget restraint, and there has been a need to reprioritise and reallocate funds to safety initiatives. One effect of this new strategy is that the state government's investment in regional roads will be redistributed from local roads to arterial roads. This decision has been taken deliberately in light of the government's safety commitment and in the knowledge that approximately 70 per cent of serious crashes in regional areas occur on arterial roads.

Of the new safety investments, approximately two thirds will be concentrated into roads in regional South Australia, with four out of the six initial black spots requiring attention being in regional South Australia. To accommodate the new safety investment in shoulder sealing and the state black spot program, reductions have occurred to the regional roads program and outback roads maintenance, together with deferral of sealing the Morgan-Blanchetown and Lucindale-Mount Burr roads. Overall, there is a small net reduction in investment in regional roads of \$0.6 million in 2002-03. However, in the following years there are significant increases—\$2.6 million in 2003-04; \$5.1 million in 2004-05; and \$5.6 million in 2005-06. These increases provide additional funding for shoulder sealing and higher levels of activity in response to rural road safety audits.

In the metropolitan area, work on the reconstruction of the intersection of Torrens Road, Park Terrace and Churchill Road will commence in 2002-03 at a cost of \$5 million as part of the Adelaide Better Roads program. The 2002-03 budget includes \$10 million to be applied to reopening the rail line between Mount Gambier and Wolsley in the South-East, a complementary investment to the safer roads program.

The transport agencies generally and Transport SA are being required to demonstrate that they are operating in the most efficient manner possible and, to this end, a business efficiency program has been built into the budget to deliver savings. This program will ensure that Transport SA contributes to the government's savings targets while maintaining outputs to the community.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I will make a very brief statement. I believe that in regard to transport the budget that has been brought down by the government is very disappointing. It is disappointing because of the fact that there has been a significant shift of funding from rural and regional roads, which I believe is to the detriment of country South Australia. I need only to look at last year's budget where the previous government spent \$10 million on the unsealed rural arterial roads program, whereas this year only \$2.8 million has been allocated. The regional roads program of \$2.2 million, which is money that is collected from the increases in heavy vehicle registration and purposely put to this regional roads program, has disappeared, as has the freight routes improvements program. So, it would appear that not only has the country been particularly targeted in the reorientation of funding but also there has been a cut.

In addition, we were advised only last week that two of the outback road gangs—there are 10 teams—have been advised that their employment will cease in September, which I find a very surprising decision given that this is the Year of the Outback and it is expected that a significantly greater amount of traffic will traverse those roads. I was also advised only the other day that the Strzelecki Track is in particularly poor condition at the moment. So, the thinking behind this particular decision is, I believe, quite surprising, given the circumstances.

In addition to that, I look at the budget papers and I note that there has been a \$9.6 million cut in operational funding for the department, and I can only guess what impact that will have on services and, also, within the transport portfolio. I have a lot of questions so I will not go ahead further with a statement because I believe that time is precious and I would rather ask questions of the minister.

The CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, member for Light. You may now proceed with your questions.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister advise the committee how many reviews have been undertaken or have been scheduled to take place within the portfolio since the government was elected? Which matters do these reviews pertain to? Which consultant or consultancy organisation has been hired to undertake this work, and what is the total cost of these contracts?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The government will take this question on notice and will provide a whole of government approach to these omnibus questions. So, I will get that information for the shadow minister.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister advise the committee which initiatives contained within the government's compact with the member for Hammond have been allocated to this portfolio? How much will they each cost? Will these costs be met by new or existing funding?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: To save time, I give the same answer.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister advise the committee of the number of positions attracting a total employment cost of \$100 000 within all departments and agencies reporting to the minister as at 30 June 2002, and estimates for 30 June 2003? I will explain that question: in August last year the now Premier announced in a media release titled 'An End to Fat Cat Bonuses' that, if elected, the Labor government would significantly change the culture of the public service with a vision for a reinvigorated public sector work force. Later, in February this year, in a letter to the Speaker of the house, he outlined the government's commitment to funding health and education through 'a

substantial reduction in the number of senior public servants earning more than \$100 000'.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I will take that question on notice and provide the details to the shadow minister.

Mrs GERAGHTY: On page 39 of the Capital Investment Statement, new funding has been provided for a state black spot program. How will these funds be allocated?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I thank the member for Torrens for her question. The budget has provided \$3.5 million for treatment of accident black spots to reduce the number of fatalities and casualty crashes on state and local roads as part of the government's road safety program. This expenditure is in addition to the federal black spot program. For the first time in South Australia we will have a state black spot program, so I am delighted to be able to share with the committee today the details with respect to that \$3.5 million. They are as follows. On arterial roads there will be:

- installation of a roundabout at the Aldgate-White Hill intersection with Verdun interchange ramp (\$500 000);
- upgrading of the intersection of the Jubilee Highway and Pick Avenue at Mount Gambier (\$450 000);
- an upgrading of the intersection of the Noarlunga-Victor Harbor road with Cleland Gully and Woodcote roads (\$400 000);
- upgrading of the intersection of Coast Road and Curramulka Road, Yorke Peninsula (\$260 000);
- widening the seal and installing edge lines on the Warnertown-Jamestown road (\$220 000);
- installation of a roundabout and appropriate signage at the intersection of Wellington and Albert roads (\$205 000);
- upgrading of the intersection of Manin North and Silo Access roads at Melrose (\$130 000).

With regard to local roads, there will be:

- installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Cross Road and Winifred Street (\$300 000);
- installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Salisbury Highway and Spains Road (\$280 000);
- modifications to traffic signals at the intersection of Sturt Road-Morphett Road and Sturt Road-Diagonal Road (\$260 000);
- reconstruction of the southern approach to establish a staggered T intersection at the intersection of Worrolong Road and Kennedy Avenue (\$150 000);
- installation of a roundabout with improved lighting at the intersection of Main North Road and Redbanks Road (\$110 000);
- installation of an indented right island deceleration lane for right turn to Nairne and left turn deceleration lane into Bald Hills Road at the intersection of Princes Highway and Bald Hills Road (\$105 000);
- installation of a box beam type guard fence on the western side of the bridge along Rosella Avenue near Lowan Avenue (\$52 000);
- installation of crash cushions and modified traffic islands at the junction of Nelson and Murrell roads (\$45 000);
- installation of guard fencing along both sides of Carrick Hill Drive and a culvert on Carrick Hill Drive south of Church Road (\$32 500).

For the first time ever in South Australia, not only do we announce a \$3.5 million new state black spot program, groundbreaking in its announcement itself, but we also have the details of money that will be spent on arterial roads and local roads, numbering some 16 different projects.

With respect to the state black spot program, it is expected that, in future years, the program will follow broad principles

and the program will be available for both Transport SA roads and council roads but not national highways. The minimum eligibility criteria for projects under the program are likely to be at least three casualty crashes in the last five years and the benefit cost ratio of any project must exceed a value of two. Up to 30 per cent of the program funds will be available to treat locations that do not meet the eligibility criteria specified above but which have been recommended for treatment following a formal road safety audit. This will enable the proactive treatment of locations that have been identified as having a significant crash potential.

The funds will be allocated on the following basis. Around 60 per cent will be allocated to projects in country areas and 40 per cent to projects in the metropolitan area. This split has been adopted because approximately 60 per cent of fatalities occur each year on rural roads. Up to 30 per cent will be allocated to projects determined from road safety audits. About 80 per cent will be allocated to Transport SA roads and 20 per cent to council roads. This split is based on the proportion of casualty crashes that occur on arterial roads and local roads. Transport SA will call for nominated projects for the state black spot program at the same time each year as the federal black spot program and involve local government in the prioritisation of works to be undertaken on local roads.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I note on page 39 of the Capital Investment Statement that there is approximately \$20 million for the Safer Roads Program. Can the minister provide some more detail in relation to the initiatives identified?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I would be delighted to do so because this is another high priority from the budget. The Safer Roads Program is a \$20 million program covering a range of infrastructure initiatives, crucial to improved road safety. The road safety package also includes new regulations as well as enhanced educational programs. Current funding is \$15.25 million, so there is increased funding of \$5.4 million, made up of the state black spot program, which I have just articulated in detail, and an increase of \$1.7 million—a 50 per cent increase—for shoulder sealing, and also \$200 000 for the safety audit response.

The Safer Roads Program includes initiatives such as the overtaking lane program, shoulder sealing, safety audit response, safety driven road investment and the new state black spot program. The majority of expenditure will be on regional roads. Studies undertaken by Ogden suggest that casualty crashes are reduced by 43 per cent with the introduction of sealed shoulders on existing two-lane rural arterial roads. Shoulder sealing provides a greater width of seal for recovery of errant vehicles and greater space for manoeuvring on the road. It reduces the potential for errant vehicles to overcorrect and lose control.

The criteria used in developing the shoulder sealing strategy include crash rates, strategic importance of the route, daily traffic volume and mix of traffic types, and whether the road is a cycling route. Transport SA has developed a shoulder sealing strategy for the entire network of national highway and rural arterial roads within South Australia. The government has committed additional funding to the program by increasing the funding from \$15.25 million to \$28.9 million over a five-year period commencing in the 2001-02 financial year. Transport SA is currently finalising a shoulder sealing implementation program over the next four years, detailing the individual project locations.

Overtaking lanes are also considered a safety priority in rural areas. The provision of overtaking lanes to improve overtaking opportunities can enhance road safety by reducing

delays and encouraging safe overtaking. I have talked in detail about the state black spot program. The safety audit response is increased from \$500 000 to \$700 000 this financial year and the purpose of the program is to address road safety audit recommendations. That is preventive action. All sealed Transport SA roads throughout the state have been safety audited at a network level. Safety driven road investment is another component that involves a number of specific projects as well as minor works.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to the Portfolio Statements, Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 9.31, and Output Class 1: Regulatory Services. Can the minister advise the status of the government's election commitment to establish a road and community safety fund?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: This was another commitment which we took to the last election and which we are pleased to honour. It states that revenue raised from anti-speeding devices will be redirected into a road and community safety fund, which will fund the development of road safety programs and also policing. Annual revenue from the use of anti-speeding devices is estimated at \$48.3 million in 2001-02, excluding late fees, other collection related fees and the victims of crime levy. Revenue associated with speeding fines and expiation fees is collected by the South Australia Police and the Courts Administration Authority. All revenue from speeding fines and expiation fees is presently directed to general revenue. The exception is the victims of crime levy, currently \$7 per expiated offence, which is paid into the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund to compensate persons injured as a result of criminal offending.

The Department of Transport and Urban Planning is working with the Department of Treasury and Finance, South Australia Police and the Courts Administration Authority to develop a detailed proposal for establishing and operating the road and community safety fund. It is anticipated that legislation to establish the fund will be brought to the parliament during the spring sitting, with the fund to commence operation from the 2003-04 financial year. The legislation will deliver on the government's commitment to achieve greater community involvement in the road safety decision-making process. It will also provide clearer lines of accountability for ministers and public servants in the delivery of road safety outcomes, part of the comprehensive approach we have adopted to catch up all the ground lost by the previous government in road safety.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Can the minister advise the committee whether the allocated budget of \$2.2 million for 2001-02 for the Regional Roads Program was fully expended? The 2001-02 budget allocated funding to eight regional roads. I am aware that some departments had their capital works funding frozen as of 5 March when the government took office.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The advice that I have received is that the great majority of that money was spent: the only money that was not spent was about \$200 000, which was for the Wallaroo bypass. I guess approximately \$2 million of the \$2.2 million about which the member asked was spent.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Will the minister inform the committee where all the money collected from the annual increase in registration fees from heavy vehicles since 2001 (previously dedicated to the regional roads program) will be allocated? The regional roads program was specifically funded from all increases in registration payments received

from the heavy transport industry since 2001. South Australia was the only state to dedicate the increase to road purposes.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: In regard to the registration for heavy vehicles, that money was directed into the regional roads program. I think we were the only state that directed the money into that program, some \$2.2 million. That is one of the areas that we have cut to \$700 000, and that money will go into the safety program.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Has the government negotiated an extension of the existing contract with AH Plant; or has the government agreed that Transport SA should call for a proposal for the supply of light vehicles; or has it resolved financing options with Fleet SA to ensure that its vehicles are competitive with the private sector arrangements? In 1997, Transport SA's light vehicle fleet of some 400 vehicles were exempted from the whole of government fleet management service provided by Fleet SA. The vehicles are sold to AH Plant as part of an operating lease, which expired in May 2002, but last year AH Plant advised Transport SA that it did not wish to continue with the contract. I understand that private sector providers have indicated that they are willing to take over the existing AH Plant arrangements, subject to price, while Fleet SA's financing arrangements and rates have been higher than the indicated rates from the private sector.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I cannot read my chief executive's writing, so I will ask him to provide some more detail, but certainly this is something that is being looked at. Discussions have taken place. Mr Tim O'Loughlin will provide some more detail in regard to that question from the member for Morphett.

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: The question is correct, in the sense that AH has advised that it wants to get out of that part of the business so it is necessary to find a new supplier. Discussions have been held within government between us, Treasury and the South Australian Financing Authority over the provision of the fleet, in effect, by Fleet SA. We have agreed to explore it further. We are trying to determine the rates in those discussions at this time. The final rates have not been provided to us and, as it is still under negotiation, we cannot say whether we would be at a financial disadvantage compared with a private sector provider until those negotiations are completed.

Mr HANNA: I refer to the Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 9.34. Will the minister advise the consequences of funds being diverted by the previous government from the transport portfolio to the arts portfolio, and specifically the consequences of these transfers upon the transport budget for 2002-03?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Yes, I can, and it does not tell a good story. Certain specifics have been advised to the parliament previously by the Treasurer and they include the following information: \$100 000 to complete funding for the State Library's facade—

An honourable member: Doesn't sound like transport!

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: No, that's right—\$100 000 to supplement the Cabaret Festival's funding of \$500 000; \$110 000 towards the government's \$600 000 contribution to the Art Gallery's purchase of the Tiffany windows; \$500 000 to the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust working capital, in addition to another \$1 million for working capital already provided in the 2001 bilateral process; \$1.744 million additional funding for the Festival of Arts; and \$2 million for the upgrade of the Natural Science Centre at the Museum. Since that time, I can now advise the committee that a further \$120 000 has come to light as a contribution to sponsorship

of an event at the Adelaide Festival; and \$1 million was also provided in the 2001 bilaterals for the Adelaide Festival.

Had those funds been retained within the transport portfolio, they could have supported some of the unfunded liabilities in transport inherited by this government. Until this government intervened, these unfunded liabilities included the obligation to replace buses, urgently needed safety driven works on embankments for the Belair train line, and the Commercial Road viaduct in Port Adelaide. At the same time, there will be no cuts to existing public transport services and the spending on operating and maintaining roads is being reduced only marginally: without the transfer to the arts, it would not have reduced at all.

I know the member for Mitchell, a passionate supporter of transport, would be delighted to know that as the new transport minister I have ruled out any money being diverted from transport to any other portfolio areas for this term of the new government.

Mr HANNA: I refer to the Capital Investment Statement, page 39, and note that the budget provides \$3.9 million for the city west connector. Will the minister advise the status of this project, and particularly when the construction of the road might begin?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I can do so, and this is not a very good story, either. I am not too sure what the former minister was up to, but I am advised that she approved this project in August 2001 without going to cabinet, notwithstanding a clear obligation to do so for a project in excess of \$4 million. The timetable agreed to by the former minister with the developer of a December 2002 completion date was completely unrealistic, given the need to negotiate terms for existing tenants to vacate Transport SA land, as well as the time required to complete planning, cabinet and parliamentary processes.

Therefore, this government inherited a commitment which had not gone through the normal review process and a time line which was never achievable. Since then, several discussions have been held with the developer aimed at achieving an outcome which attracts investment to the state but with a realistic time frame and a budget that represents an economic outcome in the interests of all South Australians.

I am pleased to advise that these negotiations are progressing well, with the current concept for work to start on a two-lane road to be completed by the end of 2003 at a total cost of \$5.5 million. The government is committed to progressing this project as expeditiously as possible, with \$3.9 million provided in the 2002-03 budget, having followed proper processes.

Mr HANNA: Does that refer to an extension to Barton Terrace?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I do not believe so.

Mr HANNA: With reference to page 9.38 of the Portfolio Statements, volume 2, in reference to the national highways program, will South Australia be the subject of discrimination as result of the introduction of the Commonwealth's new policy regime for the distribution of road funding?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Quite possibly so. This is something that all members should be aware of and certainly I would be confident that the shadow minister will look at and examine this very closely, as well as the government's taking an active interest in what has been put forward by the federal Minister for Transport. As members would be aware, the commonwealth provides substantial financial assistance to the states for road funding under three programs: construction and maintenance of the national highway; roads of national

importance; and black spot programs. The commonwealth has signalled its interest in a new, more flexible regime that takes into account interchangeability of investment between road and rail.

Transport minister John Anderson has indicated that the regime will also respond to the extent of funding provided by states, both through their own funds and the amount of private sector funds they can attract. A green paper is to be released in August. Requirements to raise private sector funds can be met only by generating an income stream, which for roads means tolls. Minister Anderson's comments are directly contradicted by reported comments of the commonwealth finance minister that the commonwealth has no immediate plans to encourage state governments to leverage private sector funds.

Interchangeability between road and rail is welcomed, although South Australia is opposed to having private sector funding taken into account because tolling of existing roads is privatisation. If the states' contributions are to be taken into account, the disparity in the financial positions and resources of the states must be recognised as well as the specific mix of geographic and economic circumstances of each. I assure the committee that I will be raising this issue with the Deputy Prime Minister in Auckland next week at the Ministerial Council of Transport Ministers. This is not something that South Australia will sit back and take lightly. Any threat to any funding for South Australia for road or rail will not be copped by this government and I hope that the opposition would take a similar position.

Mr VENNING: My question refers to Budget Paper 5, page 42. Will the minister advise the committee which unsealed rural arterial roads that were due to receive funding in this year's budget under the former government will not now receive funding? I realise that the minister in his overarching statement referred to this. Apparently \$2.828 million had been allocated to this program. Under the former Liberal government's proposal, the capital works budget for 2002-03 of \$8.25 million was allocated for the sealing of six roads: Hawker to Orroroo; Booleroo Centre to Jamestown; Burra to Eudunda; Lucindale to Mount Burr; Morgan to Blanchetown; and Elliston to Lock. Funding has been cut from \$8.24 million to \$2.828 million.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I thank the honourable member for the question. I do not believe the figure quoted is correct because \$2.552 million of that was spent previously. The roads I have identified with respect to unsealed rural arterial roads are the only ones of which I am aware. We have been perfectly up front about this. There is no hiding what we are doing in the budget with regard to infrastructure. We are putting our priorities where the priorities need to be put. Any comments about this being a harsh budget with respect to the country are simply not inaccurate. This is a budget which unashamedly attacks the root cause of road crashes and that, clearly, is on arterial roads. So, there has been a deferring of the Morgan-Blanchetown and Lucindale-Mount Burr roads. They are the only cuts with respect to unsealed rural arterial roads.

Mr VENNING: Will the minister inform the committee whether the Booleroo Centre-Jamestown road is one of the above, and has this broken an agreement with the Jamestown council, as I believe the council has borrowed funds to seal that road on agreement that it would be repaid this financial year by the government? Also, I believe the Burra-Eudunda road is there and has been laid under a similar deal. I may be on the wrong end of the road, but I believe the Goyder

council has sealed that section under a three or four-year agreement with the government for a pay-back situation.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I am happy to answer that. The answer is the same—I can spell it out very easily. Regarding the road the member for Schubert refers to, he will be delighted to know that that commitment is being met. I repeat my earlier answer that the only two roads that will be deferred are the ones that have already been spoken about today in previous announcements by the government, so the member for Schubert, with regard to his second question, need have no fear.

Mr VENNING: I refer to the same budget line. Will the minister inform the committee whether the regional roads program has been axed and, if so, will any of the four roads that were to have received funding in this budget be funded from a different program? In the 2001-02 budget, \$2.2 million was allocated for the upgrading to sealed standard of strategic local roads in regional South Australia. At the same time a forward four-year strategy plan of expenditure was announced by the former government. This was a program shared with local government and it now appears that the program has been axed as there is no mention of it in the capital works budget. The four roads in local government involved were the Bratton Way road, at a cost of \$728 000 with the District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula; the Wallaroo Bypass, at \$400 000 with the District Council of Copper Coast (which the minister mentioned previously); the Koolunga to Brinkworth road, at \$450 000 with the Port Pirie and Regional Wakefield Plains councils; and the Dublin Road, at \$622 000 for the District Council of Mallala.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: In a general sense, I think I have partly answered the member for Schubert's question. However, I appreciate that the member wants more specific detail. The government has cut the regional roads program funding from \$2.2 million to \$700 000—a cut of \$1.5 million. It is not correct to say that funding has been cut completely, because the program will continue. In 2002-03, \$300 000 will be allocated for Bratton Way and \$400 000 for the Wallaroo bypass.

In relation to the other roads referred to by the member—yes, they have been cut. It is as simple as that. Once again, this is a new government with new priorities with respect to safety. This government is delivering its dollars to get maximum value in relation to reducing road fatalities and that is, unashamedly, on arterial roads. Rightly or wrongly, this is the program I spoke about earlier with regard to the former minister directing money from registration from heavy vehicles into the regional roads program. I understand that this is the only state that has used the money in that way, and this is a clear change in policy direction.

Mr VENNING: As a supplementary question: in relation to the minister's answer regarding road safety, I question the cancelling of the Koolunga-Brinkworth roadworks. It is the only unsealed road left, with bitumen road at both ends of it. It is a popular road, and it will now be a death trap. This one link would have completed the whole bitumen road. As a safety issue, I would have thought it would be a high priority.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: We all have our own views about what is and is not a priority, and that is perfectly legitimate.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: No, I would hope not. I understand that the road the member refers to will be picked up by the Local Roads Advisory Committee. Notwithstanding that, it may not be today but there will be other roads that will

be cited. The point is that the \$700 000 funding will continue. In 2002-03, other roads beyond Bratton Way and Wallaroo will be funded as part of that \$700 000.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to page 41 of the Capital Investment Statement. Can the minister clarify the purpose of the total funding identified as \$58.1 million, Port River expressway, and the status of stages 2 and 3 of this project?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The Port River expressway is a very important project. It is a joint initiative between the federal and state governments and the private sector. It is a major road and rail transport project that will form a strategically important transport link for South Australia. The expressway route will extend from South Road in the east, through the Wingfield/Gillman area, and across the Port River to Victoria Road in the west, providing a direct link from the Salisbury Highway/South Road connector to LeFevre Peninsula. The major objectives are:

- to improve the operation and efficiency of the broader transport system by providing more direct links from the national highway and freight rail systems to the major freight and shipping facilities at Port Adelaide, LeFevre Peninsula and Outer Harbor;
- to reduce the impact of heavy road transport and freight rail traffic on the amenity of the Port Adelaide centre, thus assisting the Port Adelaide area to realise its potential in terms of commercial, tourism, recreation and urban development;
- to complement other government initiatives in the Port Adelaide area, including the port redevelopment project, the Outer Harbor grain terminal and the proposed industrial developments on LeFevre Peninsula.

The Port River expressway project will be completed in three stages. Each stage is economically justifiable in its own right, although concurrent delivery of all stages will realise the full benefits of the project. The three stages are: first, a new 5 kilometre, four-lane expressway link between the Salisbury Highway/South Road connector and Eastern Parade, including an overpass at Eastern Parade; secondly, a four-lane road bridge across the Port River; and, thirdly, a single track, dual gauge rail bridge across the Port River adjacent to the road bridge, also with a 30 metre opening span.

The estimated total project cost is \$138.1 million in 2001 prices. The breakdown for each of these stages is: stage 1, \$58.1 million; stage 2, \$54.2 million; and stage 3, \$25.8 million. The delivery strategy for stage 1 is different to that proposed for stages 2 and 3. Stage 1 is funded by the federal and state governments under the Roads of National Importance scheme. The federal government has committed \$26.7 million and the state government has approved funding of \$31.4 million. This stage will be delivered as a design, construct and maintain contract.

Providing stages 2 and 3 (that is, the road bridge and rail bridge), via traditional government procurement and funding methods, would take many years and direct funding away from a range of other essential government projects and services. Therefore, a delivery strategy involving private sector investment is being pursued. Stages 2 and 3 will be tolled facilities and will be financed, designed, constructed and, for the length of the concession period, operated and maintained by a private sector entity. In other words, it is a BOOT scheme.

Financial modelling shows that a state and federal government subsidy will be required to ensure the viability of the private investment component. A business case is being prepared for cabinet consideration prior to tenders being

called. This business case will include an estimate of the funds required, the timing and their source.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, volume 2, Investing Summary Statement, on page 9.38. I note that no mention is made of the Adelaide heavy vehicle bypass and I understand that the project has been scrapped. My question is: why?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I thank the member for Napier for his question and I also thank the member for Schubert for the advice he provided. The Adelaide heavy vehicle bypass was to provide an alternative, faster, non-urban route for B-doubles and other trucks from Murray Bridge to the mid-north and beyond. The proposed route extended from Murray Bridge to Port Wakefield via Kapunda, Tarlee and Balaklava.

A route corridor study was undertaken to identify network deficiencies and alternative routes through townships on the proposed route. This study showed that the estimated cost to upgrade the route to meet minimum requirements for B-double usage was \$3.5 million

It was established that 83 per cent of heavy vehicles arriving at Murray Bridge were destined for Adelaide. Given that half of the remaining vehicles would probably go to Adelaide, we would be providing a facility for some 8 per cent of heavy vehicles. However, on the highway this is likely to be far less than 8 per cent, because the South Australian Road Transport Association (SATA) claims that the Gawler-Two Wells route would be used in preference because of its considerably higher standard. A travel time trial conducted between Murray Bridge and Port Wakefield showed that the route via Adelaide is about seven minutes quicker than the bypass. In off-peak time, the route via Adelaide is 12 minutes quicker.

Applying these marginal benefits to a \$3.5 million investment results in a benefit and cost ratio that is well below the normal threshold for such investments of two. Scrapping the heavy vehicle bypass is not expected to have a significant effect on Murray Street, Gawler, as the heavy vehicle bypass is primarily catering for long-distance trucks going to Port Pirie and Port Augusta and not the Murray Bridge to Dublin traffic going to the cattle yards.

At community information sessions held in late 2001, strong community concern was expressed in the townships of Kapunda, Auburn and Murray Bridge. Major concerns included safety, amenity, economic, tourist and heritage issues. A report outlining the key findings from the consultation process was prepared. On Thursday 11 July 2002, I announced that the Adelaide heavy vehicle bypass proposal had been shelved due to poor economics, lack of industry interest, negligible benefits in travel savings and community concerns.

Putting all those factors together, it was probably not a wise decision; it was one that could not be justified and did not have the support of the industry or local communities. It seemed a perfectly sensible decision not to proceed.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to Budget Paper 4, volume 2, Investing Summary Statement on page 9.38. I am interested in the Adelaide Better Roads program. I understand that the Torrens Road-Churchill Road intersection will be upgraded under this program. I am also aware that some local residents have raised the issue of noise attenuation. What measures will be taken as part of this project?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I think this will be a good project—certainly, a priority. Concerns about noise mitigation measures have been centred around properties located on Churchill Road near its junction with Torrens Road. Noise

reduction along the section of Churchill Road will be achieved using a quiet road surface and by moving traffic further away from houses, alleviating the need for noise barriers.

In addition, the newly constructed section of Churchill Road will be up to two metres lower than the existing road, effectively resulting in a mound within the service road separator that will be landscaped to contribute to a reduction in noise levels to those adjacent properties. A noise summary will be carried out following completion of construction works to ensure noise guidelines have been met.

The CHAIRPERSON: I note that the member for Fisher would like to ask a question.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I would like to ask the minister a question in relation to Black Road at Flagstaff Hill. As the minister would know, there is a community cabinet coming up shortly covering that area. I can guarantee that the City of Onkaparinga will be chewing at least one ear—probably two—asking what will happen in relation to Black Road. The community has been promised for a long time that it would be upgraded, and the council, I understand, has put aside approximately \$800 000 for its share. Can the minister give a progress report on when work may start?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I thank the member for Fisher. I am delighted to see you join us. Some preliminary design work is being undertaken to establish the extent of work for Black Road. A detailed estimate will be produced following completion of this work. Community consultation for Black Road will not be undertaken until the project's scope and cost-sharing arrangements with Onkaparinga council have been finalised. But, once that has been completed, we will start the work.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Thank you, minister. I am pleased to hear that. The council understood that it had a firm position with your department, but a letter that came a few weeks ago indicated that there was only in-principle agreement, and I think that caused a few shock waves in the City of Onkaparinga

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I appreciate those comments and I think I can alleviate some of those concerns. Budget provision has been made. This is all about defining scope. I am not suggesting that this is the case with the council to which you are referring but, obviously, whether it be this project or whether it be other projects, the discussions are quite often robust between state government and local government with regard to defining scope, responsibilities and so on. They are proceeding quite well, so I do not think there is any need for fear.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Given the minister's comments earlier about the Port River expressway project and the expressions of interest, how much higher than the estimated costs were the bids for stages 2 and 3 that you have received? What impact will that have on the toll that is to be charged on the Port River expressway? In other words, does the minister know how much the toll will rise by to cover that increased cost, or will it be worn by the state budget?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The advice that I have received is that there are no bids at this stage. The next stage is to complete the expression of interest and then go to tender. Once we have all that information, we will have more advice available to us with regard to the tolls. So, it is probably a bit early at this stage, simply because we do not have that detail.

The CHAIRPERSON: Before we proceed, we have a revised timetable which indicates a transfer at 12 o'clock to PTB. Do you wish to do that, or are you happy to proceed?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Just a couple of more questions on transport, if that is all right.

The CHAIRPERSON: Everybody is agreed that we can continue?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. My question to the minister is with regard to the jetties program. What is the intention of the government regarding the maintenance, upgrade and ownership of the Henley, Grange and Largs Bay jetties, in addition to the Rapid Bay and Beachport jetties? Following the former government's jetty maintenance program, which was \$12.8 million over six years, the only metropolitan jetties that have not been upgraded to recreational standard and transferred to their representative local councils under long-term maintenance arrangements are the Henley and Grange jetties (Charles Sturt council) and Largs Bay jetty (Port Adelaide Enfield council).

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The Recreational Jetties Divestment Program, initiated in 1996, has been successful with 41 of the state's recreational jetties being upgraded and transferred to local councils. One jetty was demolished. The \$12.8 million funding allocated to the program has been exhausted. Seven recreational jetties remain under state government responsibility. They have not been upgraded to the appropriate recreational standard or divested. They are Henley, Grange, Semaphore, Largs, Beachport, Rosetta Head (which is the bluff at Victor Harbor) and Rapid Bay. The honourable member mentioned some, if not all, of those jetties.

The City of Onkaparinga has taken over the Port Noarlunga jetty; the City of Holdfast Bay has a lease for the Glenelg jetty; and negotiations have almost been completed for the lease of the Brighton jetty. The cities of Charles Sturt and Port Adelaide Enfield currently are not interested in assuming any responsibility for the four jetties in their areas. The jetties remaining with the government are being maintained to a level that is safe for pedestrian access. Port Le Hunte jetty refurbishment has been completed, but repairs to the seawall will be completed in 2002-03. Stenhouse Bay jetty in Innes National Park is to be upgraded in 2002-03. This work is being funded jointly by NPWS and Transport SA.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I may have missed it in the minister's answer, so I have a supplementary question. Brighton jetty has been rebuilt, but have negotiations with Holdfast Bay council be concluded in relation to the transfer of ownership?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I referred to Brighton jetty. Negotiations have almost been completed for the lease of the Brighton jetty.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The heavy vehicle charges require a vote at the Australian Transport Council, which the minister has said earlier today he is attending in Auckland next week. That is following the May meeting of the ministers, which was cancelled. New South Wales has a motion before that council for an annual CPI increase in heavy vehicle charges. That would overturn an annual formula increase which has been agreed with the heavy vehicle industry. How will the minister be voting when this meeting is convened next week in Auckland? The New South Wales government is arguing for a CPI increase in these heavy vehicle charges whereas the heavy vehicle industry supports a formula increase, which is quite different from the CPI increase. Will the minister be supporting the CPI increase as put forward by New South Wales or the formula

increase as put forward and agreed by the heavy vehicle industry?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Clearly, this is totally unrelated to the budget but, having said that, I am happy to answer the question. I have not formed a view on this. As a part of my consideration between now and next week, I am happy take any views that the shadow minister might like to put before me but I tell him that, if he is going to do so, he had better be quick about it.

The CHAIRPERSON: Is it convenient to change to the Passenger Transport Board?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I have a number of other questions which I will put on notice. That is the best way in which to do that.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

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

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

Mr L. Condon, Senior Consultant, Corporate Policy, Passenger Transport Board.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: This government is committed to a vigorous public transport system that continues to gain patronage by increasing its attractiveness and worth to the community. A Labor government views public transport as an essential instrument for achieving social equity and inclusion and to creating a sustainable urban environment. As a result, the Passenger Transport Board's budget has been maintained in real terms with an allocation of \$262 million for the 2002-03 financial year. This figure includes an operating expenditure of \$254 million, capital investment of \$7.5 million and repayment of borrowings of \$900 000. This includes payments of \$81 million to TransAdelaide for the operation and infrastructure management of the rail and tram system.

After taking into account fare box and other incomes, the subsidy for public transport from general revenue will be \$190 million. In addition, the Passenger Transport Board will benefit from a substantial \$58.5 million provision over the next four years for the bus replacement program, which the previous government had left unfunded. Ensuring the fleet is modern, comfortable, attractive and environmentally friendly is essential to attracting new customers and providing good levels of service to our existing customers. By the end of June 2003, the current contract with MAN and Australian Bus Manufacturers will ensure that more than half the metropolitan fleet will be modern, airconditioned vehicles with more than 300 fully accessible. Between June 2003 and June 2006 more accessible buses will be added.

The size and type of buses will be determined in conjunction with bus contractors. The outer southern suburbs are a priority for buses currently being delivered. New generation diesel buses were chosen due to the longer distances travelled and the lack of CNG refuelling facilities. Provision has also been made to trial new, low floor accessible bus prototypes on Adelaide's O-Bahn and for the trial of biodiesel as an alternative sustainable fuel. The capital investment budget includes in excess of \$1.5 million for new park and ride facilities and enhanced security, including new video surveillance. These and other infrastructure improvements encourage people to use public transport.

Improved and expanded park and rides have proven to be extremely popular. Some \$1.8 million has been allocated for

a trial using intelligent transport systems to provide passengers with real time information about bus services and to improve the on-time running of buses. The balance of this capital provision is for upgraded passenger facilities, such as information units at bus, tram and train stops; improving accessibility; passenger shelters and bike lockers; and progressively repainting the fleet.

The provision of information that is timely, relevant and motivational for existing and potential public transport commuters is a major and now well proven strategy to increase patronage. Communities in regional South Australia will also benefit from the integrated approach to passenger transport to improve access to facilities, services and social contact for isolated areas and transport a range of commuters such as young people, the aged and the physically and financially disadvantaged. Some \$520 000 has been earmarked to implement services and plan further integrated networks. These services will start this year in the Murray-Mallee region and follow an extensive 12 months of consultation with communities and other government agencies.

Other regions such as Yorke Peninsula, the Mid North, Tatiara and Gawler will also benefit from this integrated approach, with the PTB currently working with these communities. This initiative is funded from a total of \$7.7 million for regional passenger transport, which includes provision for all country bus concessions, operating subsidies for regional city services and contributions to community passenger networks.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The Passenger Transport Board and the work it undertakes are particularly important, and the board is looked upon by other states as a superior model. In fact, I am aware that Western Australia has looked at our model to implement it in Western Australia. It was with some concern that I noted when the minister took over earlier in the year that there was a question as to whether the PTB would continue in its current role—I think I am correct in saying that—and whether some review of its operations might be undertaken. I found that surprising, given Western Australia's interest in our model. I believe another area has to be looked at. I am aware that a report has been brought down by Mr Ian Kowalick on Access Cabs, an issue that is particularly important at the moment. The government has to address it, and we have some questions on that matter.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to the targets in the 2002-03 Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 9.10. One of the targets is to improve the safety and security at bus interchanges and park and rides, and I note your remarks about the passenger shelters and real time information. Does the bus interchange at Moseley Street, Glenelg feature on this list for a safety and security upgrade, and will the minister dispel the rumour that conductors will be removed from trams as part of this safety and security upgrade?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The advice I have received is that Moseley Street, Glenelg has not been identified as a high priority with respect to safety, but this program is very broad, so I am not excluding anything in the future and would welcome any input from the member with respect to that. With respect to removing conductors from trams, it is the first I have ever heard of it.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I am pleased to hear it, and so will some of my constituents. In April you released the Kowalick report commissioned last year by the former government into the operation of the Access Cabs service. The report features many recommendations, and I ask the minister about the government's intentions regarding a requirement that all

bookings be directed through the Access Cabs telephone system to be eligible for the subsidy.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I do not think it would be unfair to say that the current system is flawed. A new government will look for and find a better system. It is obviously a priority to have all Access Cabs bookings logged with the centralised booking service, but that is currently not always happening. So, a validation procedure has been developed so that drivers must have a CBS booking number in order for the PTB to reimburse SATSS vouchers. A trial of this procedure will commence shortly, which will have the effect of discouraging drivers from taking direct mobile phone bookings. As a result, more cabs will be available to take work from the CBS at any given time.

Approximately 90 per cent of customers receive a service within 30 minutes; however, customers are sometimes forced to wait for more than two hours, and that is something that simply cannot be tolerated. I think you mentioned the Kowalick report; I was also concerned about that and, obviously, it needs to be taken on board. Very soon after I became minister I spoke to the Auditor-General, seeking his advice about the Kowalick report, because this is not something that the new government is prepared to tolerate. The PTB has already put in place some measures in response to some of the recommendations of the Kowalick report, but we can and will do more.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What measures recommended by the Kowalick report have been put in place by the PTB?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I have already referred to one so I will not waste time going through that. But, to remind you, in my earlier answer I spoke about all Access Cabs bookings being logged with the centralised booking service. A log-on and log-off system for drivers and an auditable booking numbers system have been developed by the CBS, and the PTB has put in place a specific manager for Access Cabs. They are some of the remedies that have already been put in place.

Dr McFETRIDGE: You said that mobile phones would not be allowed. What is the government's intention with regard to the use of a second radio in cabs? I think you referred to telephone call bookings. I really want to know what the government's intention is with regard to a second radio in cabs.

The CHAIRPERSON: I remind the member for Morphett that supplementary questions are the exception. I have been extraordinarily generous. The next question is your third question.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I am not sure whether I made the comment that the member said I made regarding mobile phones but, nonetheless, I know that the member would not deliberately misquote me. Mobile phones can still be taken in cabs but they must be logged with the CBS. In regard to second radios, they were a condition of the licence and to remove them would be a disadvantage.

Dr McFETRIDGE: My third question is as follows. I understand that the five-year contract for the operation of the Access Cabs service between the PTB and Yellow Taxis expires by December this year unless a right of renewal is exercised. Will this contract be renewed on the same or amended terms or will the contract lapse and, if so, will tenders be called, and when?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The short answer to that is that the government will make a decision and, when it does, it will make an announcement about it.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Page 9.36, volume 2 of Budget Paper 4 sets out the Investing Summary Statement for the Passenger Transport Board. Can the minister describe how the funding has been allocated under the PTB's proposed capital works program for 2002 and 2003?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Yes, the allocation of \$7.5 million to capital works will be used for a range of improvements throughout the Adelaide metropolitan network. The government recognises that public transport infrastructure is important to ensure that public transport is safe and also appealing. This helps to both retain customers and attract new customers to public transport. The following are items in the PTB's proposed capital works program:

- real-time bus information system trial, which I referred to in my opening statement, \$1.8 million;
- accessible public transport (that is, upgrading of bus interchanges, train platforms and other facilities to comply with accessibility standards) \$1 million;
- safety and security upgrades (that is, upgrading of safety and security at high risk locations) \$1 million;
- electronic route signs and ticket validators, \$900 000;
- park and ride facilities, \$680 000;
- ticket system enhancement, \$500 000;
- environment enhancement, \$500 000;
- improved signage, \$380 000;
- bus shelters and bike lockers, \$240 000; and
- minor works, \$500 000.

That is a whopping total of \$7.5 million.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I note that there has been an increase in funds under 2.5—Regional Public Passenger Services—under Output Class 2 on page 9.29 of Budget Paper 4. Can the minister outline the government's plans to improve passenger transport in regional South Australia?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Yes, I am delighted to do so and, once again, these plans are living proof of this government's being a government for all South Australians. The government is committed to an integrated approach to transport throughout South Australia. The sum of \$520 000 has been allocated to implement services and develop integrated passenger transport in regional South Australia within a total commitment of \$7.7 million for passenger transport in regional areas. The government's approach is built around the PTB working in partnership with local communities to achieve services that are integrated, affordable, safe and aligned with community needs.

New services will be supplied through tenders for specified services over a fixed term to test viability. Fares will be set at an affordable level for passengers, with the government helping with the cost of service provision and allowing concession holders to use their concessions in the regions and allowing service providers to build their businesses. Consultation will occur with local council representatives, local commercial providers, community members and other key stakeholders. Local representatives are on tender evaluation panels in keeping with the partnership approach.

Many people in regional areas of South Australia are transport disadvantaged and, therefore, rely on passenger transport. If passenger transport services do not exist, this can result in isolation, which has many negative consequences. I spoke earlier about an injection of new moneys in the Murray Mallee and, in case there is any suspicion about my mention of that particular geographical location, I thought I would explain why we are heading to the Murray Mallee. This region was identified in the commonwealth Accessibility-Remoteness Index of Australia as having poor accessibility

and a lack of support services. Many members of councils in the area and the community were keen to be involved in improving services in the region. An extensive passenger transport study, developed over 12 months—perhaps when the current opposition was in government—in close consultation with the Murray Mallee community resulted in the Murray Mallee Integrated Passenger Transport Plan. Tenders are about to be called for some services that were identified as major areas of need in the plan.

Similar studies are now well advanced in the southern Yorke Peninsula and work is under way in other high need areas such as the Mid North (Gladstone, Jamestown and Burra), Tatiara, Bordertown and surrounds, Hawker, Quorn, Maree and Gawler.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Regulatory services, volume 2, page 9.5, of the budget papers states that one of the government's targets for 2002-03 is that no new taxi licences will be granted. Can the minister advise whether this policy has been implemented?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I acknowledge the member for Torrens' passionate interest in and support for the taxi industry, almost at the level of the member for West Torrens. The NCC has argued for open entry to the taxi market, claiming that restrictions on entry add to costs for providing taxi services. In a speech in July 2001, Mr Graeme Samuel, President of the National Competition Council, cited taxi regulations as an example when he stated that reform agendas would quickly slow and stall if governments were required to meet all the paper losses suffered by investors in the industries being reformed. In relation to the provision of any compensation to taxi operators in the event of a system being deregulated, he went on to say:

Governments have a limited capacity to meet those kinds of demands and the question has to be asked as to why they should.

This statement demonstrates that the government is quite correct in its belief that the NCC has failed to give sufficient consideration to the benefits of a regulated taxi industry, and the NCC has little regard for those people who have invested in the industry in a regulated environment.

Performance indicators, including waiting times, customer feedback and Adelaide taxi industry study findings, demonstrate that the regulated system is providing a high standard of service. There is a low number of complaints given the size of the industry, with approximately one in 8 000 of all journeys resulting in a complaint. As at July 2002, there were 1 049 taxi licences in metropolitan Adelaide. Of those, 920 are general licences, 73 are Access Cab licences (with 69 currently in operation), and 56 are standby licences, which are used only as replacements for vehicles that are temporarily out of service or during specifically declared periods such as Christmas and New Year's Eve. New licences for wheelchair accessible Access Cabs will be considered if it is likely to improve services.

During the government's first term, and as committed in the taxi policy, a review of the industry will be conducted to assess taxi needs beyond the moratorium. The average market value of general taxi licences has increased steadily during the past 12 months, but the market determines the value of transferred licences, not the government. The average price of taxi licences transferred in March and April 2002 was \$144 000 compared to an average \$106 000 in March and April 2001. The maximum prices achieved in these periods were \$152 000 in 2002 and \$115 000 in 2001.

For 2002, the market value of taxi licences has ranged from a low of \$125 000 for licences transferred in both January and April 2002 to a high of \$152 000 for licences transferred in April 2002. This compares to the market value in 2001, when the lowest value was \$80 000 in February 2001 and the highest was \$143 000 in 2001. The short answer is that the government supports the taxi industry, not Mr Samuel.

Mr VENNING: The Kowalick report, as noted by the minister when releasing it, highlighted concerns relating to fraud in the South Australian Transport Subsidy Scheme. When is the government going to act to stamp out these fraudulent practices?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I have great regard for the member for Schubert, but my regard goes only so far. I have already answered the question but I will run through it with him again. All of this fraud occurred under the previous government—100 per cent of it, lock, stock and barrel. But, like other things, this government will clean up the mess of the previous government. The first step in addressing that issue on receipt of the Kowalick report was for an incoming new minister to pick up the phone and speak to the Auditor-General and, as a matter of urgency, deliver the Kowalick report to him for examination and pass on his recommendations to the government.

Notwithstanding that, I have already outlined a range of measures that the PTB has made in respect of some of the recommendations, and it has implemented a range of activities to minimise fraud. Data entry systems associated with processing vouchers are contributing to fraud minimisation. Any claim with a suspicion of impropriety is investigated but, if the member for Schubert would like a more detailed briefing from the PTB, I am happy to organise it.

Mr VENNING: I was intending to ask another question, particularly in relation to passengers being charged more than the normal fee or the amount required, but I think that the minister covered that in his answer. Will the minister advise the committee of how the reduction in expenses in aviation policy advice and support programs and rail property services will be achieved? Output Class 2, section 2.7 on page 9.25, sees a \$2.63 million or 62 per cent fall in the expenses incurred by the department.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: That is a Transport SA question but, to facilitate an answer, after lunch we have TransAdelaide and the Public Transport Investment Unit, so I will have the appropriate officer here for any detail that the member for Schubert may well need to inquire about.

Mr VENNING: Will the minister advise the committee of all the bus routes that will operate in the Murray Mallee from this year, the expected number of passengers who will use these routes, what demand was identified for the establishment of the route, and whether or not the government is paying any subsidy to operate any of the additional routes on any of the 20 routes overall? I notice what the minister said previously about that report, but I would like more detail now.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: It is a very detailed response.

The CHAIRPERSON: The member may put that question on notice.

Mr VENNING: Perhaps the minister can give a broad outline and provide the details on notice.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Further detail will be developed, of course, but so the member for Schubert gets a feel for this (because I know he is very keen), I provide the following detail: Meningie-Murray Bridge, Murray Bridge-

Meningie (obviously going back the other way); Coonalpyn-Murray Bridge is another, daily return; Murray Bridge-Meningie, fortnightly; Tintinara-Murray Bridge, Murray-Bridge Tintinara (obviously returns); and Karoonda-Murray Bridge.

Mr VENNING: What about Murray Bridge-Mannum?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Mannum-Mount Pleasant: does that make you happy?

Mr VENNING: My word it does.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: These are only proposed services, but perhaps that gives the member a bit of a flavour. We are happy to provide more detail when these particular services are finalised. The tenders have already been put for some of these services but, in other cases, it will take some time for specialist routes to be worked out. Just to pick up the last part of the member's question, we do not know the patronage because these services have not been run before. This was a pilot scheme that was run in the Murray Mallee under the previous government. It proved so successful that it was compelling for the new government to—

Mr HANNA: That's where the idea came from.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: That's where the idea came from, yes, but a very compelling argument.

Mr HANNA: I refer to Output Class 2, maintenance and operation of the transport system. There is a government target for 2002-03 safety and security at bus interchanges and park and rides. Will the minister outline some of the safety and security improvements planned for 2002-03?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Yes, I thank the member for his question and I am delighted to do so. I know that from his very first day in parliament the member raised issues in respect of safety and public transport and I know he has a very active interest. The government has allocated \$1 million to safety and security infrastructure expenditure on Adelaide's public transport system in 2002-03. This has been allocated from the PTB \$7.5 million 2002-03 capital program. In 2002-03, upgrading of safety and security measures will be progressively implemented at high crime risk locations throughout the network and at any new or upgraded facilities being provided at key locations such as the Elizabeth train station.

Improvements include improved video surveillance and lighting, help phones interfaced with public address system, installation of fencing and gates and improved lighting. The type of safety and security measures implemented is dependent on available funding, the number of people using the facility and crime statistics compiled by SAPOL. Bus service providers under contract to PTB are required to implement and maintain safety and security plans, which are monitored by the PTB. The bus service contractors have adopted the Safety House program across the Adelaide metro bus network. The local community is improving safety and security at railway stations and tram stops through the Adopt a Station program. Community groups have adopted 66 stations and nine tram stops.

Crime prevention solutions to antisocial behaviour will continue to be pursued. The PTB is actively involved with the wider community through crime prevention strategies, the Motor Vehicle Antitheft program, the Drug Action Team program, major shopping centre management committees, SAPOL Transit Services Branch, SAPOL community programs unit and Attorney-General's Department crime prevention officers. Previous improvements to safety and security have included the following rail stations as part of the Safer Stations program: Salisbury, Elizabeth and Gawler

on the Gawler line; Brighton and Noarlunga Centre on the Noarlunga line; Glanville on the Outer Harbor line; Blackwood on the Belair line; Smithfield on the Gawler line; and Woodville and Port Adelaide on the Outer Harbor line.

TransAdelaide has installed security video cameras in all 91 3 000 and 3 001 class rail cars. By the end of July 2002, the following bus interchanges are scheduled to have video surveillance: Paradise, Tea Tree Plaza at Modbury and Klemzig interchanges on the Adelaide O-Bahn; Noarlunga Centre and Salisbury bus interchanges and Salisbury station park and ride; and Golden Grove park and ride. Secure staff car parks have been operating at Tea Tree Plaza since January 2000 and at Noarlunga since October 2001.

Mr HANNA: I refer to Output 2.3 on page 9.14 of the Portfolio Statements, volume 2, public transport asset maintenance. The government is required to efficiently and effectively manage the metropolitan public transport bus fleet. Will the minister describe the trial of biodiesel being conducted, which has the potential to improve the efficiency of the bus fleet?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Some very good questions from the government side: even the member for Schubert is getting excited.

Mr VENNING: He ought to be minister.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: He might be. We probably have—although I would not like to put a number on it—maybe treble the number of members that could be ministers compared with the opposition, and I think I am being very conservative. I think I am being unfair to my colleagues because treble is probably underestimating the high quality of government members, and speaking of high quality—

The CHAIRPERSON: Order! I remind members that we have one minute left.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Biodiesel is very important. I would have thought the member for Schubert would be very keen to hear about biodiesel, because this is a renewable fuel produced from combining canola oil grown by South Australian farmers with diesel. Emissions from this fuel are expected to be less harmful to the environment than those from diesel. The government, in partnership with South Australian Farmers Fuel, Torrens Transit and MAN, has commenced a full scale trial which will result in a viability report being presented to the state government. The trial will evaluate bus reliability, engine wear, emission outputs and fuel consumption as a result of using biodiesel fuel.

This information will be obtained by capturing and monitoring engine performance variables through data logging, from on road performances through driver feedback, capturing and monitoring of tail pipe emissions through emission tests, and from ongoing service monitoring through engine oil testing. B20 biodiesel, that is, 20 per cent biofuel from canola oil and 80 per cent from diesel, is being used over the 16 week trial.

Torrens Transit is operating the bus from the Port Adelaide depot. The University of South Australia will be providing advice on engine and emission performances and South Australian Farmers Fuel will be providing the B20 biodiesel. The cost of the bus trial is \$115 000 and is being funded by the Passenger Transport Board, Transport SA, South Australian Farmers Fuel and the South Australian State Energy Research Advisory Committee. The MAN NL202 diesel bus has been selected to run on biodiesel as a conversion kit is available. The working group overseeing this work includes experts from the University of South Australia, representatives from the bus and truck service

industry and people with expertise in alternative fuel technology and emission measurement.

The CHAIRPERSON: That concludes the time allotted for the examination of the Passenger Transport Board line.

[Sitting suspended from 1.2 to 2 p.m.]

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr R. Arnold, General Manager, TransAdelaide.

Mr M. Elford, Director, Public Transport Investment, Office of the Chief Executive, Department of Transport and Urban Planning.

Mr D. Huxley, Manager, Business Services, TransAdelaide.

The CHAIRPERSON: We will now deal with TransAdelaide, the Public Transport Investment Unit. Do you wish to make an opening statement, minister?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Just a brief one. TransAdelaide is continuing to improve its performance as a supplier of Adelaide's passenger rail services and has recorded the following achievements:

- appointed a general manager with commercial business expertise who has restructured the organisation to enhance service delivery and increase customer focus.
- patronage on both trains and trams has increased over the previous year and is targeted to increase by 4 per cent in 2002-03.
- cost efficiencies have allowed a substantial dividend to be paid to Treasury and cost saving targets for 2002-03 to be met.
- a major concrete resleeper project was carried out on the Outer Harbor line in 2001-02 within budget and on time.
- close consultation with the EPA has resulted in safe handling of contaminated ballast, with a satisfactory result.
- the Adelaide Railway Station has recently undergone an extensive renovation, which has given it new ticket barriers, improved lighting, repainting, improved signage and passenger information systems and some appropriate art work. The project is designed to complement the Riverbank precinct and to repopulate the station as a vibrant commercial area. The introduction of a no-smoking policy has added significantly to this ambience, assisted by the installation of improved ventilation to remove diesel fumes.
- the Adelaide Railway Station is also commercially more effective with faster throughput of passengers and releases passenger service assistants to work on trains where they can do both customer service and revenue protection duties.

In 2002-03 a total of \$8.26 million will be spent on capital works. The focus on activities will be to address key safety issues. Significant projects include:

- \$2 million on stabilising railway cutting faces at various locations on the Belair line.
- \$1.3 million on repairs to the Commercial Road viaduct to ensure the structure meets current bridge standards and enables the safe operation of both passenger and freight trains.
- \$1.9 million to commence the replacement of the signal control system. This computer system provides real time control and monitoring of trains running over Adelaide's metropolitan rail network. The existing system has

reached the end of its economic life and will be replaced over three years for a total cost of \$9.36 million.

\$900 000 to improve the safety and conditions of the suburban railway stations.

A new approach to managing public transport investment in South Australia has recently been implemented by the Department of Transport and Urban Planning. The Public Transport Investment Unit has been created to ensure public transport investment planning is undertaken in a strategic manner with a focus on transport outcomes, as opposed to a single agency approach. This work is also being undertaken in conjunction with the development of the state government's strategic transport plan. The government has given a commitment to have a draft prepared by the end of March 2003.

Two specific public transport projects are worth highlighting. The first is the Bedford Park transport interchange. A concept for a bus/rail interchange was developed by the previous government and involved the Tonsley rail line to cross Sturt Road and into a parcel of land adjacent to the Sturt police station. The second is the upgrading of the Glenelg tram service. The previous government called for an expression of interest for the upgrade of the Glenelg tram service through a public/private partnership. Both projects are being examined as part of the development of a strategic transport plan.

The CHAIRPERSON: Does the member for Light wish to make a statement?

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Yes, I will make a very brief statement. I congratulate TransAdelaide in two areas. First, the increased level of services introduced by the previous minister in the former government to provide additional train services for metropolitan passengers. This has meant increased services, particularly on the Gawler line, and it is appreciated by people along that line. The second is the implementation of the gates in the Adelaide Railway Station. I raised this matter with the minister some time ago after visits interstate and overseas and seeing operations there. Having been put in place by the former minister, there will be a greater reduction in fare evasion than previously was the case. I was always concerned that one could walk onto a platform at the Adelaide Railway Station without being challenged either by a conductor at the gate or by an automatic gate system. So, these are two measures that are working extremely well.

The minister mentioned the Glenelg tram system. This is an important tram system and, given their age, the trams are in need of replacement. The other issue relates to the bus fleet replacement program and the need to adhere to the regulations when implementing the bus replacement program, and the opposition will have questions on that issue for the minister.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to Budget Paper 5, page 2, Overview and Highlights. It was good to hear the minister refer in his statement to the PPP on trams. I understand that these projects are under review by this government and, according to the budget documents, the government will soon decide whether to continue with these projects. On page 3 of the Budget Statement, it states:

This government intends to strengthen the Partnerships SA program.

I know that in last year's budget there was an announcement of a PPP to allow for the upgrade of the tramline and rolling stock. I understand there have been at least 70 inquiries in

relation to this announcement. Will the minister advise the committee whether this particular PPP is progressing or at least put on the public record some idea of when an announcement can be expected on the future of the tramline and the levels of staffing? In relation to staffing levels, will the minister give an assurance that conductors will not be removed from trams?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I thank the member for his question. I can give an assurance that conductors will stay. I thought that I had given that assurance this morning.

Dr McFetridge interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Well, I will give that assurance now. I can also say that employees will stay with TransAdelaide, unlike, I think, previous discussions that were mooted by the previous government. This government is happy to develop this as a policy formation that, if we do proceed with a PPP, it will be on the basis that existing employees will stay with TransAdelaide. I also understand that the previous government put out an expression of interest for a PPP, and that is somewhat different to going to the market for a PPP. So this government is working on it. Needless to say, it is an important issue. The trams are at an age where the previous government was looking at it and the incoming government is looking at it.

We have ruled out privatisation, and that is why the existing employees will stay with TransAdelaide. We have given an assurance about the conductors, and we are working towards a policy formation. I think I have already answered questions in parliament in relation to this matter. As soon as the government arrives at a position, we will be happy to share it with the parliament.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I was just looking after my constituents. Will the minister advise whether the budgeted amount of \$16.14 million for the bus fleet replacement program for 2001-02 was expended? Given the reduction in funding this financial year of \$6.47 million, how many new buses will be purchased? I am aware that, to adhere to the regulations regarding bus age, 55 new buses are required this financial year.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I am advised that the \$16.14 million referred to by the member has been spent and that the program is on track. There will be 44 new buses this financial year and, of course, unlike the previous government, we have funded it in our capital program for the next three years, and that is an outstanding performance.

Dr McFETRIDGE: My question is in relation to the South-East rail project. Is the minister now as confident as the Premier was on 24 May that 'the final contract details will be progressed to enable construction work on standardising to be in full swing before Christmas'? A news release issued by Premier Rann on 24 May stated:

... the Government has approved the major terms of the contract with Australian Southern Railroad

It goes on:

... that the final details needed to achieve contract closure will be progressed to enable construction work on standardising to be in full swing before Christmas.

In an interview with WIN TV on 23 July, the minister seemed to be suggesting that major issues remain unresolved when he said:

[he] has told his department it must get negotiations for the South East rail network right because it's too important an issue to mess up.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: It is very rare that mere ministers disagree with their premiers, but the answer is no; I am even more confident than the Premier was. It is interesting that an incoming government injects \$10 million into major infrastructure in the country—in the South-East—highlighting again good government for all South Australians, and here we have the doomsayers about this project. Whether it be the doomsayers from this chamber, in terms of its normal operation, or wherever, this project has been announced and work at a departmental level is proceeding with regard to the specifics of the contract. Yes, I have said publicly, and I will say so again today, that I expect my department to ensure that those contractual details are materialised so that we develop a good project for the South-East and a good project for South Australia.

The CHAIRPERSON: I note that the member for Fisher has joined us again. I presume he wants to ask a question.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is my gipsy blood—I move between committees. Regarding Blackwood railway station, I commend TransAdelaide on its park and ride facilities. I was a little concerned to read in today's *Hills and Valley Messenger* that a lot of significant trees would be removed to make way for carparking at the station.

The station is in the electorate of the member for Davenport, but many of my constituents use it and I am very familiar with that area. Some of the confusion might have arisen because Mitcham council has a different definition of 'significant tree' to the general state legislation or the provisions that were passed a year or so ago.

This morning, the journalist told me there was no plan available to indicate what would be happening in that project. I do not expect the minister to be carrying the information in his pocket but, in order to allay the concerns that will come to my office—and, I guess, to the office of the member for Davenport—can TransAdelaide make available more detailed information about what is proposed? Are the trees—the large number of significant trees—that the report suggests are to be removed the smaller trees? They are not the giant trees that we normally call significant trees but are, under Mitcham council's definition, much smaller trees. At an appropriate stage, can the minister make available more detail relating to that project at Blackwood station?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Some trees do have to be removed. We will check this for the member, but it is my understanding that approval has been given by the DAC. I am unsure of the definition in respect of significant trees and whether there is a different definition between the various levels of government. We will pursue that for the member and provide him with some additional advice. Of course, to a degree, this would be a planning issue, and perhaps my Chief Executive Officer will make further comment.

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: The minister has indicated that we can provide some further advice. Conceptually, you may be aware that the significant trees that fall within the responsibility of the state are those with a 2.5-metre girth and one metre above the ground, and the ones for which councils have to put a plan in place are between 1.5 and 2.5 metres. Mitcham council was certainly involved in discussions regarding that, but I cannot remember whether it has completed a planning regulation.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: As you are aware, the issue of tree removal is very sensitive in that location, and the confusion may be in relation to what Mitcham council calls 'signi-

ficant', which are the smaller sized trees, and the general provision in the metropolitan areas for the 2.5-metre trees.

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: That is right.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: As a regular user of the train system, which I must say is very good, in my assessment, I ask: is there any plan to bring back guards? Perhaps they are called something different these days. Is there any plan to change the staffing arrangements on trains so that there is someone like the former guard travelling on a train? At night, I know, there is a guard plus a security officer. Given that the technology has been changed at Adelaide station—with barrier ticket checking and so on—is there any plan to change staffing arrangements on trains, particularly during the day?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The member is aware, because he is a regular and passionate user of trains, that security guards are on the trains after 7 p.m. PSAs are at the station during the day to assist. The introduction of the barriers, which we spoke about earlier, has released another eight PSAs to go onto the trains during the day.

For special occasions, there is a special arrangement under which transit police are made available, and my advice is that we are exploring additional ways of making available transit police on the trains. I guess part of the answer is yes and part is no. Those additional eight PSAs, who have been made available as a result of the introduction of barriers at the Adelaide Railway Station, will prove to be valuable, as will additional transit police for special occasions, if we can make that happen.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: As a supplementary question, now that the barrier system is in place—and I am glad you have replaced those crutch-grabbers which probably did something to a lot of the population of Adelaide which will have long-term consequences—is there a need in the system to have the ticket checked by the machine as you enter the platform area? The ticket is validated when you get on the train and, if you travel after 7 p.m., someone comes within five minutes and checks it again. Unless you stay there all night, I cannot see how you can get onto the train without going through the barrier. The multiple checking of tickets seems superfluous, which may end up contributing to mental illness in the long term.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I will ask our specialist general manager who, before your arrival, defined himself as an expert in this area, to answer that technical detail.

Mr ARNOLD: We have increased our efforts to check the validation of tickets, because we lose revenue through fare evasion. The barriers at the entrance to the Adelaide Railway Station do not validate the ticket: they merely check that the ticket is current and useable. The ticket is validated on the train, and then a passenger service assistant, hopefully, will check that that validation has been carried out. So, there is not a repeat exercise: it ensures that people pay for their tickets and that those tickets are validated, and we should be doing that.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I accept that. I guess it depends on when you phase out the Crouzet system. In this technological age, it does seem tedious to go through all those processes in order to take a train trip.

Mr ARNOLD: It is a little, but I think the Crouzet system is something like 15 years old. I think the Passenger Transport Board is looking to replace it over the next few years. With the present Crouzet system, that is the procedure we have to carry out.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Budget Paper 3, page 7.14, indicates that one of TransAdelaide's significant businesses is the

management of tram and train infrastructure in the metropolitan area. Passengers would have seen considerable changes in the Adelaide Railway Station during the year. What cost has been incurred by TransAdelaide and why?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: TransAdelaide has undertaken a range of projects over the past six months to improve various elements of the Adelaide station, including the installation of 15 turnstiles to replace manual gates, which allows improved passenger flow and which releases passenger service assistants from ticket checking duties to be deployed to the trains—and we have already talked about that. There is also the introduction of the no smoking policy, which is working very well, coupled with improved ventilation to remove diesel fumes; extensive repainting; substantially improved lighting; and improved passenger information systems. Other projects have been undertaken to introduce artworks into the station to complement its place in the Riverbank. The total cost of the projects is \$750 000, which has been funded jointly by TransAdelaide and the Passenger Transport Board.

Mr VENNING: Does the minister have any plans to standardise the current Noarlunga rail line, or construct a standard rail line to Port Stanvac, to allow the transport of grain to ships that would berth off Port Stanvac? It has been suggested to me that the government may be entertaining the idea of using the deep sea facilities at Port Stanvac as a grain port. This would require the construction of a standard line, or the use or standardisation of the existing line. If this was to occur, it would obviously affect local residents through noise pollution and frequency of trains using the line.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: There are two separate issues here, but the honourable member is entitled to ask a double-barrelled question. Noarlunga is in the forward program, so that is covered. With respect to Port Stanvac, there is a proposal by the Australian Wheat Board to put a grain terminal at Port Stanvac. It is one of several proposals. I have attended presentations which have been made. Certainly, there was a presentation by the Australian Wheat Board to the cabinet Major Projects and Infrastructure Committee. In regard to the selection of the grain terminal location, ultimately that will be made by the infrastructure committee that has been put in place, but of course that recommendation would go to cabinet. No decision has been made at this stage, but that is an issue which is being discussed actively by government and which is certainly under careful consideration.

Mr VENNING: Will the government be upholding the terms of the Mawson Lakes indenture in providing additional bus services in this budget year to Mawson Lakes? I am advised that already some 1 000 people are without public transport at Mawson Lakes, with the population projected to increase to 10 000 over the next decade. The government is responsible for providing public transport and could be open to legal action if it does not meet the terms of the indenture.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Under the revised commitment deed, the PTB is committed to providing a transport interchange adjacent to the new rail overpass on the Mawson connector by June 2003. Potential patronage demand indicates that the new Mawson Lakes station could be the third highest patronised suburban train station with 2 500 passenger movements per weekday. The final scope and size of the facility will be dependent upon the resolution of the alignment of the Mawson connector and the associated trunk drainage. This financial year the budget allows for \$500 000 for the Mawson Lakes transport interchange.

Mr VENNING: In your answer to my first question, you talked about the line to Noarlunga being upgraded. I gather that includes resleepering. Does it also include the capacity to change the gauge?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Yes.

Mr HANNA: In the targets for 2002-03 on page 9.10 of the Portfolio Statements it refers to the preparation of a draft transport strategy covering all modes and services. Can the minister outline how the current government will ensure the development of a strategic transport plan? Presumably, that will follow a significant stakeholder engagement period.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: This is something to which we committed in the lead-up to the last election. We have already started to deliver on it. The plan will be prepared by a multidisciplinary project team established within the Department of Transport and Urban Planning. This team has experience in transport, land use and social planning, and it will also be closely examining interstate and overseas practices. Unlike the previous government, the Rann Labor government is determined to honour its commitment in this area and will have a draft plan prepared by March 2003. Key stakeholders, via a reference group whose final membership is yet to be determined, will be involved in the consultation.

The reference group will be chaired by Professor Derek Scafton from the University of South Australia. The plan will encompass regulation, policy and operational matters, and it will seek to address all transport modes—rail, road, sea and air. The plan will be integrated and will consider metropolitan and regional area needs. It will ensure that transport decisions have social access as the primary goal. I think this will be a very important part of the government's strategy. The plan will not necessarily be the answer but, rather, the start of a new way of thinking and making decisions about transport matters. It will establish a strategic approach to transport infrastructure investment and ensure that transport decisions provide greater social access for the people of South Australia.

Mr HANNA: The capital investment statement on page 38 indicates that \$1.9 million has been allocated to the centralised train control system upgrade in 2002-03, and \$9.3 million has been provided in the budget estimates for the replacement of the centralised train control upgrade over the next three years. What does this upgrade involve and what benefits will flow to customers from this major investment?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The centralised train control and passenger information system is a network of interconnected computers and external fuel based hardware systems that provide real-time control and monitoring of trains and also passenger information for commuters using Adelaide's metropolitan rail network. This project involves the replacement of these systems. While failure of the centralised train control and passenger information system would not create an unsafe situation in itself, the system provides an operational capability without which it would be impossible to run trains over the metropolitan rail network. If due to a failure of the system an attempt was then made to operate trains under some form of manual working, possibly bypassing the safety related circuitry, the risk of a serious accident could arise.

TransAdelaide's current system is close to 15 years old and is based on a technology that is now obsolete, with components being extremely difficult to source. The original equipment manufacturer, Hewlett-Packard, no longer supports the computers. Based on current advice, it is believed that within two to three years the risk associated

with a total system failure would be unacceptably high. Recognising the risks associated with a complete failure of the CTC system and the estimated time frames involved in procuring a new system, planning for the replacement of TransAdelaide centralised train control systems commenced in 1998. The upgraded system will also bring customer benefits with improved passenger information systems and more reliable timetabling.

Mr HANNA: On page 7.14, Budget Paper 3 states that TransAdelaide will continue to focus on meeting customer demand by, among other things, upgrading train infrastructure to enhance passenger safety and comfort. I suspect that this has something to do with the program for resleepering the lines. Because I am not familiar with that word, will you please tell me about the resleepering program?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I can indeed. I can see the member for Schubert getting more and more excited. We will get you invited to the big Australasian Railway Association dinner next year. Does anyone else want to go? You are all on the list. TransAdelaide has a continuing program and budget allocation of \$3.5 million a year for replacement of worn sleepers, and it has a strategy of replacing wooden sleepers with more durable concrete sleepers. These also have the advantage of being gauge convertible for future conversion to standard gauge. The concrete resleepering of the Outer Harbor line has just been completed at a cost of \$10.5 million, which effectively wrapped a three year program into one. This step was taken for economic and logistic reasons, in that the highly specialised equipment which carries out the work has a mobilisation cost of \$700 000 each time it is used.

The resleepering program brought with it many challenges, not least of which was the contaminated nature of the ballast on most of TransAdelaide's lines, caused by past practices of South Australian Railways in relation to weed eradication. This challenge was answered by TransAdelaide, external environmental engineers and the EPA working together to devise a plan which enabled the contaminated ballast to be handled and retained on the rail corridor. TransAdelaide plans to resume its concrete resleepering program in 2004-05, with the objective of completing all lines by 2010.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I do not expect an answer from the minister on this immediately, as he might need to check the records. Will the minister check on his statement that future bus purchases were unfunded by the previous government? It is my belief that, in the forward capital works provision was made for bus purchases for the next two or three financial years.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I am happy to check that for the shadow minister. The advice I have received is that the funding was there through to the end of 2002-03 but that there is no provision beyond that time. We will check those details.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister advise the committee whether the \$5.5 million allocated in the 2001-02 budget for the Mawson Lakes development plan was fully expended in that financial year and whether the \$1.5 million allocated in this year's budget meets the government's obligations under the indenture for Mawson Lakes with the developers? The government is obligated under the plan to provide a connector road between Main North Road and Salisbury Highway, including an overpass of the rail corridor.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Yes, as long as I do not interrupt my colleagues around the room. The advice I have received is as follows. Basically, the answer is no, but this is

the reason. There has been a lot of discussion between TSA, the developers, the University of South Australia and the Parafield airport about the alignment. That is further impacted upon, more on the Parafield airport side, by the presence of a rare grass about which we need advice from the federal government.

Mr VENNING: Couch?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I do not think it is couch. It is called 'vernal pools'.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The second part of the question is: does the \$1.5 million that is allocated in this year's budget meet the government's obligations under the indenture relating to the Mawson Lakes development?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The program will be pushed out, for the reasons that I have given. Of the \$1.5 million, \$1 million will be for road design and \$500 000 will be for the interchange that we have talked about, but there will be a requirement for more money in later years.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister explain what factors will be responsible for the increase in projected output revenue of the department? In explanation, at page 9.25 of Budget Paper 4, volume 2 the output revenue of the department is projected to increase from \$70.402 million in 2001-02 to \$81.174 million this financial year.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I will obtain some more detail for the shadow minister. Some of this, but not all of it, will be driven by increases in patronage, but that does not account for the full amount. So, I will take that on notice and get the detail for the shadow minister.

Mr O'BRIEN: Budget Paper 3, page 7.14, refers to the number of passengers that TransAdelaide carried on its train and tram services. Can the minister tell the committee:

1. Is patronage on rail continuing to grow?
2. What was achieved in the year ending June 2002?
3. What is targeted for 2002-03?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I can give you that advice. The final patronage figures are not available for the end of June 2002. However, the figures for the 11 months to May show a growth in patronage of 2.9 per cent for trains and 4.1 per cent for trams. Trains were influenced by the patronage reduction experienced on the Outer Harbor line during the extensive concrete resleepering work through March and June. Keys to the growth are strategies to improve on-time running, eliminating missed trips, enhanced railway stations and a reduction in fare evasion.

Mr O'BRIEN: Budget Paper 3 at page 7.14 states that TransAdelaide has two significant businesses, one of which is the provision of tram and train services. Obviously, industrial relations is a key component of this part of the business. Can the minister advise of the status of TransAdelaide's certified agreements with the trade unions?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: Yes, I can do so. Agreement with bus redeployees has been received between TransAdelaide employees and the trade union. It has been filed with the Australian Industrial Relations Commission—it has not only been filed, but it has also been ratified as of yesterday. For the first time, an agreement has been reached with tram operations employees which gives improved working conditions and the opportunity to improve work practices. As all the agreements go to July or December 2004, this provides a lengthy period during which the improvements embodied in the agreements can be implemented. TransAdelaide maintains a close consultative environment with its employees and their representatives and this is proving instrumental in facilitating business improvement initiatives.

Mr O'BRIEN: With reference to page 38 of the Capital Investment Statement, can the minister inform the committee whether TransAdelaide's capital expenditure is sufficient to ensure that infrastructure is maintained at a level that ensures public safety?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I thank the member for his question. TransAdelaide's capital expenditure for 2001-02 was inflated by the concrete resleeper program at Outer Harbor, which we have already talked about. TransAdelaide has identified two areas of potential risk in the next two years. First, some areas of the embankments on the Belair line have rock faces which are in need of some remedial work. Design work has been carried out to assess the work involved and to obtain reliable cost estimates. Secondly, the Commercial Road viaduct in Port Adelaide carries significant commercial freight traffic as well as TransAdelaide's passenger rail services.

It was identified in late 1998 that significant works were necessary in order to comply with current bridge design standards, and this has been carried out progressively with a number of piers remaining to be strengthened in 2002-03. Work on both of these potential risk areas has been fully scoped and costed and provision made in the 2002-03 capital budget of TransAdelaide. Work on the Belair line embankments has already commenced and work is shortly due to restart on the Commercial Road viaduct. All of TransAdelaide's identified potential risk areas have been fully funded through 2002-03 and 2003-04.

Mr VENNING: In relation to the announcement yesterday about the development of Port Adelaide and taking into consideration what we have heard today about the capacity to upgrade the line to Port Stanvac, will the third river crossing, particularly the rail crossing, over the Port River go ahead?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I think I have answered this question before. The process is that there is an expression of interest. It then will go to the major projects and infrastructure subcommittee of cabinet. Beyond that, a recommendation would be made to cabinet and, of course, once a decision is made we will look forward to sharing that with the public of South Australia.

Mr VENNING: Does that include that third river crossing—the rail crossing? Is that involved in this review, or this consideration?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: There is no review. Unlike the previous government, we do not like reviews.

Mr VENNING: At least you have the grace to smile! So the rail crossing is under some—

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: It is a part of it, yes.

Mr VENNING: So it is up in the air?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: No, it is not up in the air; it is out for an expression of interest.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Will the minister advise the committee of the number of TVSPs that are budgeted for in TransAdelaide and what classification of officers will be targeted?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: The short answer is that no-one has been targeted in TransAdelaide, but I think that a figure of 600 TVSPs across government has been talked about, and redeployees would be part of that thinking.

Dr McFETRIDGE: We heard about 100 in TransAdelaide.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I cannot help what you heard.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 9.10, lists 25 targets for 2002-03, and one of those targets is to continue to divest non-operational Australian National

railway land. Can the minister give a list of the location of this land and estimate the income from the sale of the land?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I will take that question on notice because it will require some research to get that sort of detail.

Mr HANNA: Prior to the last election, the former minister for transport authorised the drawing up of plans for a rail-bus interchange at Bedford Park in my electorate of Mitchell. The proposal caused a lot of distress to a number of residents and, while I am conscious of the need to improve public transport in that area, I believe there needs to be an appropriate balance between the local residents and the broader transport issues. In the context of this budget, can the minister give the committee an update on the status of that project?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I thank the member for his question, and it is something that he has raised with me since day one of this government's coming into office. Let me say that, from a community point of view, the community will count when it comes to transport, so we will be working closely with the local member and the local community. Looking at the bigger, broader picture, it would be fair to say that the project is currently under review and will be considered as part of the development of the new strategic transport plan. No contractual commitments have been made. A short-listing process for a design and construct contract has been completed.

In the letter confirming selection to this short list, the successful consortia were advised that the project has yet to receive final funding approval from state cabinet or been considered by the Public Works Committee, and that consequently it is not possible to indicate any timing. If and when we proceed with a project of this nature, we will certainly want to involve the local community in a consultation phase, and that is a commitment that I give to the local member and to this estimates committee.

The CHAIRPERSON: The time for examining this line has expired, but I understand that the member for Light has some questions to read into the record.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: My questions are as follows:

1. For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the share of the \$322 million underspending in the 2001-02 year claimed by the government and what is the detail of each proposal and project underspent? What is the detail of any carry-on expenditure to 2002-03 that has been approved?

2. For each year 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 and from all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the share of the total \$967 million savings strategy announced by the government and what is the detail of each savings strategy?

3. Will the minister advise the committee how many of the 600 jobs to be cut from the Public Service will be lost from within his portfolio?

4. Can the minister advise what is the budgeted cost of bus fare subsidies in country regions? Can the minister also advise what is the cost of the bus subsidies for city areas covered by Adelaide bus services? Can the minister advise the budgeted cost of new buses for the Adelaide bus service?

5. Can the minister advise whether a transport subsidy will be provided for the blind?

6. Can the minister clarify what funding has been allocated to the highway widening west of Ceduna to Penong?

7. Can the minister advise how much money will be allocated from the regional arterial road funding program to the Lock-Elliston Road in the 2002-03 budget?

I have further questions, but I will put those on notice in the usual way.

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

Witness:

The Hon. J.D. Hill, Minister for the Southern Suburbs.

Membership:

The Hon. W.A. Matthew substituted for the Hon. M.R. Buckby.

The CHAIRPERSON: Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Just a brief one. I know we do not have a lot of time, so I do not want to fill it up with a 40-minute speech. The Labor government's election platform committed to securing a better future for the people of the southern suburbs. We committed to providing a whole of government focus that would set strategic directions through the establishment of the Office for the Southern Suburbs and the appointment of a minister.

The Labor government will ensure that the southern suburbs continue to make significant contributions to the economic development of this state as the fastest growing region in South Australia. It is important that the growth in the number of people and the number of houses is matched by an equally strong growth in economic activity. The 2002-03 budget is a positive step to ensure that the southern suburbs meets its potential, not just for the people who live and work there but for the economic welfare of South Australia. The government is committed to ensuring that, as well as attracting new business to the south, there would be a major focus on supporting existing industries.

The 2002-03 budget, first, initiates a 10-year assistance package to ensure that Mitsubishi maintains its car making operation; second, establishes an Inner Southern Business Enterprise Centre; and, third, provides \$1 million over three years to the City of Onkaparinga for economic development planning. The Labor government is committed to giving health services a much higher priority. The 2002-03 budget ensures that hospitals and health services in the south will benefit from Labor's increase in resources for more nurses and to open new wards. For example, \$9.16 million goes to the Flinders Medical Centre to fund more beds for mental health clients.

The Labor government is committed to addressing the high demand for emergency housing in the southern suburbs. The 2002-03 budget allocated \$1.5 million over six years to the City of Onkaparinga for crisis and emergency accommodation and community support. Furthermore, the Labor government's budget includes:

- four additional police officers for the Aldinga Police Station;
- a new light rescue vehicle valued at \$85 000 for the Sturt SES;
- \$700 000 to relocate the preschool at Willunga onto the primary school site;
- employment of a youth worker to assist adolescents at risk, address non-child protection matters and juvenile

justice issues for the Marion, Aberfoyle Park and Noarlunga districts;

- a community drug worker for the City of Onkaparinga to undertake assessment, counselling and community work for the community.

These are just some of the initiatives the Labor government has taken to remedy the longstanding issues facing the southern suburbs.

The southern suburbs portfolio will ensure advocacy for the region and, with the \$440 000 allocated in this budget for the establishment of the Office for the Southern Suburbs, this agency within the Department of Transport and Urban Planning will secure productive working relationships with local government, existing agencies, local business and community groups. This initiative is about lifting the profile of the southern suburbs area, capitalising on its opportunities for growth, maximising the job potential of school leavers and giving the programs and ideas for the south a strong voice in cabinet. The Labor government's budget for 2002-03 solidifies our commitment to the improvement of the lifestyle for the southern suburbs and the betterment and prosperity of our state.

Membership:

Mrs Redmond substituted for Mr Venning.

The CHAIRPERSON: Does the member for Bright wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: No.

The CHAIRPERSON: Would the member proceed with questions then.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Yes, thank you. Why is there scant detail in the budget in relation to the portfolio of the Minister for the Southern Suburbs, to the extent that there is no reference to the targets of his portfolio other than the establishment of an office with an operating budget of \$400 000 per year? To explain my question further for the benefit of the minister, Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 9.1, details the Office for the Southern Suburbs as part of the Department of Transport and Urban Planning and lists the minister's name as the Minister for the Southern Suburbs on page 9.2.

On page 9.18 the only target listed under the heading 'Planning and development' is 'Establish the Office for the Southern Suburbs'. No other targets for 2002-03 exist within the budget documents. In Budget Paper 3, page 3.15, a single sentence states:

Office for the Southern Suburbs—establish an Office for the Southern Suburbs providing advice and support to the minister on developments in that area.

An allocation of \$400 000 is also listed on that same page. In all, a couple of sentences, a couple of lines and the minister's name.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I appreciate the question because it gives me an opportunity to speak in broad terms about what we are planning to do with the Office for the Southern Suburbs. This is a new initiative, as the member knows, so, at this stage, it is a little difficult to articulate exactly the targets that we will be able to achieve in the first 12-month period. I have initiated this program already in that we have selected an office site—and that will be in Noarlunga House in the Noarlunga Centre close to the Onkaparinga City Council. We will be working with two city councils: the Marion City Council and the Onkaparinga City Council. In

the near future, we will be advertising for a director of the office and an administrative worker.

We will also adopt a flexible approach to the other staff who will be working in the office. There will probably be two at any given time, but I do not want to lock people into those positions as yet, because I really want the specific directions and specific ideas and targets for this first 12-month period to come out of more detailed discussions with the two city councils. We are committed to a genuine partnership approach with both Onkaparinga and Marion, and we want to work with them through the priorities and the targets, too. One of the things we want to do is have a seamless approach to planning, service delivery and so on across state, local and, if we can manage it, federal government. I would certainly want to engage in discussion with senior federal ministers from South Australia so that, if possible, we can have a third dimension to this office as well.

I can understand the basis of the question. There are no details in the budget papers, and I concede that. I would hope that we would be more specific in the next budget round. We certainly have a raft of policy initiatives that we wish to pursue, but we want to do that in conjunction with the councils and the other major players in the southern suburbs.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: If I may clarify this in a supplementary question? The minister mentioned the cities of Marion and Onkaparinga as being the partners in this initiative. I want to flesh out from the minister why it is that it is only the cities of Marion and Onkaparinga, and perhaps I had better explain that. Council boundaries do not always take note, for example, of suburb boundaries. I can think of a number, including Seacliff Park, Kingston Park, O'Halloran Hill and Coromandel Valley that are split between councils. In the case of the first two, between Holdfast Bay and Marion; and, in the case of the last one, it would be between Mitcham and Onkaparinga.

It seems to me that, if you live on one side of the boundary in Kingston Park, you are covered by the ministry, but if you live on the other side of Kingston Park you are not. My electorate office is located in the City of Holdfast Bay on Sturt Road—it is on the same road as the Marion council chambers. My electorate office is more to the south than the electorate office of the member for Mitchell. His office is located in the Marion council area. I am trying to flesh out that it is not a true south boundary. I cannot understand why the minister did not say 'everything south of Anzac Highway', for example.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There are a range of ways you could approach it. These issues about where the south is, where the north is, or where anything is really become arbitrary. If you looked at transport boundaries, they would be different from education department boundaries which would be different from health department boundaries. One of the great nightmares of administration is trying to work out where the boundaries are. We do not have consistent boundaries across state government. I understand that, when Premier Tonkin was premier, he attempted to get a consistent set of boundaries. He tried for a number of years and eventually gave up in frustration.

It would be very convenient if local government boundaries neatly followed other boundaries, then we could have a pure set of boundaries. Unfortunately that is not the reality. The alternative to choosing a couple of council areas to work with was to do as the member says; that is, say 'Let us look at that territory.' That would have increased the administrative difficulties—and I may well have been dealing with four

or five councils. It would have been more difficult to achieve positive outcomes if there was a more complex set of arrangements or relationships. I have to say to the member that this is a trial and it may not succeed. We are committed to it for this term of government, but time will tell whether—

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I work with three councils as the local member.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, of course, we all work with a number of councils. We are trying to establish a new way of doing things—a partnership approach—which makes it administratively easy to identify a couple of council areas. As I have said in the house before, I am prepared to be flexible about this, certainly on the edges. If Seacliff is divided between two councils and there is an initiative that will benefit Seacliff, we will not be silly about it. Over time we may define the boundaries differently, but this was really a starting point so that we knew what we were doing. When we had an office in place they knew we had officers appointed. Everyone know who they were dealing with and it allowed progress to happen.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Why has the government not seen the need to establish an office in the northern suburbs? Why is it that you have started in the south? If one looks at the two areas, there are certainly more unemployed and more socially, economically and crime disadvantaged people living in the northern suburbs as distinct from those living in the southern suburbs, so why has not the government instigated an office to focus on their needs? You could argue that the Labor Party already holds the northern seats of Elizabeth, Enfield, Taylor, Florey, Torrens, Wright, Napier, Ramsay and Playford, so there are a lot of government offices in the north but not a lot of government offices in the south.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am not sure I follow the logic the honourable member is pursuing here, but the Premier determines the ministers and administrative arrangements. He made a political promise to the residents of the southern suburbs prior to the 1997 election that there would be a minister for the southern suburbs and, implicit in that, that there would be some administrative unit that supported the minister. The Premier repeated that promise prior to the most recent election and, I have to say, we got a strong positive response from the southern suburbs community in relation to that promise, which we are delivering upon.

As to whether or not there should be similar ministries or offices in other parts of the state, particularly in the northern suburbs, that is a matter for the Premier and cabinet to contemplate. Consideration may well be given to establishing such units. The southern suburbs office and ministry is something new—we have not done this in South Australia before. Other states have had regional offices and ministries—New South Wales has three or four, I think, and each have slightly different ways of operating, depending on the personality of the minister and the geography and demography being covered. This is a trial: if it works we may see more of these.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: In view of the minister's answers to earlier questions, we can see that the creation of this office is about politics. You have admitted to the committee that it was a political promise made pre-election, so it really is an attempt to placate residents in marginal southern seats who have either deserted the Labor Party in the past or, it is feared, could desert the Labor Party in the future. To explain further, if you look at the political make up of the southern seats that the Labor Party holds, probably with the exception of your own, they would be regarded as marginal,

and indeed those seats held by the Liberal Party in the south, with the exception of that held by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, would also be regarded as marginal. Is it really that this is all about politics? I put it to the minister that this really does not have much to do with what happens in the southern suburbs.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That is a nice cynical kind of description. God forbid that politicians should be about politics! How can one distinguish one promise a political party makes before an election from any other promise made before an election? Are some promises political and other promises not political? Where do you divide these kinds of promises? If the Liberal opposition promised to build a particular road somewhere or spend millions of dollars on schools in a particular area, are they political promises or non-political promises? As a party we analysed the needs of a particular area and made a series of commitments to the people in that area, just as we have done in other parts of the state. You do not need to be cynical about this. It is a genuine attempt to do something new in the delivery of state government services and planning to a particular region.

There is a sense in the southern suburbs (it is possibly true in the north, but I do not represent that area, so I am not as familiar with it) that somehow or other they are remote from the city and maybe forgotten in terms of what governments do. It is a way of addressing that perception and reality. It is similar to the way the former government announced a ministry, office or bureau of regional affairs—whatever it was called—because there were perceptions that people in the bush or regional parts of South Australia were somehow being ignored and their needs not being addressed. The government, as governments are expected to do, responded and established a process for dealing with that. Our government has picked up that idea in terms of regional South Australia and we have a Minister for Regional Affairs, and he is doing some work in establishing regional offices which build on the work your government did. Is that a political promise, as we hold only one seat in the country, or is it just a good commonsense way of dealing with the issue?

What we are doing here is a novel, innovative way of trying to address real issues. I am genuinely committed to working with the city councils and the community in the southern suburbs to get positive outcomes across a whole range of areas—education, health, social services and economic development. This will be an important part of the Department of Transport and Urban Planning. I am particularly pleased that it has been placed within that department because it will have connections with all of the infrastructure and intellectual capacity that that department has and will become a key player. The director of the office will report directly to Tim O'Loughlin and to me as minister and go through the normal bureaucratic process. It is not a cynical operation or something we said we would do and are ticking it off, doing it and then forgetting about it: it will be an integral part of the way the government deals with those communities.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: By way of supplementary question, I would hope the minister does not misunderstand that I believe it would be something he would just tick off and not do. On the contrary, I can see the reason for your doing it. I put it to you, minister, that it is about developing the staffing to focus on those areas that the Labor Party wants to retain or to win. I put it to you that this is simply a cynical exercise where \$400 000 every year for the next four years has been committed in the forward estimates program, when

that \$400 000 in my view could be far better spent on sand replenishment along the southern coast and all southern residents would get great benefit from it.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I reject that. This is not an attempt to win votes in any particular way—no more than having a good education or health policy. Governments implement policies and, hopefully, they will be responded to. This is not a cynical exercise to have officers down there who will do my political bidding. They are part of a government bureaucracy that is aiming to deliver services in a more integrated, better planned way to residents of the southern suburbs. I would hope to work closely not only with the city councils but also with other elected members of the area, including yourself, the member for Mawson and other members who have electorates within that area. You and I and others—the current Chairperson (the member for Reynell) and the member for Mitchell—are part of the southern partnership, which is a body established by the Onkaparinga council and includes the state and federal governments. So, the three tiers of government are working together to achieve common outcomes.

I would see the office and ministry of the southern suburbs as being something which will support, strengthen and assist that process. I encourage the member not to be cynical but to participate. The director of the office will be available to talk to local members from whichever political party, to provide help and assistance and to take on ideas. I look forward to his doing that. He may be able to answer at some stage whether the Liberal Party is saying that it has a promise or commitment to get rid of the southern suburbs ministry should it win a future election.

Mr HANNA: After carefully sifting through the budget papers, I am not sure whether there are financial implications for the state arising from the development of the Glenthorne property (the former CSIRO property) on the corner of Majors Road and South Road in the southern suburbs. There is a lot of community interest in my electorate in the future of the Glenthorne property. In particular, the Friends of Glenthorne group has been enthusiastically maintaining vigilance and encouraging good outcomes for the development of that property. Can the minister inform the committee about the current state of negotiations regarding Glenthorne?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for his question. In fact, I anticipated that he would ask me this question, because it has been an issue of great interest to him for some time. I can inform the member of the following. As the member would know, the University of Adelaide has current ownership of the 228 hectares of Glenthorne property. Its usage is to establish a commercial vineyard on 95 hectares of the property, based on the recommendations of the committee in consultation with the community, the local council and the Friends of Glenthorne. Some additional infrastructure will be required to ensure sufficient irrigation water for the vineyard. The remaining land includes water-courses, existing buildings and areas of native and heritage vegetation and an area of black soil to the north of the site which is unsuitable for vines.

The university has confirmed that the heritage buildings and trees will be maintained and, where necessary, restored—and that is good news. Moneys accruing from the vineyard project will be used to support the wine industry in South Australia by providing funds for research and training into wine and vine-related issues. A community group, the Friends of Glenthorne, is assisting the university with the revegetation of the buffer zones, and the university is still negotiating with

BRL Hardy for head lease over approximately 90 hectares of Glenthorne for use as a vineyard. The concept is for BRL Hardy to lease and manage the whole of the vineyard area. It will plant 45 hectares for its own use. The balance of the vineyard will be managed and planted by BRL Hardy for sub-lessees (that is, other wineries). The university hopes to finalise these arrangements with BRL Hardy in the near future.

In addition to the vineyard concept, the Marion council and the university are to progress recent discussions concerning links through Glenthorne to the network of national parks. The Marion council has agreed to put a written proposal to the university for its consideration and is currently working closely with officers of the state government.

Mr HANNA: Another development in my electorate that is the subject of considerable community interest is the proposed subdivision of land on the northern side of O'Halloran Hill—the actual hill and not the suburb—in the suburb of Darlington and going into Seacombe Heights. Is that something in which the Office for the Southern Suburbs would take an interest?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for this question, and I inform the committee that I was anticipating it. It is certainly something that the Office for the Southern Suburbs—

An honourable member: What a surprise!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, what a surprise! As I said, it is something in which the Office for the Southern Suburbs will have an interest. Open space is of particular interest to me. I will read the government policy in relation to this from our policy document. In consultation with the local community, Labor will amend plans announced by the Liberal government in September 2001 to sell government-owned land at Darlington to make way for the subdivision of 113 housing blocks. Labor will ensure that the majority of this land (around 70 per cent) is protected as open space and incorporated into the existing O'Halloran Hill recreation park.

As the member would know, Transport SA is the owner of 25 hectares of land zoned Residential 1 at Darlington (O'Halloran Hill subdivision). The Land Management Corporation has proposed that it be developed into 113 residential allotments with approximately 45 per cent of the area set aside as open space. One of the conditions for the development to proceed, approved by the Key Stakeholder Forum, was the addition to the park of 55 hectares of adjacent Transport SA land, together with the resources to manage it. Additional land had previously been agreed with Transport SA and negotiations held for National Parks and Wildlife Services to receive establishment costs of \$190 000.

The government policy proposes to add further portions other than the 55 hectares previously agreed so that the government can meet its commitments. Transport SA, as the owner of the land, is the lead agency in implementing government policy in this area. I have written to the ministers for transport and government enterprises seeking advice on how to progress this policy. I understand by talking to Mr O'Loughlin that that is well in hand. Budget and financial matters relating to transfer of Transport SA land are pending on the resolution of policy matters with the ministers. So I am anticipating good news announcements shortly.

Mr HANNA: Just to clarify one point, the Labor opposition, coming into the election, promised to halve the original number of houses as part of the plan developed under the former Liberal government. Is that correct? I believe that the

Labor promise was then matched by the former Liberal government before the election.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I understand that is correct.

Mr HANNA: My third question is: can the Minister for the Southern Suburbs explain how the recent sewage spill at Field River on 22 July 2002 was addressed and how he proposes to sustain the water quality of the Field River? I might add gratuitously but sincerely that the Field River water quality and development around there is an issue of concern to the member for Reynell, who is in the chair, to me and to others in the area.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: This is an important issue which I guess affects my portfolio as Minister for the Environment and the person responsible for the EPA. I can inform the committee that at approximately 5.30 p.m. on 22 July a contractor using a bulldozer at Sandpiper Terrace, Hallett Cove, damaged one of the two pumping mains from the Reliance Road waste water pumping station. This caused a significant spill of untreated waste water to the Field River. The bulldozer contractor had been engaged by a local resident to do some excavation work on his property.

It was reported to United Water by a householder at 5.35 p.m. and United Water was in attendance at 5.59 p.m. So its attendance was pretty quick. United Water attempted to isolate the damaged main for repairs by closing isolating valves on the main upstream of the leak. United Water's drawings did not show any downstream isolating valves. However, the leak continued to occur because of surcharging in the system downstream. After some older drawings of the system were checked, some downstream isolating valves were discovered and, when closed, successfully stopped the leak at approximately midday on 23 July 2002. Repairs then commenced.

The spill affected a section of the Field River, which is used by local schools as a conservation area for native species of fish and animals. I actually spoke to a couple of school students last week who have been doing some matriculation work in relation to this particular site. Their statistics certainly changed dramatically over that two-day period. Some dead fish were found in the river mouth, as members would probably know.

As a precautionary measure, DHS, in conjunction with the City of Marion, restricted public access to the affected parts of the Field River and also to the beach until the public health risk was fully assessed. As members probably know, the area has now been declared safe. Microbiological samples were taken from the beach and the river, as requested by DHS. The EPA and the City of Marion also took samples. The incident also attracted wide media attention. The EPA has advised SA Water that a formal investigation is under way.

In the future, the Office for the Southern Suburbs and its location in the outer southern metropolitan area will enable projects between the local councils and key community stakeholders to become more achievable, especially in relation to sustaining the environment. In relation to this particular subject, it is probably more of an environment answer. I have had conversations with SA Water, and I will talk with the EPA as well. I think we need a proper set of protocols between SA Water, United Water and the EPA about how we go about the reporting process. While United Water probably did the best that it could under difficult circumstances, the EPA was not told until significantly later, and it was not really told how serious the event was until well into the next day.

An honourable member: Nor was the council.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Nor was the council, as the member says. I think this is the third or fourth time over the last six months or so that there has been a reasonably serious spill of sewage. So we really need to work out how we deal with it so that people are properly notified. We are going through the process and, where possible, the Office for the Southern Suburbs will have a role in it. However, it is really within my role as Minister for the Environment that I will hopefully address the issue.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Does the minister know of any plans to standardise the Noarlunga railway line or to construct a standard railway line to Port Stanvac to allow the transport of grain ships that berth off Port Stanvac? It has been suggested that the government may entertain the idea of using the deep sea facilities at Port Stanvac as a grain port. This would require the construction of a standard line, the use of an existing line or standardisation of the existing line. If this were to occur, it would obviously affect local residents through noise pollution and the frequency of trains using the line.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am aware of some of the proposals that have been put to government, but the government does not have any plan to do that. The Minister for Transport may have answered the question in the last session in relation to upgrading the railway line, but it is not to enable what you have described to occur: it is to enable the line to be upgraded. I am aware that this idea is being floated, but it certainly is not government policy.

Dr McFETRIDGE: To clarify that, the re-sleepering of the line with, as I understand it, gauge-convertible concrete sleepers, would allow the line to be upgraded at some time.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: This is a Passenger Transport—

Dr McFETRIDGE: But in the southern suburbs.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Not everything in the southern suburbs is within my portfolio.

An honourable member interjecting:

The CHAIRPERSON: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I have answered the question to the best of my ability. Mr O'Loughlin may be able to tell you more about the sleepers and why they are being put in. I make the point that I am aware that there is a developer who is promoting this particular scheme. I can assure the member it is not part of government policy and, as member for perhaps the safest seat in the southern suburbs (and I want to keep it that way) I am not thrilled by what is being suggested. Mr O'Loughlin may be able to add something.

The CHAIRPERSON: Do you want to add anything to what has already been said on this matter?

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: Very briefly, Madam Chair. We touched on this in the previous session—that there is a forward program for re-sleepering all of the suburban rail line. The re-sleepering will be done in such a way as to enable the gauge to be converted to standard gauge, if need be, but that program is driven very much by passenger transport considerations.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Can the minister advise the committee what action he has taken to secure the Marion Domain site as a site for the future state swimming centre? As the minister is aware, in the northern suburbs there is the state hockey centre, the velodrome and, under the Liberal government, the southern suburbs had its opportunity to have a state swimming centre. However, this may be in jeopardy if action is not taken by the Labor government. Has the minister been championing this cause and, if so, what he has done?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for the question. I am aware of the great job that the former government did in relation to sport in the southern suburbs. There must have been about a hundred meetings in relation to the South Adelaide Football Club site, which came close to resolution on two occasions. However, the minister changed, and it fell over each time. As you say, work was done by the former government in relation to the aquatic centre at Marion; once again, nothing was done, but there was a lot of talk. I can give you an update on the current situation with the Marion project, as I certainly have had conversations with the council and individuals who are proponents of it. I have also discussed this with various of my ministerial colleagues, too.

Various reports dealing with public aquatic facilities suggest that there should be a regional indoor facility in the south-west of metropolitan Adelaide. As members may know, in 1999 the South-West Indoor Aquatic Centre Committee Incorporated was established to pursue that development. A steering committee, with representatives from six local government authorities and government, was established to investigate and, at the end of 1999, a joint working party was established between the government and the City of Adelaide to look at options. As a result, the previous government decided on a two-pronged strategy of developing state level swimming facilities at Marion and state aquatic facilities at Adelaide. The Marion facility was to be built through a PPP process—that is, a public-private partnership. The Adelaide facility was to be redeveloped with capital funds that had been set aside.

In the context of appropriate and effective recreation and urban planning, the option put forward by the former government was to develop an indoor facility at Marion and redevelop the Adelaide Aquatic Centre. This would provide access to aquatic facilities across the metro area, as indoor facilities currently exist at Noarlunga and Elizabeth. The Office of Recreation and Sport, in partnership with the major project group of DAIS and the Department of Treasury and Finance, have been investigating the potential for a PPP for the Marion State Swimming Centre. The Office of Recreation and Sport is currently working with MPG, DTF and Planning SA on potential options for aquatic facility provisions in the south to be developed prior to any further work to be undertaken. Are you keeping up with all these acronyms?

Mrs REDMOND: No.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I know what they mean. Do you?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I do. This is in keeping with the DTF's requirements in relation to its findings on the initial work undertaken on the Marion PPP proposal (public-private partnership) as part of the outlined business case and the wider urban project being considered by Planning SA. I think both sides would like to see this happen, but the bottom line is: can we get it to stack up? That is being pursued now.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Can the minister advise the committee how much state government money was spent in each of the past 10 financial years in the area he has defined as the southern suburbs, the cities of Onkaparinga and Marion, and how much the government intends to spend in those same areas in 2002-03?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It may surprise you that I do not have that information with me. I am not too sure that anyone will have that information, and I cannot tell the member that I will be able to provide it, because it may well cost tens of thousands of dollars to have the research done. But if you want me to compare the former government's record in those

areas with what the Labor governments have done in the past and may do in the future we can always take that as a future task. No, I do not have that information.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: You will take that on notice?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I said I do not have that information. In terms of the budget estimates, I do not think it is appropriate for me to take on questions which relate to the last 10 budget rounds. You may wish to write to me, or put it on the *Notice Paper*. I will look at it but, as the former minister knows, those kinds of questions can become very expensive to answer. If there are particular issues you want clarified, I will happily follow those up, but I think you need to narrow the question down to make it feasible.

Mrs REDMOND: I am sure that the minister is aware that—more so than I—sand moves along the coast from south to north and, therefore, southern suburbs beaches are sand disadvantaged. Obviously, that has an impact on both recreational and environmental issues, and it may be an ideal opportunity for the minister to champion the cause of southern beaches. What has the minister done, or what is the minister proposing to do, about the issue of sand drift to the north?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Other than stop the way the planet turns, I do not think there is a lot we can do to stop littoral drift, which is what you are describing. The tragedy of Adelaide is that our early developers did not pay attention to our early planners, and they probably do not do it too much these days either. The original part of Light's vision was that there should not be any development on Adelaide coasts for several hundred yards back. Had that been the case we would not have any sand management problems, because the dunes which formed the coastline would have provided sand—

Mrs REDMOND: I heard you on radio 891 telling us that recently.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Probably. That would have meant sufficient sand to provide a buffer for the beaches. However, we have built on all of the sand dunes, so we have locked that sand in. We pump out treated sewage and stormwater, and that helps kill off the seagrass, which stops the sand being held in place. The littoral drift causes the sand to go up the coast, and a minimal amount comes back. So, the member for Port Adelaide ends up with lots of sand in his electorate and, further south, there are minimal amounts of sand.

I represent about 30 kilometres of coast, and those beaches are doing well, thank you very much, despite the fact that the former government plundered the offshore reserves of sand at Christies Beach, Port Stanvac, and elsewhere, and placed that sand further north. After eight years in government the member for Bright has suddenly taken an interest in the beach in his electorate.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Not in the parliament.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will check the records. These are issues about which I need to talk in the context of my environment department. We have a strategy to look at coastal and marine issues, and we are doing a considerable amount of work on it. I cannot give any immediate comfort in relation to Hallett Cove, but I am aware of the issue.

Witness:

The Hon. J.W. Weatherill, Minister for Urban Development and Planning.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

Mr N. Savery, Executive Director, Planning SA.

Mr R. Teague, Development Adviser, Planning SA.

Mr P. Smith, Director, Development Assessment, Planning SA.

Mr B. Burman, Director, Planning Policy, Planning SA.

Membership:

The Hon. Dean Brown substituted for Dr McFetridge.

The Hon. M.R. Buckby substituted for Mrs Redmond.

The CHAIRPERSON: I refer members to appendix D, page 2 in the Budget Statement, and part 9, pages 9.1 to 9.80, volume 2 of the Portfolio Statements.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The government is intent on promoting sound strategic policy as the basis for decision making; improving the social environmental quality of urban and regional communities; and broadening the implementation of urban design practices. The budget for Planning SA for 2002-03 is \$25.1 million, which includes an appropriation of \$13.1 million, plus fees and other income sources. The operating expenditure of the total budget is \$23.78 million. This includes employee costs, policy investigation costs and grants.

The budget also includes capital investment of a further \$1.1 million for development of the electronic lodgment and transfer of development application system, and the implementation of the electronic system for land division applications, in partnership with the LGA and other relevant sections of the industry. The sum of \$7.5 million is budgeted in the Planning and Development Fund for strategic open space projects including implementation of the second generation of parklands and continued implementation of Coast Park along the metropolitan coastline, and the recently organised Places for People program.

The government has a commitment to strategic planning in areas of economic development, community development and environmental management. This year's program places an emphasis on enhancing the role and the function of the state planning strategy as one of the government's most important policy tools for guiding decisions on land use planning and development activity. It is fair to say that the planning strategy, we say, in recent years has not enjoyed that level of support. The new metropolitan volume of the planning strategy is to be replaced, and that will place greater emphasis on the sustainable form of metropolitan Adelaide, reducing social inequalities and promoting appropriate and necessary development.

A spatial development plan is to be prepared to provide visual mapping of the elements that comprise the urban system, including an urban design framework and an open space framework. A new inner regional volume of the planning strategy is also to be prepared to provide broad policy guidance to land management, environmental protection and development activity in the northern plains and the Adelaide Hills through to Fleurieu Peninsula. Urban design will achieve greater prominence through the planning system with the development of the urban design charter, and the promotion of good design principles through the work of such people as Professor Jan Gehl, who was recently in Adelaide. That will continue the development of a number of urban regeneration projects, including the North West corridor, Elizabeth and Noarlunga.

Improvements to some features of the state planning system will also place greater focus on strategic planning and

policy development. The development plan improvement program aims to simplify development plans through content, structure, language and consistency. It is our goal to achieve much greater political commitment and also to make them much more useable plans for local development assessment. Our major initiatives in 2002-03 include \$3.2 million over three years for the Places for People program, which will assist local government in enhancing the safety, vibrancy, attractiveness and effectiveness of important community places; \$6.25 million over two years for the North Terrace redevelopment project, which will revitalise Adelaide's premier cultural boulevard; a further \$6 million this year to progress the implementation of the Coast Park metropolitan open space system and regional open space program and also a package in how best to protect the hills face zone through the management of future development, the enforcement of action to counter illegal activity and an examination of policy within the region.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: We do not have an opening statement, but I will ask some questions, if I may. Minister, back in May of this year you released SA Planning projections for various communities in South Australia. In releasing that, as a rather inexperienced member of parliament you decided to attack the now Leader of the Opposition for his failure to release those figures, even though he had refused to release them because of clear inaccuracies that appeared to occur there. In fact, if we had waited just a few short weeks, we could have checked them against the newly released ABS figures, which I have now had a chance to do.

I notice that for the Yankalilla District Council area in my electorate you had projected from 2001-06 a drop in population by 7.7 per cent, and you projected that by 2006 it would reach a population of 3 676. I checked with the ABS, and the most recent figures show that Yankalilla is now past that figure. In fact, the ABS projects a population growth rate for exactly the same period: not a drop of 7.7 per cent as projected in your figures but, rather, an increase of 13 per cent. That would make it the fourth fastest growing district council area in South Australia.

Incidentally, I notice that the Yankalilla council wrote to the planning department and pointed out that the council had had an 86 per cent increase in the number of new dwelling applications in the council area. Working on the assumption of only 40 per cent of those being for permanent residence, there will still be a significant increase. An aged care complex which has been planned and talked of and which is now completed would put at least an extra 80 to 90 people into the township of Yankalilla. Will the minister now acknowledge the fundamental inaccuracies in some of the figures he released earlier, and will SA Planning now look at the techniques that are used in trying to project figures forward so that you come up with more accurate figures in future? One reason I ask that second question is that there has been an ongoing problem for at least five or six years down in the Fleurieu Peninsula with the state government using projections which have come out of the planning department and which are also used by other government agencies, such as the education department.

An honourable member: What did your lot do about it?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I raised this issue with the then minister, and that is why the figures were not released. That is the very point I am getting to. The figures were not released, because they were found to be inaccurate. On Fleurieu Peninsula the facts have shown that year after year the figures are significantly understating the actual population

growth that is occurring, and that has therefore affected the investment that has occurred in education facilities. At the beginning of each new school year, major schools such as Victor Harbor Primary School find that they suddenly have to bring in two extra classrooms, and they invariably arrive one term late.

The first and key point concerned the inaccuracies in the figures that the minister released in parliament. It is one thing to release inaccurate figures: it is another thing to try to make a political point out of it. The minister's political point falls flat on its face now that the accurate figures are available. Secondly, can SA Planning look at the basis on which it does its projections? Clearly, there need to be more accurate projections in regional growth areas such as the Fleurieu Peninsula.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The question misunderstands the nature of the criticism, as the Leader of the Opposition misunderstood the nature of the criticism. The criticism was of the suppression of the population projections. The first thing to say is that they are population projections; they are by their nature estimates of what is likely to happen in the future. They are based on the best material that is available, and are published for people to use in making decisions about what use they are put to. Interestingly enough, they are also published with a very long list of caveats in the document. Those include caveats about the use to which the documents can be put, and they invite people to supply material which may question certain of the assumptions upon which the material is based. Another thing that needs to be borne steadily in mind here is that the population projections covered the metropolitan and the regional areas. You recall that the document made clear that in many regions within South Australia there were quite substantial—some would say catastrophic—falls in population growth in the regions and increases in the ageing of the regions, given that many young people were leaving those regions.

Those observations were made about the whole of regional South Australia and different aspects of it. There were also important population projections about the metropolitan area within that same series of population projections. It was said that the sole basis on which the then deputy premier, now Leader of the Opposition, refused to release the population projections was his concerns about regional South Australia and the fact that there may be more population growth in those areas. His comments were broadly directed across the whole of regional South Australia.

I note that the question that has been asked here is predicated on the benefit of reading those population statistics, and what the honourable member seems to be drawing to our attention is that just one of those regions seems to have seen a higher population growth than that projected in the earlier projections. The first thing to say about that is that, when one had the advantage of these population projections some years ago now, they could have been used for the purposes of planning various government decisions in a whole range of areas. That opportunity was lost to government on the basis that these population projections were not released. It is now suggested that, because some of the population projections have proven not to be the case, that justified the suppression of the whole of the population projections, and that manifestly is a nonsense. A more likely construction, and one which I think is much more compelling, is that the report itself contained some serious public policy issues about the fall in population in the regions, whereas I think we are not likely to see change in many of the regions.

It is about those things that the same report expressed concern, which had obvious political ramifications for the government of the day. It did not want this report released because it would have shown the government in a bad light. There was an enormous amount of boosterism about how wonderfully things were going in South Australia. Nobody wanted anything to get in the road of the good news—certainly not bad news about population projections. In my submission, that is what was in the minds of those who made the decision not to release the report. The report could have been released and, to the extent that there were concerns about what it contained, appropriate remarks could have been made at the time but, in a fashion which was the hallmark of the previous government, it chose to suppress the report.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Before moving to my next question, I will comment on some aspects of that answer. The minister said that these figures are available and should have been released for planning purposes in terms of projections for government. I am glad that they were not released, because it would have shown Yankalilla as having the biggest decline of any council district in the state—that is what the Planning SA figures show. In fact, based on the ABS projections—and I cannot talk for every council area but I can match it with the figures released earlier by Planning SA—the Yankalilla council would have been the fourth fastest growing district council in South Australia. In fact, the figures are so wrong—as the district council, in fact, wrote to the department and pointed out—that anyone looking at them could see that they are wrong.

Also, although I do not have the projections, I have looked at the figures, for instance, for the Alexandrina council area and I can tell you that, again, they are wrong. A 10 per cent growth rate over a five year period is projected. I think you will find that there has been about a 5 per cent growth rate in much of that area in one year alone. It is projected that there will be a growth rate in Victor Harbor of 11.9 per cent. Victor Harbor has recorded an average of 3.5 per cent for the past 10 years, going back before the census. If you look at the figures, Victor Harbor is growing at something like seven times the state average.

My concern is that these inaccurate figures reflect in terms of planning, particularly for school construction and the number of classrooms that need to be constructed, because they are used by the education department. The figures consistently show inaccuracies which are to the penalty of schools and facilities in my electorate.

The CHAIRPERSON: Member for Finniss, may I interpret that as your opening statement?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: You may.

The CHAIRPERSON: Will you proceed with your second question?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I will put my second question, and if you want me to refer to an output I will put it under 4.1 on page 9.22. I simply say this to set the record straight, because the minister used a somewhat sarcastic expression in the house in terms of not knowing whether or not I supported the Sellicks Hill wind farm. In fact, the minister drew to my attention that the applicants for that wind farm, Trust Power, had used my name in the application, and I was grateful to the minister for bringing that to my attention. I have, therefore, spoken to Trust Power and, because the minister has recorded something in *Hansard*, I think it is worthwhile setting the record straight. Trust Power wrote to me in the following terms:

We also acknowledge that you do not agree with the comments recorded in the planning application and that they are not a fair representation of the meeting you had last year with Mr Alistair Wilson of Wind Farm Developments (the previous developer of the Myponga wind farm project).

To address these issues we will (this week) be lodging a variation request to our planning application with the Development Assessment Commission, which will remove all references to meetings with members of parliament. The variation will be made before the DAC makes the planning application document available to the public.

I bring that to the minister's attention because he was aware that the company used my name in the previous application. I point out that the company that used my name had not met me at that stage: I am not quite sure how it could use my name without having met me. Secondly, the previous company, when it came to see me, could not even lay out where the wind farm or turbines were to go.

Mr HANNA: What is the question, Dean?

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I am coming to that. So, I highlight the fact that this was clearly an inappropriate comment to appear in the DAC documentation, as it was grossly inaccurate. The issue about the Sellicks Hill wind farm is that the minister said that there will be a number of potential ways in which approval could be granted. There have been very widespread requests from within the area for this to be given major project status so that there is full consultation with the public. I ask the minister whether he has decided what the planning process will be, and I urge him to give it major project status to enable an appropriate environmental impact statement to be prepared, together with the opportunity for members of the community to have their say.

The CHAIRPERSON: I hope that the minister's response is not as long as the question.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is a little hard to follow how the previous proponent could be confused about their support for a much bigger wind farm operation, and now the member for Finniss is suggesting that he does not support a much smaller wind farm operation.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I did not support the other one. I suggest that I think they have got it grossly wrong, to the point of dishonesty.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: All right; that is your comment for the record and I hope that you can back it up, because I understand that these are proceedings of parliament. I think that I should offer the member for this area an explanation of the current situation, because things have changed considerably since the last proceedings in parliament. In June this year the Development Assessment Commission received an application for 34 wind towers in the Sellicks Beach-Myponga area, and that application was lodged under the crown development and public infrastructure provisions of the Development Act.

That development involves wind turbines along two ridge levels, and I presume that the member for Finniss is familiar with the nature of that proposition. But, very recently, on 26 July, the proponent amended the application by deleting 14 towers proposed to be erected along the setback from the ridge of the hills face zone. So, there is essentially a variation to the original proposition from 34 wind towers to 20 towers—a removal of 14 towers.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Are there 14 fewer towers, or is it down to 14 towers?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: There are 14 fewer towers—down from 34 to 20. It is a qualitatively different proposition. Having said that, I am presently receiving advice about the development assessment path that should be taken

for the proposal. Obviously it is still in the metropolitan area and it is still a very substantial proposition. There are two aspects to the advice that I am taking: one is to take advice about the planning route that this decision should take; and the other is some legal advice that needs to be applied to that process. I do not have that advice yet, but I expect to have it shortly. The two routes, if you like, that this could take—the crown development route and the major projects route—are both open, and I shall be making that decision shortly.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Just as a point of clarification, I presume that before the minister goes into that planning process he will make the decision as to which route it will follow and make a public announcement to that effect.

Mr O'BRIEN: I take a point of order. I am new to the parliament but I thought this was a committee given over to the consideration of budget estimates. I do not find what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is canvassing has anything to do with any line in the budget and I think he is wasting an enormous amount of our time.

The CHAIRPERSON: Perhaps the deputy leader can identify a line.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I have identified the line as 9.22.

The CHAIRPERSON: I do not uphold the point of order but I do ask the deputy leader to be quicker with his questions. Whatever he asks, this is the final question.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: If that is the case, I will move on to another subject, and perhaps the minister could clarify that point.

The CHAIRPERSON: The member can put questions on notice. This is an opportunity for everyone to ask questions. Please proceed.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Do you want to add to your answer?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, I will find out what the question is and then I will answer it.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Councils on the Fleurieu Peninsula have got together and have done some work on identifying the key planning issues that should be taken into account when giving approval to retirement villages and aged care facilities. A detailed report has been prepared on that, which the councils would like to present to the minister. The Alexandrina and Victor Harbor councils have been the first councils to work together on a regional basis and they would like strong support from Planning SA to finalise that region (the Southern Fleurieu Peninsula) with a joint PAR. I also have requests from the Yankalilla council and the Victor Harbor council that their general PARs, which have been sitting with the department for some time, be released as a matter of urgency. There is a big community expectation, particularly because of the high growth rate of the area, that those PARs be finished as quickly as possible.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The issues associated with what was described in the planning strategy as the inner region, that is, the area spoken of by the honourable member, have not received as much detailed attention in the past as they should have, and the issues raised by the member—the rapid growth of population in the region and the ambitions of people in that area—are exercising our minds as to how we deal with that. We are looking to grapple with this whole question of the inner region or, as it used to be described, the outer metropolitan area, within the planning strategy.

We are anxious to hear what ambitions councils have for their areas so we can consider them. If they fit in with the state's overall planning strategy, we are keen to include them

within that document to provide guidance for councils and some key coherence to public policy. We have already provided some preliminary advice to the councils concerned about this issue, and we are also giving some thought to the whole question of a plan amendment report for the aged accommodation issue. They are two routes by which we can address the issues that the member has raised. In a broad sense, we are anxious to work closely with councils to facilitate their ambitions.

Mrs GERAGHTY: In light of recent house fires and the tragic death due to a house fire that was reported in the media, can the minister advise what action his department is taking to ensure public compliance with legislation requiring smoke detectors to be fitted in all homes?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is a very important question, and this is one of those measures, a bit like seatbelts or crash helmets, which create a degree of inconvenience for the people who have to comply with them initially but which have massive public benefit. Smoke detectors are a crucial way of preventing death and massive property damage in circumstances where there is a fire in a house. When the requirement for smoke detectors was introduced for houses in 2000, it was recognised that it would always be difficult to ensure compliance, so accordingly education programs were put in place at that time.

Unfortunately what has happened is that, because of the very nature of smoke alarms, there clearly is not the capacity to go door-to-door, intrude on people's privacy and find out whether or not smoke alarms are fitted. The other issue with smoke alarms is that, although one might be in place, the batteries tend to run down and it is a question of replacing them, so an even more sophisticated process of surveillance is necessary.

The best advice that I have received is that this is really an issue about community education and we need to draw to people's attention the massive benefit that the smoke alarm can provide. Obviously it is a very small risk that something can go wrong in a home, but this is a very small measure that can make a massive contribution to protecting life and property. We are giving some thought to how we can improve the whole question of enforcement, but it is a difficult exercise. We are also looking at proposals for community education and, in that regard, I have asked for a meeting to be organised between the Metropolitan Fire Service and representatives of employees in the industry to see what contribution the insurance industry may be prepared to make to this question, because there might be some capacity for joint action.

The other thing that has been brought to my attention is that regulations broadly cover all jurisdictions that are quite similar and perhaps on a national basis we could organise an approach to this issue of community awareness. We are looking at increasing public awareness about this issue and encouraging people to make this small investment, which could save them massive heartbreak.

Mrs GERAGHTY: We should also advise people of the insurance implications that might apply if they do not maintain smoke detectors, which is not a tragedy of life but a tragedy in another way. Can the minister advise the committee what the government is doing to address the concerns that have been raised recently regarding the increase in fees for cemetery services?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The first thing that I am doing about that is to ask the authority that was responsible for announcing an increase in the fees why it is doing so. I

became aware of this by reading the *Advertiser* this morning, which is not traditionally how I like to have statutory authorities communicate with me. I do not know precisely at this stage what its obligations are from a legal perspective to consult with me but, as a courtesy, the authority involved could have discussed the matter before it resolved upon this course. I am anxious to find out what justifies the increase in the fees for cemetery services.

Some preliminary investigations have established that there have not been fee increases recently concerning the cemeteries that are under the control of the cemeteries authority, and there may have been a backlog of fee increases that needed to be dealt with. I am not yet satisfied about the basis of those fee increases and I am exploring what options I have in the event that those increases cannot be justified.

I suppose the simple answer is: when I find out what the rationale is, I will make an assessment. If the assessment does not satisfy me, I will explore what options I have to intervene in that matter. Given that this only came to my attention this morning through the daily paper, I will be undertaking some more analysis.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Hopefully, none of us will have to pay those fees too soon. The capital investment statement on page 37 indicates funds have been set aside for the North Terrace redevelopment project. Will the minister advise the committee how the North Terrace project has been amended as a result of the public consultation process; and what funds has the government committed to this important project?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As Madam Chair would be well aware, having previously worked on the Public Works Committee, this was a joint state-local government initiative with an interesting project arrangement. It is project managed by the Adelaide City Council but the state government simply applies some funds to the project. Upon coming into government, we were presented with the Public Works Committee report which made a number of criticisms of the project. It criticised the lack of public consultation and also key elements of what was proposed by way of design.

We took the opportunity of approaching the Adelaide City Council, which was already well along the track of moving to the tender process, and asking it for its forbearance to allow us to respond to those criticisms. I must say that the Adelaide City Council, through the Lord Mayor, provided us with an enormous degree of cooperation, and for that we are very grateful. He allowed us the opportunity to undertake a public consultation process during which the detailed design was exhibited. Something in the order of 1 000 different responses were received from people concerning the project. It was a very successful public consultation process.

By that stage a number of the concerns had also been built into the designs, so there were some slight amendments to the design which was used in the public consultation process. As a consequence of the public consultation and also our budget deliberations, we sought to do two things. First, to find savings, which we did by reducing our contribution by \$2 million. Therefore, our total contribution to the project becomes \$6.25 million. Secondly, we also made certain changes to the design of the project in that we moved to have more lawned areas and a more shadier tree option, rather than the spotted gums which were being suggested to try to respond to both the Public Works Committee's and the public's desire to have a more shady and useable area.

We are confident that we have—perhaps absent some quibbles about some public art and the taste of various members of the Public Works Committee about one piece of

art or another—a project which has broad bipartisan support and also one which is fully supported by the Adelaide City Council. This is a 50-50 project, but as a result of our reduced contribution, the Adelaide City Council has chosen to apply other resources to aspects of the project. Therefore, the project in its total scope is not being greatly affected by our decision to reduce our contribution by \$2 million.

It has been a good example of cooperation between state and local government. It continues on some good work that I have to acknowledge the previous government initiated and I believe that, where possible, especially in matters of urban design, we need to find as much common ground as we possibly can. It is very easy for us to play politics with urban design issues because they are so subjective but, if we are to keep South Australia, and Adelaide in particular as the beautiful city it is, we need to continue to take a mature approach to these issues and try to find common ground so that we can move forward and ensure that projects such as these get off the ground.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: I note the minister's answer regarding the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority and that he is investigating the increases in charges for various services at cemeteries under the control of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority, so he may need to take this question on notice. Will the minister advise the committee what power he has over the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority and whether it needs to report to him of any price increases prior to its notifying funeral directors of those price increases? If he has no authority over it, what hope does the public have in terms of dealing with an authority which can increase prices without any control by the government, even though it is a government authority?

Yesterday I was advised that the body of a baby who died 20 years ago was exhumed from the West Terrace Cemetery to be reburied with the body of the child's father at another location. The cost yesterday was \$1 100, but the cost on 1 August (that is tomorrow) for the same service will be \$3 498; in other words, an increase of some 218 per cent. In addition, the cost of exhumation at the Enfield cemetery on 1 August will rise by 80 per cent and, as a comparison, the cost of exhumation at Centennial Park is \$1 790. We are comparing \$1 790 at Centennial Park with \$3 498 at West Terrace. In addition, the cost of burial for a standard coffin, level 1 and level 2, at West Terrace will rise by 50 per cent; a level 3 coffin by 71 per cent; and an over size or couch casket level 1 and 2 by 170 per cent on 1 August. The minister may need to take those questions on notice.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: All those questions were questions which occurred to me as I was reading the paper this morning. I have asked very similar questions. I will take those questions on notice and provide an answer as soon as possible.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: The minister will need to take this question on notice as well. Will the minister advise the committee why the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority has not increased the cost of cremations? It has increased a range of other services but cremations have been left untouched.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: Will the minister inform the committee of the reasons for the approval of the proposal by SITA to establish a landfill at Kalbeeba, east of Gawler, being declared a major development? SITA is proposing to establish a landfill in a now extinct quarry at Kalbeeba, a small distance from the South Para River. As three other landfill sites are already approved at Dublin, Inkerman and

Medlow Road, I am interested to know the reason for this proposal being declared a major development.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Under the act, I am entitled to give consideration to whether a project is of such social, environmental or economic significance that it is either necessary and/or appropriate to declare it a major project and send it down a particular path of development assessment. In my view, this particular development fell into that category. I reached that decision after taking advice about a range of factors that bore on those questions. Simply because it has been given a major project status does not necessarily determine what the next step will be.

I am advised that the present application of the proponent has lapsed and that it is necessary for them to make a further application if they want to pursue the project. If they choose to make such a further application, the process is that I will receive advice about my options from that point, and one of the options is simply to say, 'No, this is out of the question', or to send it down this more detailed assessment path, and that is where we are at the moment.

Mr HANNA: One of the highlights for the 2001-02 financial year listed in Portfolio Statements, volume 2, page 9.18, is the completion of a study of the public spaces in central Adelaide. I understand this is the report produced by Professor Jan Gehl and that it was jointly funded by the state government and the Adelaide City Council. Will the minister tell us what the government is proposing to do now that the report has been presented?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: This is a very important report. Professor Gehl is an internationally recognised specialist in analysing and improving the quality and pedestrian use of public spaces in cities, and his work is based on creating cities that are welcoming and vital, so it is about activating the city spaces. His objective is to address what he sees as essentially the privatisation of life. We spend so much time in our homes and he wants to create more of a village square atmosphere so that we enjoy people as we move about in public spaces. He has looked at a number of cities and made massive contributions around the world to different cities. Planning SA and the Adelaide City Council initiated the sponsorship for Professor Gehl to undertake this study in relation to Adelaide.

The principal elements of the project that he engaged in was a quality evaluation of major streets and public spaces in the CBD, a public life survey about how the spaces are used, recommendations in broad policy changes for the square mile and quality improvements to public spaces based on the area from Victoria Square over to North Terrace. Professor Gehl presented his findings to meetings of the Capital City Committee and the Adelaide City Council on 16 July, and the report was publicly released the following day. I think I have sent a copy of it to the shadow minister and also the shadow minister for local government.

The recommendations are generalised and strategic rather than specific and short term. It is not about whether or not we close Victoria Square, but they are broad ideas about what makes good cities and gives us some principles by which we can make those individual decisions as we consider them. It is all about encouraging greater pedestrian and bicycle use and making the city a more attractive place in which to move around. The study will be used in a number of ways: it will inform both state and council policy in urban design generally but will also assist us in traffic and road policy, public transport policy, parklands and squares and how we deal with them. It will also inform the planning strategy in the develop-

ment plans of the Adelaide City Council. It is a very broad set of principles that allow us to move forward.

It is important to ensure that it does not just become another report that sits on somebody's cupboard and gathers dust, so we are anxious to continue using it. The Adelaide City Council at the meeting that considered it resolved to act and adopt it in broad terms and to find ways in which it could put it to some immediate use. It is a very practical analysis of Adelaide. It talks about the fact that Copenhagen had very similar traffic issues to Adelaide some 40 years ago and there was a conscious process of moving to the stage at which it is now, where it is a much more pedestrian and cyclist friendly city. It is about incremental change.

I plead with the opposition to take a bipartisan position on this report, which was initiated under its government and is something we have embraced. There are lots of easy political pot shots to take, whether it be at Victoria Square or something else, and we need to find a way of moving together on this. It will work only if state and local government work together. We are seeking a similar discipline from the Adelaide City Council and asking it to embrace it broadly rather than turning it into the most recent manifestation of a factional dispute. That is the importance of it: it is a quality piece of work that can guide our thinking. In broad terms, not many people would find any disagreement with it: it is how we turn it into practice. If we do it incrementally and take the community with us, we will end up with an even more beautiful city than the one we have already.

Mr HANNA: My second question relates to the government's urban improvement program listed on page 9.18 of Budget Paper 4, volume 2. What is the government doing to foster community life and pride by improving town centres and main streets?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In the house recently I announced the first round of grants for some \$250 000, which I set out in detail and will not go through again. I will talk briefly about the ongoing nature of this program. It is to be called 'Places for people' and it builds on the program the previous government was also involved in, namely, 'Streets Ahead'. Its key aspect is to promote improvements to centres and main streets as well as promoting greater design skills and understanding within local government. In a sense it is in a local way what we are attempting to do with the Adelaide City Council through the report we just mentioned.

The main objectives of the program are to assist councils to add to the vitality of their public areas, to support community life and to develop a sense of place and identity that reflects their local heritage. A formal launch will occur shortly, but another key objective of the program is to take those suburbs which it could be said have been less fortunate in their physical appearance and make contributions to those areas. We need to encourage councils, in those areas where they have degraded suburbs or public places which are not attractive and which people do not attend, to get involved in this project. We are thinking of ways in which we can structure the funding arrangements so that councils that regard themselves as less financial are able to participate in these projects. It would be unfortunate if we had the same councils that have well organised grant application units continuing to get grants. We would like it targeted to areas of greatest need.

There is a real relationship in my view between the way a place looks and community pride in that area. It also can affect issues such as the way in which public disturbances such as graffiti and other issues are dealt with, which again

locks up people in their own homes. We do not want people going to their homes, investing in shutters and spending their lives in isolated existence. We want as far as possible to attract them to community places where they can feel safe and can enjoy the company of their fellow citizens.

Mr HANNA: My third question refers to Output Class 3, planning and development, from Budget Paper 4, page 9.30. Will the minister advise the committee of government initiatives to provide greater certainty for proponents and the community in regard to electricity generating wind farms?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The government supports the establishment of renewable energy facilities including wind farms in appropriate locations. Our commitment is to have a planning framework that ensures that the location takes into account the issues of nearby homes and communities. A total of eight wind farm applications have been approved in South Australia over the past two years. Two were approved by the former minister for urban planning as public infrastructure proposals, and six were approved by local councils.

Currently, local development plans do not make specific reference to wind farms but provide general planning policies for consideration of such applications and the government believed that it was necessary for those policies to be enhanced. It is crucial that there is strong public support for the process of development assessment. They need to know, as do developers, all of the issues that are to be taken into account so that we can introduce some degree of certainty into this area.

In January 2002, Planning SA released a draft advisory notice on wind farms that went some way. However, based on a review of recent applications and interstate and overseas experience, the key issues raised by wind farm developments have been identified. They include: visual impact on landscape quality—there are obviously elements of subjectivity, but we are looking for a test that takes into account the way the community evaluates those visual impacts; noise; bird migration and birdstrike; potential disturbance of native vegetation; and particular location and design.

On 24 July, the Premier announced details of the government's wind farm package to 200 delegates of the Australian Wind Energy Association Conference. The package, which is to be publicly released tomorrow, includes the following components:

- a planning bulletin that identifies issues relating to wind farm developments;
- assistance to councils on policy directions when conducting section 30 reviews. It also provides methodologies that will assist in visual impact assessment;
- a ministerial PAR to provide broad policy direction that reinforces the importance of the development of renewable energy resources but provides policies relating to key wind farm issues that will be inserted in council-wide sections of development plans across the state;
- a guide to assist applicants, designers and relevant authorities in the preparation of wind farm applications; and
- a fact sheet summarising those components.

We will also be promoting a development regulation amendment which requires applications for wind farms to be referred to the Environment Protection Authority.

We think this package will provide a greater degree of certainty for all sides of the debate. It is a classic issue of not only wanting to encourage a particular industry but also ensuring that it is provided in the appropriate location. We hope that this package gets the balance right.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I refer the minister to his ministerial 'Directory of Office' (issued by the government on 12 June and updated on 13 July). I note that the minister's ministerial office comprises 15 staff, including one ministerial officer for local government, four ministerial liaison officers in the areas of planning and local government, administrative services, demographic and communications. I appreciate that the minister would not necessarily have job specifications for each position, but I ask the minister to take on notice to provide job specifications for each of those positions so that the committee can see exactly what their duties are.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take that question on notice. I think that part of the answer lies in the fact that there is no greater budget, but I will clarify as to how the ministerial office is presently configured. There are a number of issues relating to part-time staff, but I will clarify that and bring back a serious answer.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: At the same time, will the minister also indicate the qualifications of the staff appointed against those positions. For example, I am particularly interested to know whether the ministerial liaison officer positions require demographic and communications qualifications, etc. to ensure that they have the appropriate and relevant qualifications.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am happy to supply that information.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: First, will the minister advise the committee of the reasons for the expected fall in output revenue from \$5.118 million in 2001-02 to \$3.22 million in 2002-03? In Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 9.25, the table entitled 'Outputs Net Expenditure Summary' under Output Class 3, 3.1, entitled 'Urban and Regional Development Strategies', the expected revenue this financial year has fallen by \$1.898 million. Secondly, will the minister inform the committee whether there has been any change to the planned works for the underground infrastructure of the North Terrace redevelopment project?

Thirdly, will the minister inform the committee of the reasons for the reduction in expenditure on information and advice to the public, industry and government agencies, as shown in the table on page 9.30 in Budget Paper 4, volume 2? The abovementioned table shows a reduction in expenditure from \$3.079 million in 2001-02 to \$1.010 million this financial year—a reduction of almost \$2 million. Finally, I refer to Output 1.3, Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 9.8. Will the minister inform the committee of the process he will use to achieve the 2002-03 target of 90 per cent of major developments processed by Planning SA within the agreed time frames? In 2001-02, 83 per cent were processed within the agreed time frame.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take those questions on notice.

The CHAIRPERSON: The agreed time for examination of this line having expired, I declare the examination completed.

Minister for Local Government—Other Items, \$416 000

Witness:

The Hon. J. Weatherill, Minister for Local Government

Additional Departmental Advisers:

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

Mr I. Brown, Director, Strategic Policy, Office of Local Government.

Mr P. Skouborg, Principal Project Officer, Office of Local Government.

Membership:

Mr Brindal substituted for the Hon. M.R. Buckby.

Mrs Hall substituted for the Hon. W.A. Matthew.

The CHAIRPERSON: I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to appendix D, page 2 in the Budget Statement and part 9, pages 9.1 to 9.80, volume 2 of the Portfolio Statements. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, Madam Chair, I would like to make a brief opening statement. I will briefly set out the broad policy themes I want to progress through this portfolio. I have not done this elsewhere, so I want to take the opportunity to do it now.

As you would appreciate, the Office of Local Government is a rather small policy unit, so, primarily, that is where the outputs will be directed. The first broad measure is to promote open and accountable local government. Whilst I acknowledge that a number of measures have been dealt with in the most recent Local Government Act, a range of issues need to be dealt with to enhance public confidence in both local government and, of course, state government. One measure that occurs at state government level is the Freedom of Information Act, and that flows through by virtue of the amendments that the previous government promoted to local government. There will also be amendments to the section 90 closed meeting procedure. The perception is that that procedure is being used to prevent scrutiny of the affairs of local government.

The second broad theme is that we want to promote the notion of addressing local government with respect. Its ambition is to be treated not as a lobby group but as a sphere of government. That can provide tensions when state government feels that local government does not demonstrate a capacity to do so, or does not behave like it is a sphere of government. There are two alternatives: to treat it like a child, or to treat it with respect and then cast policies on that basis. I think it is a fairly obvious solution: one has to treat local government with respect and engage in capacity building, to the extent that that is necessary, to allow it to carry out its role in an effective fashion. That is a very challenging proposition, and I note the shadow minister grinning to himself; no doubt he has made many attempts at these things.

It is also the case that this is ongoing. It is a question of building on an existing set of reforms. Local government certainly has the ambition to be a serious part of the process of governance, and we need to respond accordingly. One of the key measures to deal with that is the minister's local government forum, which also builds on an initiative of the previous government. Rather than have a relatively ill-defined agenda, we have chosen to try to put a number of concrete matters on the agenda. Shortly, we will be announcing the

composition and the role of that forum, but it is an attempt to grapple with the key issues of the interface between state and local government; to ensure that there is sufficient buy-in from government agencies to make the development of policy in those areas work; and also to select an agenda that is of interest to both state and local government, because there is no point in talking about issues that are not crucial.

Whilst the previous government talked a lot about partnerships—and useful work was done—many of those initiatives ended up being agreements to talk about reaching further agreement. We would like to put a few issues on the agenda and try to get stuck into them. Another principle is consistent and coordinated government and, in many respects, the forum will be an attempt to deal with that issue. However, we think there are real opportunities to unlock the potential of local government to work collaboratively with state government. To an extent, this occurs already, but we think a greater degree of coordination will allow us to better utilise scarce resources.

One key means of achieving that is the link between the planning and local government systems. You will note that this government has the local government portfolio together with the planning portfolio, which is a change from the previous government's arrangements. We think that provides an opportunity to integrate those activities to ensure that the state's strategic planning is integrated more seriously with local government strategic planning.

The fourth major theme is to seek a fairer and more equitable arrangement for funding local government. It does not receive a fair share of funding from the federal government, and that is a key issue that needs to be addressed. It was addressed by the previous government, but we need to continue to pursue it. I am also interested in reviewing the way in which local government raises its own revenue from its citizens and in ensuring that those measures are equitable.

It is my ambition to ensure that councils' employment practices and relations with its employees reflect best practice, which embraces the diversity of people involved in performing those roles in local government and also the way in which they are treated as employees. Finally, I want to build the capacity of elected members and senior managers in local government. I hesitate to use the word 'professionalise' because it implies that they may not be professional but, certainly, I want to lift capacity in a way that ensures that both elected councillors and employed officers are able to discharge their functions in an effective fashion. Part of that aim is also about ensuring that there is a diverse composition of elected councillors and employed officers, in terms of gender, ethnicity and age, so that we have a local government sector that broadly reflects the community. In that way, there will be a strong sector that is able to take its place as a serious sphere of government.

Mr BRINDAL: I commend the minister on some of the directions he is taking. I point out that he is lucky to follow an extraordinarily talented minister for local government. Collegiately, I wish to correct a few things. In reforming the Local Government Act and establishing the City of Adelaide Act, the last government was, as this government seeks to do, embarking in the direction of seeking to establish collaborative working arrangements.

Whilst I note that the minister said that our government was characterised perhaps by verbals rather than actuals, that must be viewed in the context of the act needing to be reformed—the sector needing to be reformed—and that where this government starts is, in fact, where the last

government left off. Therefore, some of my questions are related to funding reform and funding partnerships.

Insofar as this minister appears to be pursuing not so much the policies of the last government but intelligent policies for the integration of local and state government, the opposition will give him full cooperation. With respect to his statement regarding greater openness in councils, I agree that that is at least the perception. In my opinion, it is perhaps the case that, at least in some instances, some councils unnecessarily try to shroud their business in secrecy. I will talk to my party room about cooperating as much as possible to ensure that there is openness and accountability in local government, as there is in state government.

My only note of caution is that the Local Government Act provides an outstandingly broad capacity for local government to raise revenue in its own right through a variety of mechanisms, and it is much broader than our own capacity to raise revenue. That was a deliberate ploy which has not yet been fully employed by local government and includes things which a party dedicated to social justice might not like, because it does not compel wealth taxes or levies based on the creation of wealth. In the current Local Government Act there is the capacity for fee for service, of which the member for Mitchell's council was fond some years ago.

I believe that, if the minister seeks, through a change of the act, to restrict again local government's right to raise funds in a democratic way in the method of its choice, he will have a war on his hands in the parliament—a legitimate war. Your government is entitled to think what it likes, but we broadened that base and we want that broad base to continue. Having said that, we will not resist any attempts by the minister to make the act more intelligent, more intelligible and better working.

Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: My response is that self-praise is no recommendation.

Mr BRINDAL: I actually thought your praise of yourself was good. My first question follows on from the minister's opening statement, so he needs to answer only the parts that he feels he has not answered in the opening statement. Has the minister established, or does he intend to establish, the local government forum? If so, what impact will it have on the current financial arrangements between state and local governments?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It has not been formally established. We are settling its composition and an announcement will be made shortly. The way in which we have attempted to grapple with the question of state and local government relations is that, rather than trying to grapple with that question in the broad, which is a difficult proposition, we intend to select some issues of real importance to both sectors and attempt to work them out. It is my view that in a process of attempting to grapple with some of the issues that have plagued the sectors, in terms of who is responsible for what, if we are able to select some concrete issues and come up with answers, what may emerge out of that is a pattern of measures which may form future state and local government relations.

I do not want to engage on an economic exercise. We have deliberately chosen to have referrals to the forum that will be objective based rather than broad themes. What we would not put on the agenda is 'state-local government relations'. What we may put on the agenda is the issue of how one grapples with the flood mitigation works, for instance, something practical which is a present concern of local government. It has become an intractable issue, and a major issue for the

former government was the deployment of resources and responsibility for dealing with issues of that sort. That is how we propose to grapple with it.

Mr BRINDAL: What plans does the minister have in relation to functional and financial reform? That was the next agenda for us were we to remain in government. I think the minister is saying that he intends to use the forum to achieve functional and financial reform. Am I correct?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think that functional and financial reform will flow from our dealing with some concrete issues. Rather than trying in an academic sense to work out where the boundaries are in the relationship, if we select a few things that have been plaguing us to try to come up with solutions, that will throw up issues. People will say that the way in which we dealt with the first five issues implies a certain pattern and out of that functional and financial reform will flow. I am not inclined to want to put something as broad as that concept on the agenda without knowing exactly what it means.

The state's interests are protected and local government's interests are protected if we are tightly able to define the nature of the problem and get busy with the solution. The impression I have been given from the local government sector is that there has been lots of talking and it would like to get down to practical measures to solve some of these problems. That is without criticism of the former government. A lot has been done. There is a question of building relationships. We are at the point where we need to start talking about some concrete issues.

Mr BRINDAL: Are they the minister's own ideas, or is that based on his advice, or is it based on a bit of both?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is my decision. In my view this is the best way forward. I am not suggesting that these are entirely my ideas, but they are formed as a result of discussions I have had. I am a good listener.

Mr BRINDAL: In terms of the North Terrace Redevelopment Act, I am sure the minister has a portfolio there ready to answer these questions. The previous government committed jointly to fund Stage 1 of the North Terrace redevelopment with the Adelaide City Council to the tune of \$8.193 million. Why has the current government reduced the funding to \$6.125 million?

With respect to the controversial LED messages and their aesthetic impact on the streetscape, will the minister explain why the LED messages were not unveiled as part of the public consultation? Given the feedback I have received from the public about the proposed message boards, I am concerned that we may be lumbered with a very expensive piece of art work which the general public finds unappealing and inappropriate. Can the minister tell me whether there will be any binding agreement with the artists concerned?

We cannot actually shift the art work on the Plaza at the back of the Festival Theatre because Don Dunstan entered into some arrangement where it has to exist until the pyramids fall down. The Bonython Fountain encountered similar problems: we had to get the Bonython family's permission to do anything at all. If these things are not to the appeal of South Australians, or if we change our mind, I think the worst possible decision is to be lumbered with flashing fish and chips shop signs that no-one likes.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The simple answer to the savings is that every portfolio area was under pressure to find savings. We found \$2 million savings in this project. It is a new government with new priorities. We have announced that. We have said that ad nauseam. We are tipping extra

money into schools and hospitals. No portfolio was quarantined from making its contribution. Additionally, when every element of government expenditure was put under the microscope, it became obvious that, in relation to this project, the way in which the funding allocation was arranged was that the government was paying half the price, but about two-thirds of the works were on council property. We thought some rescoping of the contribution could introduce a greater degree of equity in relation to financial arrangements. There were ways in which we could make a contribution to the overall effort of government to essentially save money to be applied to other purposes. We thought that, from an equitable point of view, there was some basis for that in this project.

In relation to the LED, questions of public art are difficult. I have tried to grapple with what role I should play in this as minister. My first inclination is that I am not the minister for good taste.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Thank you very much; that is very kind. I have to rely upon people who—

Mr O'BRIEN: What is an LED?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is a light emitting diode, if I remember my year 10 physics. In this context, it forms letters in relation to a moving set of stories on a public art display. One needs to understand the whole context of the project. There is a range of public art which is essentially flat, such as fountains and other things on the ground, and this is one that sits vertically so it is observable as one walks down the promenade. It is modern in its conception, so in that sense it contrasts with some of the older heritage buildings around it. It has been the subject of criticism in the Public Works Committee report; I do not think it is much to the taste of Madam Chair.

A public art committee was established to deal with this matter, and I understand that it alarms the member for Unley. I had a balancing act: on one hand I had Ron Radford, the Director of the Art Gallery, and on the other hand I had the member for Unley. It was a difficult choice, but I plumped for the Director of the Art Gallery; I thought he might be a more reliable guide to matters of taste.

Mr BRINDAL: Do not always regard those who hold themselves out as experts to be the experts.

Membership:

Mr Venning substituted for the Hon. Dean Brown.

Mr BRINDAL: You alluded slightly to this previously, and I would like you to expand. Since being in government, what efforts have been made in partnership with local government and the water catchment management boards to facilitate better environmental outcomes? You have only been there a few months, but I would like to know what you have started to do.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As you know, this is something that has been plaguing state and local government relations for a long time. The Local Government Association has made much of the former government's decision to reduce the annual contribution to the catchment management subsidy scheme to \$2 million from \$4 million. In the second half of 2001 the then minister for water resources, whom I think was your good self, and the LGA President appointed a committee to report on key aspects of that scheme, no doubt to calm the beating hearts of local government. For many years funding provided by state government in the form of subsidies has supported works proposed by local councils,

drainage authorities and catchment management boards, and you would be well aware of that.

The review committee's report has very recently been completed and has been submitted to the Minister for Environment and Conservation, and I understand that he will be grappling with that. It is a matter that I am seeking to engage with the Minister for Environment and Conservation as a matter that could appropriately be dealt with in the forum. It is obviously a matter of great concern to local government and it crosses a number of agencies, so it is the sort of issue that I would be seeking to promote on the forum as a means of coming up with some innovative solutions.

Mr BRINDAL: I am sure that if you wanted I could come and have a talk to you, or perhaps the officers might be aware. I understand the distress over the catchment management subsidy scheme, but there was a huge debate about its applicability. It was a stormwater scheme to get rid of water; it had nothing to do with retention or purification or the environment and, in the view of the last government and I am sure in the view of your minister, that was one of its down sides. That was the reason for the catchment management boards. There were enormous works from the public purse through the catchment management boards going back into local government areas to subsidise the work of water courses. So, I would put that it is a little cute of the sector to argue that \$2 million has been extracted, when you do not add on the money that is coming now from local catchment management boards. So, I commend the minister for a proactive approach.

I did not know this until just before we lost office. If the minister cares to check, he will find that most of the catchment management boards have put water education officers in most of the councils on full-time salaries at \$60 000 a year. You add that up and you get a much bigger bill than \$2 million going to the same councils that are grizzling about \$2 million being cut from the sector. I commend the minister for his proactive approach and, if he wants any help at all in putting a reasonable view of a state government, be it a Labor or Liberal government, working with another sphere of government, I will give him all the help I can.

The City of City of Adelaide Act 1998 requires that the Capital City Committee undergo a review by June 2002. Will the minister advise me of the review findings? What is the government's commitment to the Capital City Committee? I note that the Hon. Mr Elliott has gone feral in this place and has introduced a bill to abolish it. Who is the new chair of the Capital City Forum? As the minister would know, it was previously Mr David Woolford, who was the Managing Director of Knight Frank but who has moved to Sydney.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As the member for Unley would be aware, the Capital City Committee comprises the member for Adelaide, the Premier and me. We have participated in two formal meetings of the committee since the change of government and there have been two special meetings, one with the Capital City Forum which I was unfortunately not able to attend, and a further one with Professor Jan Gehl on the recommendations of his Public Space, Public Life study. Our preliminary view is that the Capital City Committee is a good mechanism, but we have had very little experience with it; it has just been these first two meetings. It was difficult for us to participate in the review in any meaningful way, because when the review was being compiled we did not have any experience of the committee. So, we are presently considering the recommendations contained in the review.

I can tell you that the review report supports the continuation of the Capital City Committee and provides some suggestions for enhancing its operation, but it does not propose any changes to the legislation. The review found that the Capital City Committee is a good mechanism for fostering collaboration and cooperation, and I understand that it has been copied in other states since that time. We will be considering the recommendations in the review and responding in due course. I am sorry I cannot tell you who the chair of the Capital City Forum is. I will take that on notice and communicate that to you.

Mr BRINDAL: Thank you for that answer; I am pleased with it. Has the minister reviewed the management of the Local Government Disaster Fund, and will he tell us what are the future plans for the fund? Additionally, what plans, if any, does the minister have to ensure a continuous source of revenue for the fund, how much money is currently in the fund and how much money is the fund earning in interest per annum? I ask this question with the background that it was growing at an extraordinary rate, and the argument is that perhaps it does not need to keep growing indefinitely.

When I used to discuss with local government the thought of capping the fund or paying it down, and, as part of this arrangement we are talking about, I suggested several times that perhaps local government should become a self insurer over time so that the state government could wind down its involvement and local government could pick it up, it was always predicated on local government's belief that that was their money. Somehow they wanted it all paid out before they would take any responsibility. That is the basis of the question.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: You would be aware that it was an election commitment of ours to maintain the capital value of the fund, and we have kept that promise in this budget. The precise future disposition of the fund—

Mr BRINDAL: What is the capital value at present?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It is \$39 million. You should also be aware that we have undertaken that we will talk to the Local Government Association about the future of the fund. All of the issues that you have raised are sensible. Obviously, there are different views about the precise future of the fund. It had its genesis as a mechanism for payment of the Stirling bushfire liabilities, but that debt was cleared some time ago. Since then the fund has been making modest payments, mainly to country councils, to assist with roads and drainage infrastructure.

So, there is a need to revisit it. It has lost its previous funding source, as you would be aware, which was the special levy of .005 per cent of the FID which was abolished as a consequence of the GST reforms on 1 July 2001. So it is a current issue. I think you specifically asked what was contributed to the fund in 2001-02.

Mr BRINDAL: No, I did not, but I think you have answered my question. You say that your electoral commitment, which I was not aware of, was to cap the fund at its existing level, so there is \$39 million in it but there is no more going into it. Is that the gist of it? Are you still adding money or is it capped?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, it does not imply what is going to happen to it in terms of what may be agreed about its future disposition. It is essentially a holding position: it is maintaining the capital value of the fund and retaining the investment earnings. I can give you the precise language of the commitment that we gave during the election.

Mr BRINDAL: The head of the department may help to answer this, but my understanding is that while we were in government there was a source of revenue going in by the month, because that was somehow promised, and it kept on after the funding source changed. When I was minister, for instance, the fund stood at \$23 million, and it is now \$39 million. I think I understand you to say that when you took office it was \$39 million, you committed to keep the \$39 million there but you are not locked into the commitment that we had to keep adding month by month by way of extra revenue, not just interest. We were adding extra revenue.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: As you would recall, the financial institutions duty was the means by which continual contributions were made. That ceased to be the case. Continuing contributions are made to the fund by way of interest earnings. So it is growing, not because of contribution of revenue from state government sources but, rather, by the application of interest.

Mrs HALL: Can the minister advise why shack free-holding does not appear to have proceeded since the change of government? I would like a general comment on that and then a specific comment.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think I can give an answer to that, but it does not fall within this particular portfolio line. The member for Morialta could ask the question tomorrow or I could take it on notice. It actually comes under the portfolio of the Department of Administrative and Information Services.

Mr VENNING: I know that the minister referred in his opening statement to the formula used in Canberra for road grants and that he raised some concern about it. The fact that we pay a penalty and our councils are missing out because of the formula has been discussed for years. What can be done in the short term? Is the minister confident that this can be addressed? First, does he agree that there is a problem and, second, does he think that it can be fixed?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, there are two aspects of the financial assistance grants formula, one of which is the local roads funding aspect. Despite repeated requests to review that formula, it remains set on the basis of some historical arrangements. Nobody can tell us what the rationale is for the way it works, but we have something in the order of 11 per cent of the country's roads and we receive 5.5 per cent, I think, of the funding which is allocated under the financial assistance grants. We also get less than our per capita share, which is 7.75 per cent. So, by any measure, we get done over by this grants formula.

I think there are prospects for improvement. There has not been a recent ministerial council for the local government sector, which I think is a shame, and it is something that we want to encourage because any discussion on this issue would probably mean that we will be better off. But, as I understand it, and on considering this issue—because I think it is very important—we, along with New South Wales and Victoria, in this respect do not fare well from the roads allocation formula. So, in some senses they are big friends and perhaps there is some basis for revisiting that aspect of the financial assistance grants formula. However, two things need to happen: the federal government needs to cooperate with us; and, presumably, the states need to come to a view amongst themselves. I am keen to promote that agenda and try to arrange a meeting of the national ministerial council.

Mr VENNING: Is the problem the federal government or is the problem the local government associations of Australia?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Can you explain that question?

Mr VENNING: I was told by various members of parliament that the problem is not with us but that the local government associations have locked it in because of their internal politics, rather than the politics within the federal government.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am not entirely certain who is to blame. All I know is what we are grappling with. I suppose something else I should have said is that there is currently a cost shifting inquiry that is being organised by a federal parliament standing committee for these affairs which is being promoted by the federal Minister for Local Government. We will make a submission to that and will put these issues on the agenda. I do not know who is to blame or what the relationships are that have brought this about, and I suspect that they change over time. I am just trying to find a way to have this debate reopened and get a more rational formula for funding our roads.

Mr BRINDAL: I know the financial aspect of this topic comes under the Attorney-General's portfolio, but the liaison aspects of it come under the portfolio of the Minister for Local Government because he is the one who has to cop the flak. The question is related to the local government crime prevention program. As the minister will know, the current government has slashed its funding of the council-run crime prevention program by \$800 000—down from \$1.4 million to \$600 000. This means that 18 councils that receive direct state funding may have to abandon programs targeting graffiti, car theft, drug use and house break-ins.

Anecdotal evidence demonstrates that the program is very effective. However, one thing that cannot be measured is the feeling in the community that something is being done to address the problem of crime in our society. Earlier, the minister talked about the need to construct positive relationships. He would be aware—it is no secret—that councils have been coming to me and saying that they are disappointed because the government is talking about creating positive relationships, yet there is a three year contract in place and one of the minister's colleagues has, almost as an early action, simply cancelled a three year contract and left councils with the unpalatable choice of shifting the cost onto their budget or abandoning the project.

Either way, when I started as minister, the big problem I had all the time was a procession of things that governments had done which they then abandoned for local government, leaving a really sour taste. All we did was give them seed money and leave them with the baby. I am not arguing that this is the minister's responsibility, or that it might not have been a cost-cutting exercise, just like others that he mentioned. It is obviously a difficult matter for the Minister for Local Government. How does he intend to handle it?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The way we handled it was to provide advance notice of this funding change by giving a confidential briefing, prior to the budget, to the Local Government Association. It did not deal with all the details, and I would not seek to suggest that it knew every aspect of it. No doubt it came under pressure from its constituents once the details emerged.

What needs to be said is that no particular decisions have been taken. A decision has been taken to reduce a level of funding and it is now a question of how that is to be allocated. In broad terms, this is another example of a new government with new priorities. We had to find savings, and recurrent savings, to deal with the difficult budget position

we found ourselves in. There are not too many programs that are completely unworthy. It is a question of harsh choices between programs that are more worthy than others, and we have a strong commitment to the regeneration of certain areas. Some of those areas have significant crime problems.

There are many bits and pieces in government that are broadly directed at these things. There are partnerships in certain parts of Adelaide which suck in federal government money and there are many different agencies that are broadly directed at regenerating communities, which in broad terms are directed at improving local crime prevention. We are trying to take a bit more of a strategic focus to some of these issues. We needed to find funding cuts and we have announced them but, as I am advised, we have not yet taken individual decisions and we have established a state reference panel to provide advice across the program to organise the way in which we are going to be able to manage reductions in the program. Obviously a lot more work needs to be done. We are conscious of the disappointment of the local councils that have been involved in using these crime prevention measures.

Mr BRINDAL: I thank the minister for his answer and, as I have some respect for him and for some of my colleagues on the other side of the house, I would simply say to him that any government is entitled to set its priorities and its budget, but it is a pity that for some magical reason your Treasurer insisted on a \$72 million budget. It would be easier for you to go to the local government sector and say, 'We have had to cut something by \$800 000 and something else by \$2 million.' That would be fine if the budget were balanced, but it must be difficult for the minister and the backbench to continue to justify that argument when the Treasurer is rolling around South Australia boasting that he has \$72 million that he cannot find a home for. It puts everyone in a difficult position. I am not asking the minister to comment on it; I am just making a statement. Perhaps the government backbench would like to take it up with the Treasurer.

How much money is budgeted to be spent on the STED scheme this financial year? Was all the money that was budgeted last year spent and, if not, what was the carryover? Does the government intend to honour the last government's commitment to accelerate the program? Has the local government sector been consulted on any changes that are likely to occur? Will the government continue a commitment to the continuation of the program? When is the STED scheme for American River scheduled for completion? The minister may wish to take that on notice.

The CHAIRPERSON: Minister, you may care to explain what a STED scheme is.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Septic tank effluent disposal scheme. As it happens, there was some confusion the other day when this question was asked of me in the presence of minister Conlon. Because of the portfolio arrangements, this matter is reported under the Treasury line. It fits, though, within the Minister for Government Enterprises' budget, and he has been administering that fund in practice. I would be reluctant to comment on the particular details of that area, because it does not strictly fall within my portfolio; suffice to say that the Local Government Association (and I think the member for Unley entered into the arrangement for the administration of that scheme), has a lively interest in that and it regularly appears on our list of issues to discuss.

It may be an appropriate matter for us to deal with in conjunction with minister Conlon at some point. I will take that question on notice and supply an answer. From what I

can gather, there does not seem to be any change to what was previously supplied in relation to the scheme.

Mr BRINDAL: What is your attitude, minister, to councillors' allowances? I know it is a very vocal issue with them. There is obviously a strong feeling that they want greater salaries, and some of them would like salaries commensurate with the Eastern States, but in the Eastern States, as the minister would know, most councillors get a full-time remuneration and are expected to make a full-time commitment. In this state, the last attitude that I was aware of is that local government is a voluntary sector and they do not want to remove the voluntary nature; yet they are anxious that the allowance be increased. What plans does this government have to see that the allowances are reasonable but at the same time commensurate with the type and nature of the sector?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The way to answer that question is to refer the member back to the principles that I outlined in my opening statement. The first is providing some degree of respect for local government. If we consult that principle, it is probably a little strange that the Minister for Local Government sets those allowances. There is some sense in there being an independent tribunal to which propositions should be put to form that view. The other issue is the question of the capacity of councillors. If we consult the principle of building the capacity of councillors, one might take the view that, if there are any barriers to people participating in local council because of financial disadvantages, that might be something that we may wish to address and overcome.

I have asked the Office of Local Government to consider the proposition that has been put to us by the Local Government Association in relation to the independent body to deal with the remuneration of local government elected members. I think that we have to grapple with this question as to whether we want to fully professionalise local government or merely compensate them for the disadvantages of becoming a councillor.

I do not think anyone is suggesting that local government wants to be fully professional, a la New South Wales, but there may be some scope for them to address the question of their level of remuneration. I am aware that previous governments have substantially increased the level of remuneration for councillors. There may be some additional scope for that: it would be a shame to think that people were not participating because they were financially unable.

I suspect that there will always be an element of voluntarism in relation to the council activities of elected members as there is with all aspects of public service. I am actively considering all those issues now, and all the matters the member has raised are live concerns.

Mr BRINDAL: In that respect, if an answer is to be forthcoming, the minister might consider at which level of remuneration the concept of a double gift under the Crown starts to apply. For instance, a number of mayors and councillors are public servants and because they are mayors and councillors they get special consideration from government in respect of their employment. At which level of pay does a mayor cease to enjoy the rights of special privilege because he is doing a community service; and at what level does it then become a double gift under the Crown which the minister would know would cost him his job or me my job?

Mr VENNING: We went through a series of amalgamations in the last government, and I think with varying degrees of success. Is any data available that shows whether there

have been successes or otherwise and, if not, will there ever be an assessment, particularly in relation to council administration costs? Going on from the amalgamation process, is the minister or the department looking at anything to do with council boundaries because the amendment to boundaries was to come after the amalgamation process was concluded? Has anyone addressed that with the minister?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am unaware of any detailed report that pulls together and purports to analyse in a detailed way the benefits of amalgamation. Anecdotally, there are lots of reports of increased efficiencies associated with economies of scale. In broad terms, one aim is to look at the sector to see whether its balance sheet is particularly healthy.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The problem is spending money to find out something that might be slightly obvious when you may choose to devote money elsewhere. There are undoubted benefits associated with certain amalgamations. There may be some difficulties at the margins. The broader point is that I am concerned with building the capacity of councils to do the things that they want to do and we want them to do and, if structure gets in the way of that, that is when I am interested in looking at further amalgamations or adjustments to boundaries. I do not have a fixed position about what local government should look like. One can make the case that large organisations can be very responsive at a local level and some small organisations can be unresponsive at a local level.

I do not think structure is necessarily a solution to the problems of the world. I think that we have pointed to quite considerable benefits that have flowed from amalgamation, but I am not aware of anything that quantifies those benefits. I really do not think it would be beneficial to spend a lot of money inquiring into that process.

Mr BRINDAL: I have a series of questions that I will read out, and the minister can take them on notice. My questions are:

1. What measures has the minister taken to ensure that the regional development infrastructure fund operates as efficiently as possible?
2. Has the minister, or does the minister intend to review current development planning laws to ensure that there is sufficient balance in the planning process that allows for the interests of both the developer and the community?
3. In Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 9.39 it states that \$62 248 million has been budgeted for commonwealth grants and payments. Will the minister provide a breakdown of where and how this money will be spent?
4. Will the minister advise the committee which initiatives contained within the government's compact with the member for Hammond have been allocated to this portfolio? How much will they each cost, and will these costs be met by new or existing funding?
5. Will the minister identify with respect to his portfolio which outputs and measures have been merged or redefined and the dollar value of these changes?
6. Will the minister advise the committee how many of the 600 jobs to be cut from the Public Service will be lost from within the local government portfolio?
7. Will the minister advise the committee how many reviews have been undertaken, or are scheduled to take place, within the portfolio since the government was elected, including the one for \$50 000? To which matters do these reviews pertain? Additionally, which consultants or consul-

tancy organisations have been hired to undertake the work? What is the total cost of these contracts?

8. For all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what is the share of the \$322 million underspending in the 2001-2002 year claimed by the government? Additionally, what are the details of each proposal and project underspent, and the details of any carry over expenditure for 2002-03 which have been approved?

9. Will the minister advise the committee of the number of positions attracting a total employment cost of \$100 000 or more within all departments and agencies reporting to the minister as at 30 June 2002 and estimates of the same as at 30 June 2003?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will take each of those questions on notice.

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

[Sitting suspended from 6.03 to 7.30 p.m.]

Membership:

Ms Chapman substituted for Mr Brindal.

Mrs Redmond substituted for Mr Venning.

Witness:

The Hon. S.W. Key, Minister for the Status of Women.

Additional Departmental Advisers:

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

Ms V. Petroff, Senior Project Officer, Office for the Status of Women.

Ms L. Forrest, Ministerial Liaison Officer, Office of the Minister for the Status of Women.

The CHAIRPERSON: Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Yes, but I will make a couple of preliminary comments. I understand that I am to congratulate you on being the first woman to chair an estimates committee.

The CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I understand that is the case.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am pleased to address my first estimates committee as Minister for the Status of Women. I am pleased to see that the opposition has an all woman team, which is a good omen and message for this committee, and I also acknowledge my colleague the member for Torrens and the members for Mitchell and Napier. It is good to see that on the government team men are also interested in the status of women portfolio, which I find quite heartening.

To begin with, it is important to recognise that the gains women enjoy today are the legacy of the dedication and hard work of many women in our community over many years. Some of those women are in the chamber. In particular I pay special tribute to the previous minister for the status of women, Diana Laidlaw, who has worked tirelessly on many issues at times against great odds. We all remember and acknowledge her efforts in relation to the prostitution bill in 2001, and the member for Mordialta can probably remember that as well as I can. I also acknowledge the Women's Advisory Council and the Office of the Status of Women for implementing policies and programs to improve the status and well-being of women in South Australia.

This new Labor government is committed to continuing to support women by addressing inequities that limit women's full and equal participation in all areas of life. Our lead agency, the Office for the Status of Women, will be consulting and continuing to maintain close connections with women in the community, and in future the office will concentrate on more effectively working with and across government agencies to ensure that the rights and needs of women are fully recognised within the objectives, policies and programs of all agencies.

We will build on the successful initiatives that have been implemented and take a lead in addressing issues affecting the most disadvantaged women in our community. We will continue to support rural women through initiatives, including the rural women's gathering and Women's Information Service's rural outreach program. However, we will now also ensure that a full range of services are more directly available to women in the inner metropolitan areas. This work is well under way. The Women's Information Service is working with the Far North division of general practice to bring women and service providers from the Iron Triangle together for a women's day in Port Augusta.

The service was recently involved in a highly successful women's week at the Parabanks Shopping Centre at Salisbury. It is also conducting a very successful five-week internet training program at Trinity College, Gawler. This government recognises that there is significant difference in the outcomes experienced by indigenous women compared to those experienced by non-indigenous women. We are committed to bringing about greater equity in this area. As part of this work, the Office for the Status of Women will collaborate with the relevant government and non-government agencies and organisations to progress a South Australian Aboriginal Women's Action Plan.

The plan focuses on the key priority areas of leadership, safety and economic status as identified by Aboriginal women themselves. Women's safety is a high priority and we will be working at strengthening programs addressing domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, as well as improving domestic violence and sexual assault legislation, and addressing indigenous family violence. The budget for the status of women for 2002-03 is \$1 615 000, which includes \$517 000 for the Women's Information Service and \$141 000 to establish the Premier's Council for Women.

Membership of the Premier's Council for Women will encompass women from diverse backgrounds and broad-ranging experiences. The council will provide leadership to the work of the Office for the Status of Women to ensure that government receives expert policy advice on identified policy and program issues. The council will contribute to a positive and active policy agenda for South Australian women. I look forward in the coming weeks to being able to announce with the Premier the formation and membership of the council.

This budget will enable us to meet the initiatives I have described and other initiatives during 2002-03. This government recognises the right of women to participate fully in all aspects of life: politically, socially and economically. Our policies aim to give women choices—whether it is to pursue a career, participate in further education, stay home and raise children or be supported as carers and volunteers. This government is committed to developing measures to improve women's equity of and access to health, employment, education, training and all other government services.

We recognise that this is not simply the responsibility of one relatively small government agency (Office for the Status

of Women); rather, it is the responsibility of all government agencies in their spheres of influence, policy formation and service delivery. To this end, driving and guiding these initiatives across government will be the development of the Women's Action Plan advancing South Australia's women. The Premier's Council for Women, in conjunction with the Office for the Status of Women, will be responsible for consulting with South Australian women to enable them to articulate their concerns to ensure that their needs and rights are adequately addressed.

The office will work collaboratively with all government agencies to develop an action plan to ensure that agency policies and services meet women's needs and improve the status of women. The plan will:

- identify baseline data on the status and situation of women in South Australia. These measures will be refined over time and will be the mechanism by which we measure the effectiveness of women's policies for women;
- document performance measures, strategies and time frames; and
- document the agencies responsible for each strategy and outcome.

Each year an annual report will document the department's achievements against the measures identified and detail any new strategies for the coming years. I am determined that, in the coming years, we will see tangible improvements in the position, status and situation of all women in South Australia but most particularly disadvantaged women. I look forward not only to working with the Office for the Status of Women and all government departments but also working with my female parliamentary colleagues to make this a reality. I am sure that, in many ways, we share the same goal.

The CHAIRPERSON: Does the member for Bragg wish to make an opening statement?

Ms CHAPMAN: Yes, Madam Chair. First, I would like to acknowledge the work of the previous minister in this portfolio. I look forward, hopefully, to seeing the achievements of the new minister in this government, because this is an important portfolio which, historically, has enjoyed bipartisan support and I expect that to continue in the future. May I also say that, in relation to the composition of those present (contrary to the minister), I indicate my support for the male members contributing to this matter in estimates. In fact, I suggest that there will be—

The Hon. S.W. KEY: That is what I said.

Ms CHAPMAN: I may have mistaken what the minister has said. I welcome the contribution by the male members of this committee and that women will truly have reached equality when the Minister for the Status of Women and the person who is in my role are men. However, that is something that is yet to be seen, and I welcome the opportunity to participate in this contribution tonight. As an opening statement, I understand that, consistent with the estimates to date, four or five generic questions are put to the minister by the shadow minister or leading persons. Will that be the similar practice here? If so, I will read the five questions into *Hansard* at the end of the estimates. Is that your understanding, Madam Chair?

The CHAIRPERSON: That is what has happened in most cases.

Ms CHAPMAN: The minister is nodding her agreement, so I am happy to do that later to save time. I have no other opening statement. I indicate that I will be supported by the members for Morialta and Heysen who will, of course, be asking questions.

The CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Does the member for Bragg wish to ask the first question?

Ms CHAPMAN: I indicate that, in general, the status of women does not comprise a very substantial number of pages in the budget papers. In principle, I will be referring to Budget Paper 4, volume 2, pages 9.21, 9.48 and 9.70. For the completeness of the record, I note and acknowledge the structure and representation of this position as Minister for the Status of Women by the Hon. Stephanie Key, referred to on pages 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 in which there is a brief but nevertheless important acknowledgment of the status of women in the strategic context. They are the pages to which we will be referring. My first question relates to the draft report of the 2001-02 women's statement. When will this report be published and at what cost in this year's budget allocation?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: This is a very important question. Many years ago, I was involved with the then women's budget, which went on to become the women's statement. The OSWs work with all government departments to produce the report on government issues for women in the community and public sector. Information has been collected to produce a statement which is tabled in an annual report to parliament. Another process has been put in place for the next budget, and the 2001-02 women's statement is being finalised into a document to be tabled in parliament. The statement will be posted on the OSW women's information service and the South Australian central web sites. I am advised that the time frame for this is within the next three weeks.

As the member for Bragg acknowledged, because of the very tight constraints of the budget for the Office of the Status of Women, we have decided to make the statement accessible through the web site and the South Australian central web sites to see whether this is a better way of communicating with women and interested people.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to page 9.21. Will the minister explain the difference between the annual women's statement—a framework of which is proposed—and the proposed annual women's plans, and any difference in cost thereof in this year's budget?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The annual women's action plan has been developed to help drive the government's forward agenda for women. The main points of the plan are in the framework developed by OSW which works collaboratively with all the government agencies in its development. The plan will identify baseline data on the status and situation of women in South Australia. Document performance measures, strategies and time frames document the agencies responsible for each strategy and outcome. Then the annual report will document each department's achievements against the measures identified and detail any new strategies for the coming years. This is the way we hope to do a comparison. Measures will be refined as we go through the process, and mechanisms will also be identified for measuring the effectiveness of the government's policies for women. The action plan and the annual report will be made public.

At present, a framework for the whole of government agenda for women is being developed by the Office of the Status of Women. The policy officers in OSW will be responsible for developing plans in partnership with project officers identified by their chief executives. Previously, a women's statement was prepared to report on the government initiatives for women. The 2001-02 women's statement—which, as I mentioned in answer to the previous question, has been finalised in a document—will be tabled in parliament.

As I said before, that information will be made available not only publicly in the usual form but also through the women's information service and South Australian central web sites. That is the process we are looking at for both the annual report and the statement.

Ms CHAPMAN: By way of supplementary question, the minister started her answer by suggesting what the annual women's action plan will do. Has the minister stated what the action plan will do or has she outlined how it will be different from the annual women's statement?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The honourable member has identified two parts to this matter. First, we want a framework in which to have the women's action plan, and that will be a forward looking document. However, we will also have an account of the work that has been done so far, measured up against the outcomes, as I said before, of being identified by not only the Office of the Status of Women but also the different agencies. So, we can see whether or not there has been any progress is the quick answer.

Ms CHAPMAN: But both of those are different.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: I again refer to page 9.21. What funding has been allocated in this year's budget to identify and promote women candidates for appointment to government boards and committees, and who has been or is to be appointed to undertake that task?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: This has been an ongoing campaign on the part of both sides of the house. Obviously, the aim has been to increase the number of women on government boards and committees. In last year's estimates, we were very complimentary to the previous minister, because there had been some improvements in relation to appointments.

During 2001-02, 33.52 per cent of all positions on government boards and committees were held by women. Of a total of 1 020 appointments, 342 were women and 678 were men. Women accounted for 35.3 per cent of new appointments, there being a total of 711 new appointments, 251 of which were women and 460 men. Names of appropriately skilled women that should be considered for appointments, as vacancies arise, are provided on an undergoing basis by the OSW to chief executives and ministerial officers. This is an ongoing service provided by the OSW.

The Office for the Status of Women uses a number of strategies to identify women who may be suitable for appointment, including the commissioning of executive searches and the maintenance of a women's register. Again, members will know that this practice has been taken up both at commonwealth and at state level. I think it was originally a South Australian initiative, so it is another first in this area.

I am advised that the women's register presently contains the names of over 400 women who are interested in serving on government boards and committees, and a further 72 women have been identified through executive searches. In 2001, an executive search was commissioned to specify and identify women from a diverse range of cultural groups. I am pleased to say that there was a move to try to widen the net and ensure that women from different backgrounds had an opportunity to be on the register, too.

I imagine that the member for Morialta knows from her experience that vacancies on government boards and committees are identified with ministerial officers, and each has their own method. We will be receiving a profile of available boards and committees in the next six months, so that will be a forward-looking report. The aim is to keep up

the pressure—certainly on my part—to increase the representation of women on government boards and committees, and to provide the names of suitable women who can be considered by ministerial officers and chief executives. I notify all ministers of obligations regarding the appointment of women as outlined in the traditional cabinet handbook, and this is another practice that has been carried out previously.

Ms CHAPMAN: As a supplementary question, who has been, or is to be, appointed to undertake this task?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: As I was explaining, through the Office for the Status of Women, we will make names and contacts available; some of that will be in the next six months. So, we do this in advance to know what boards and committees are coming up. As Minister for the Status of Women, I will be encouraging ministers and their CEOs to look at, and refer to, the register. So, it is a two-part process. As was the case with the previous government, a number of ministers do that as a matter of course. We will ensure that everyone is aware of the register.

Mrs GERAGHTY: The health and welfare of indigenous women continues to be of concern. It is pleasing that the specific initiatives to address Aboriginal family violence are indicated on page 9.21 of the Portfolio Statements. However, preventing domestic violence is just one aspect of improving Aboriginal women's health and welfare. How does the government plan to communicate with Aboriginal women to ensure that more of their needs are being addressed?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The government is committed to bringing about greater access and equity in its services and programs for Aboriginal women. We recognise that consultations with Aboriginal women and their communities play a key role in enabling the government to respond appropriately to the issues that they face. OSW will continue to develop its collaborative and consultative work across government in this area, in particular with the Aboriginal Services Division of the Department of Human Services and the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs. Consultation with Aboriginal women across South Australia has already begun. During 2002 the Office of the Status of Women employed a temporary Aboriginal project officer to coordinate local women's gatherings across South Australia and develop an action plan for presentation at the National Indigenous Women's Gathering.

I am pleased to say that I had the benefit in June of attending the Commonwealth-State Ministers Conference on the Status of Women and we were very honoured to be invited into the National Indigenous Women's Gathering and hear, first-hand, from the women. Many of the women are elders in their community. I am pleased to say that a statement put forward to the ministers' conference on the status of women was endorsed by the commonwealth—represented by Senator Amanda Vanstone—and the different status of women ministers for the states and territories and also from New Zealand. So this was a very memorable occasion, certainly for me. Although I know there have been other national indigenous women's gatherings this was a particularly significant one, and one that will always have a special place in my memory as being a significant breakthrough.

I am pleased to say also that in South Australia approximately 200 Aboriginal women have attended South Australian gatherings. These have been held in Point Pearce, Port Augusta, Whyalla, Port Lincoln, the Riverland, Noarlunga, Elizabeth, Pitjantjatjara Lands at Turkey Bore and Balfours, and Coober Pedy, as well as the Tauondi College Elders Group and the Grannies Group. I have had a bit to do with the

Grannies Group recently and I must say that they are an inspirational group of women. I had the honour yesterday of meeting with members of the Aboriginal Elders Group, including two of the women Aboriginal elders, one representing the area of the Mallee and the other representing the Riverland area. So, it seems that some good work is being done by the Office of the Status of Women. But Aboriginal women themselves, particularly the older women in the community, are very organised and very clear about what needs to be done. I have to say that, unfortunately, they take up a lot of responsibility in their various communities.

A further 80 women participated in an ATSI regional women's forum held in Tumby Bay. There have been a number of young Aboriginal women involved in these consultations. Approximately 30 girls attended a workshop held at Gepps Cross Girls High School. Girls from Windsor Gardens, Ross Smith and Le Fevre High Schools also attended and, again, I was very privileged to meet some of these young women. A delegation of Aboriginal women attended the national gathering that I was talking about earlier and presented a draft action plan. The delegation included two young girls from Gepps Cross High School who attended as observers.

I have to say, Madam Chair, they were very cross that we made them wear their school uniform to this meeting. The information gained through the South Australian Gatherings and the outcomes and proceedings of the National Gathering and MINCO will be shared with Aboriginal women and groups through a newsletter which is currently being looked at by the Office of the Status of Women. I am very excited because this is a service that has been asked for by Aboriginal women around South Australia, and we are looking at how, with the very tight budget that we have, we can make this a possibility.

There are ongoing consultations with Aboriginal women. They are an integral part of the consultative process that the government is putting in place to ensure that programs and services match women's needs. As I said, the Women's Council is being established and, in conjunction with OSW, it will play a key role in consulting with women across government and within the community. Aboriginal women will be appointed to the council to ensure that Aboriginal women's issues and concerns are considered as an integral part of the work of the council. I am pleased to say that, because of the other portfolio areas for which I have responsibility, along with my colleague Minister Stevens in the health and mental health area, I feel we can ensure that the profile of indigenous women is very high in this government and certainly within all the work we do, particularly through the Office of the Status of Women.

Mr HANNA: Under the previous government, the Office for the Status of Women was sometimes referred to as the 'Office for the Women of Status', perhaps because it was seen as focusing attention on business women and women of means, as well as rural women. What is the government doing to challenge that perception? I was thinking in terms of access to information, and I refer to page 9.21 of the Portfolio Statements.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I am not sure how to answer this question. I do have information prepared, but I think that, knowing the history of the Office of the Status of Women, this is not a fair criticism. I think the previous minister had a fairly limited budget, but I think she was keen to ensure it went as far as possible and that there was a fair distribution. In saying that, I think different governments bring a different

emphasis. I know that, as a result of talking to women in the community, there are a number of excellent, well-established women's groups in South Australia. They have a history all their own. Obviously, the Office of the Status of Women will ensure that, through the action plan and through the process of consultation that has always been, and will continue to be, the case with the Office for the Status of Women, the priority areas, as identified by women themselves, are those with which we deal.

I have already talked about the fact that a very good program has been initiated for indigenous women. That will continue and, I hope, expand. A very active group of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds has ensured that their voices are heard. I am very keen to see that continue. I am also keen to try to ensure that services, not just within the Office of the Status of Women but across the public sector and in the non-government area, have the widest possible net. I have identified issues that concern suburban women and consulted with them. As I said, we have a commitment to the rural area. I do not want to divide people into categories, because I do not think that is helpful, but we need to look at suburban women and women at home—and that is an area which I am keen to follow up. We also need to look at services and support for women escaping domestic and family violence, and some of the services that are needed to ensure that women in our community do get a fair go.

I mean services that help families, such as child care and access to support. In the short time that I have been minister, one of the other things I have learned—and I think I have known instinctively all along—is that women make up the majority of carers that we have in the community. It is usually by choice but, quite often, there is no-one else to do that caring. So, they need to be supported, and that fits very strongly, I think, into the other portfolios that I am responsible for. But I think it is important to recognise that.

The tremendous contribution of women in the volunteer area also needs to be recognised. There are a lot of things that happen in our community because women have put that extra time into volunteering. So, I can assure the member for Mitchell that we will continue and this will be a collaborative and consultative effort to make sure that the resources of OSW go as far as possible and there is some democracy as to how that money is spent and how the priorities are made up, but that we also need to make sure that the other portfolios deliver on these concerns as well.

Mr O'BRIEN: I have been given a very simple one-liner in which I was going to make some comment about the mere male being given the most simple question of the night. But I would just like to make one simple observation, which probably has nothing to do with estimates.

Members interjecting:

Mr O'BRIEN: That's right; I have a couple of references. I think that the Office for the Status of Women goes way beyond just the notion of social equality. Women represent 52 per cent of the community and therefore should be entitled to participate fully in the democratic processes of this society. When people have looked at why the west has done as well as it has in terms of its advances in the sciences and medicine and the like, as opposed to the three or four other major civilisations that currently occupy space on the planet, they really have come down to the fact that above and beyond any other factor the west has, over a long period of time, allowed women to participate in the community, and for that reason our pre-eminence in science, mathematics, the arts and whatever is really due to the fact that we have allowed half

of our community to actually participate in all those functions.

Last night I was reading a Roman travelogue about a Roman traveller going to Greece in the first century AD and looking at all the cultural wellsprings of Roman civilisation where Aphrodite was supposed to have leapt from the spring and where Zeus is supposed to have done this and that. This Roman (I think it was in 120 AD) commented on the difference between Rome and Athens. And the difference was that in Rome women basically participated in virtually every significant role in Roman society, and yet in Greece it was very similar to a Muslim society today where women were cloistered and kept off the streets. So, I think the proposition that the west is as pre-eminent as it is is not due to the military valour of the males: it is the fact that for 2000 years, for better or for worse, women have played a considerable role—perhaps not very well recognised, and perhaps it has only been in the last 50 or 60 years that we have actually recognised the role of women in the civilisation of the West. Without our ability to bring 51 or 52 per cent of our population into the realms, and our cultural and political realms, I do not think we would be the society that we are today.

So, now I get to my question, and you will know why I have gone through this preamble when I ask the question. How will the government continue to support rural women?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I was wondering; do you want me to comment on your introduction?

Mr O'BRIEN: Well, you may; we have another 20 minutes.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I was saying earlier in my introduction that the work that has been done for rural women is considered to be very important. Part of that will be in relation to the ongoing support—and, I must say, admiration—for women in rural and remote areas. Certainly, in my own case, there is a lot for urban people to consider. We will continue that support, so that is not at risk at all. As I said, the previous government had a very firm program of agrarian socialism, so the opposition will be pleased to know that we will support that, particularly with regard to women. This will include a highly successful annual event. I think it is the seventh year that the Rural Women's Gathering will take place, and there will be continued funding from OSW for that.

I know from talking to the staff in the past that this is considered to be a very important focus for the Office for the Status of Women. Very early on I heard about the world rural women's congress and was asked to contribute, which we have done. Despite our very small budget, the Office for the Status of Women will be contributing \$5 000 to enable South Australian women to attend the conference, which is held ever four years I am told. This time it will be in Madrid in Spain, and I am pleased to say that a further \$5 000 will be provided by PIRSA towards this initiative so, again, that is important.

The Women's Information Service will continue its outreach services to women in rural and regional areas. Recently at a community cabinet I was very pleased to be involved in services that were being looked at in Port Augusta and meeting some of the local women, including the wonderful women's group, the Silver Sirens. I met a number of Silver Sirens, who said that they felt that having access to information and being able to link up by computer and also meet people from the women's information outreach service was very important. That was a direct contact that I had with those women.

Obviously, given what I have said already, a strong presence has been built up through the outreach program. There have been visits and attendances at rural field days, and conferences have taken place around the state, including Port Lincoln, the Nullarbor, Wudinna, Clare, the Riverland, Kangaroo Island, Fleurieu Peninsula and the Murray-Mallee, to name just a few of the areas that have been visited. Where opportunities arise the Women's Information Service tries to promote the services and contacts that are available.

The Women's Information Service conducts a regular monthly visiting service. Apparently it began in Whyalla, and Port Augusta is another place where that has been followed up. Through the Department of Primary Industries and Resources the government will continue to support the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, the rural women's award and the rural legends award, which are important initiatives through which rural women are acknowledged and supported in leading the change.

I guess the member for Napier's description might have been apt a few centuries earlier, but I think that the point that he is making and certainly the one I am trying to make is that the contribution of not only rural women but certainly rural people to South Australia is recognised. In fact, we have emblems in the House of Assembly that identify the significance of agriculture and primary industries to South Australia, and a lot of unsung heroes, particularly women, have been part of that history or 'herstory'.

With respect to ongoing consultations, we are really keen to make sure that the close connections that have been made with rural women continue and also to make sure that, notwithstanding the minimum of resources that this portfolio has, we try to include all women in that process.

I have mentioned the work of and the ongoing commitment to Aboriginal women in the process and, obviously, a number of Aboriginal women are also significant in those rural communities. As has already been mentioned, those consultations have begun. Some really important priorities have been set by indigenous women, and I look forward to receiving some direction from rural women and also from indigenous women in those regional and remote areas.

Mrs HALL: I would like to make a very short statement before asking my question. I join the minister and others in paying tribute to the great work of the former minister and, with a sting in the tail, remind the member for Mitchell that one of the reasons why the work of OSW has been so successful over many years is a pretty bipartisan approach. I think it is something that is a gender difference, the way the women of this parliament in a general sense usually try to work together.

I am delighted that the minister said that she will continue the executive search for appointments of women to government boards and advisory committees, etc. Does the minister intend to try to convince her colleagues to set some targets? She noted earlier the fantastic increase that we have had over a number of years, and I think South Australia still has the highest in Australia in terms of participation. I also know of the hard slog that that has involved. Has the minister thought about establishing any targets for individual ministers and, in particular, has she given any thought to changing the criteria of some of the appointments?

As I am sure the minister will find when she goes through them, so many of the government boards and advisory committees are position based. There is one that a couple of my colleagues and I used to have a brawl about occasionally, and I suggested that perhaps we could look at community

representatives being added to those boards. I might say that it was not necessarily greeted with great joy. Has the minister thought about that sort of approach to some of the more structured committees within government?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I suspect this would be one of those things where people would say that I was being very courageous if I set targets for individual ministers. However, having never been a shrinking violet, I think that the good thing about targets is that they provide a focus and a goal. The bad thing about targets is that if you cannot live up to them it is seen as a recipe for disaster. I would probably be careful if we did have targets about how public they would be.

The member's point about the way in which people are put onto committees and the role they play is a fairly important one and, although in some cases people ask why we should have sitting fees, and that people should just do this out of the goodness of their heart and be on different committees, the real issue that the honourable member is probably alluding to is the whole equity and access of participating in a meaningful way on a committee or a board.

I am really keen to look at and perhaps review some of the boards and committees that exist. I am certainly doing that in portfolios for which I am responsible. We are looking at the times when meetings are held, at the fact that quite often there are not adequate travel allocations for people to be on boards, and at the fact that some committees meet at such a frequency that it is really difficult for someone in paid work to be involved. We need to look at the whole area of access and equity.

I think the register provides an opportunity for people to be identified but we need to go further and look at how that can meaningfully happen. I am very keen to ensure that we have all sorts of representation on boards. As you know, I am also the Minister for Youth, so I am keen to look at some of the great initiatives of the Office of Youth in establishing a register, which will probably be accessed in a more modern way via the electronic media rather than perhaps by the traditional methods used in other portfolios.

So, I guess the answer to the question is: no in relation to being an obvious target, but yes in relation to the suggestion with regard to reviewing how we get people onto boards and committees and what we expect of them. That will certainly happen in the departments that I represent, and I would suspect some of my colleagues would have no problem with my making similar suggestions to them as well. I do not know that that would be universally welcomed. It is something I will try out and probably report to you on privately.

Mrs HALL: Over a drink I might give you a list of some of the extraordinary committees that you might have to work on.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: That would be helpful. I make one other point, that it is probably important to recognise that it has been the tradition of women in this parliament to work together, and within that I also identify our Independent member and also the Democrats. It has gone further than just Liberal and Labor. So I should just put that on record.

Mrs HALL: The minister mentioned earlier the announcement that is coming soon, I think, about the Premier's Council for Women.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Yes.

Mrs HALL: I wonder whether there is anything she can say about it, particularly regarding its structure. I understand that the existing Women's Advisory Council comprises 14 members at the moment, five of whose terms expire on

30 June 2003. Is the minister able to say whether these members will be in a position to continue on the Premier's Council for Women or whether it will be an entirely new structure?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: We are still working through all of those points. I am really impressed with the work that has been done by the Women's Advisory Council. I think it has been a huge success. As I said in my opening statement, as minister I have been involved in some fabulous outcomes, including the work that has been done with rural women and the wonderful campaign about sexually transmitted debt, which has been a big success, particularly with young women. I have to pay a tribute to the women who have been on the advisory council. I hope that we can have some carry-over and continuity, and we are looking at that at the moment.

As I said before—and this probably relates to your previous question—we have to try to ensure that we have the broadest possible representation on that committee. There is a bit of a debate about whether it should be a small committee or whether it should be a larger committee. That has not been signed off on yet and we are debating that. If you have a view about it, or any suggestions, I will be very happy to hear from you, or in fact from any member.

Mrs HALL: Accepting the fact that the Office of Status of Women has too small a budget, and always has and probably always will, can the minister confirm that the multilingual promotional material that has always been produced by the Women's Information Service will continue? Does the minister have a figure, perhaps, that has been allocated for that production in this year's budget, or is she going to try to stretch it?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Yes, I do have information about that matter. I asked about this the other day, and I was told that we are producing a pamphlet explaining the Women's Information Service, in particular, and that will be in 19 languages. The pamphlet talks about not only the services available through the Women's Information Service but also other services that are available that people may wish to access. The pamphlets will be available, I am told, in the next three to four weeks. Hopefully, they will be available for electorate offices, in particular—which is, I think, where the member's question was leading—and, considering the profile of her electorate, they should be useful.

We are working with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and also the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission. Again, I was privileged to attend a recent leadership course held for women from non-English speaking backgrounds, and I looked at the first women's leadership course in that area. The Attorney-General and I had the privilege of presenting the women with their certificates. We will also be involved in the next course, which is coming up. I am pleased to say that some really good work is happening at the moment across government departments, but this is one of the areas that I think is particularly heartening. I am told that the budget for the leaflets is about \$10 000, which is a very modest amount.

Mrs REDMOND: I am sure that the chairman will not mind my making a very brief comment before I proceed to my question, given the latitude that was shown to the member opposite. I recently attended the Women's Constitutional Convention in Canberra. My report of that conference (which is some 20 pages long) is now on the internet. At some stage, the minister might care to look at the responses. Like many women, I guess, who have reached reasonably senior positions, I believed that things had got pretty good. But if

one reads what is happening in rural Australia and the sorts of experiences of women getting on to or trying to get on to rural boards such as the farmers federation and the like, one will see that they are about 100 years behind. I have put into the report quite deliberately an extensive series of quotes as to what was said by one particular reporter to that conference.

I refer to Budget Paper 4, volume 2, page 9.70. Can the minister explain the amount of reduction for each of the proposed voluntary separation package savings and staff efficiencies as described therein?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Would the member be offended if I took that question on notice and provided her with a clear statement?

Mrs REDMOND: No, I will be satisfied with that.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: We have talked about the register of women and committees and boards within the public sector, and also the different committees and statutory body boards that exist. I think that there is a need for us to be forever vigilant of the outside boards and committees as well.

Having come from the trade union movement, I am pleased to say that, despite the Trades and Labor Council's 120 years of history, there could probably be an analogy. There was a lady organiser in 1894 but, until I was appointed in 1984, there had not been any women officials in the Trades and Labor Council. This is an issue that is very dear to my heart.

The chair would have been the first woman secretary of a trade union in South Australia, so we have another ground-breaker here in that area. My sympathies and support go out to the Farmers Federation. I have met the new Director of the Farmers Federation, who is a woman, and a very impressive one, and I think we need to be forever vigilant. I do not think that any areas can put themselves forward with great pride about their representation from women. In a way, that is probably my answer to the member for Napier's comments, as well. I am happy to provide that information in detail.

The CHAIRPERSON: In acknowledging the minister's comments, I would like to recognise the work of Elizabeth Johnstone, who was the Secretary of the Federated Clerks Union during the Second World War, when no men were available, which was the excuse given, but I am confident that she was an excellent secretary of that union. Does the member for Bragg have some questions to read onto the record?

Ms CHAPMAN: I do. The minister commented on her commitment to the outreach services, which I acknowledge and appreciate. I ask specifically whether the services to Whyalla and Port Augusta are to continue and if there is any proposed extension of rural outreach services.

Will the minister explain how much is to be saved in relation to the vacation care program claimed on page 9.7 of Budget Paper 4, volume 2, and why this program, being a family friendly workplace initiative catering for children between the ages of five and 12 and operating every school holiday period, is to be reduced? Has any consideration been given to obtaining funding from anywhere else in the budget to ensure that is covered, particularly given the proposed directorate on industrial matters and the focus that the government has identified in relation to balancing work and family and the critical service that provides, not just to public servants but to every employee of this building? I would appreciate a response on that.

Will the minister confirm whether the Aboriginal project officer employed by the Office for the Status of Women had completed the eight month project identifying the needs for

Aboriginal women in South Australia and, if not, will the minister confirm that funds are available to continue and complete this work? In light of the commitment to Aboriginal family and domestic violence, it is critical that that be completed, so I would appreciate that. Does the minister propose to relocate the Office for the Status of Women or any part thereof to any other premises or accommodation and, if so, when and at what cost?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I want to reassure the member that that issue is still under discussion. I think I might have said in parliament in answer to a question asked by the member for Bragg that I am happy to provide that information. It just may not happen very quickly.

Ms CHAPMAN: The minister has answered and I thank her for that. Have any funds been provided in this year's budget to cover that contingency? That is the rest of my question. Given the comment made in partial answer to that, I just put on the record that the minister has personally indicated to me that she is prepared to negotiate on that issue, and I appreciate that.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: There is a limit on the time for answering some of the questions that are raised through this process, so if I do not have an answer within that time frame, I do not want the honourable member to think that I am not going to answer the question. It is just that we are still going through a process of working out at a strategic level and a financial level the best way to deal with the location issue.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister confirm whether the submission presented to the commonwealth Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Prue Goward, supporting 14 weeks paid maternity leave is available and whether a copy will be provided?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The direct answer to that is that we have sought an extension—I am not sure exactly how long it is—to make sure that we consult fully on that issue, and we will respond to the five options outlined in the paper 'Valuing Parenthood'. I am more than happy, once that submission has been through the process of consultation and before cabinet, to make it available.

Ms CHAPMAN: Perhaps in response to that question the minister could identify what consultation processes are currently being undertaken and with whom, and perhaps she could indicate when the submission is prepared that a copy will be provided if it is not to be tabled in the parliament.

Will the minister advise the committee how many reviews have been undertaken or are scheduled to take place within the portfolio since the government was elected? In particular, to which matters do these reviews pertain, which consultant or consultancy organisation has been hired to undertake the work, and what is the total cost of these contracts; and what is the total amount of money paid or allocated to be paid in the financial year ending 30 June 2002, and what are the commencement and completion dates of those reviews?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: The impression I am getting is that we do not have any. I understand that this is an omnibus question, but at this stage you probably should know that there are none intended.

Ms CHAPMAN: Therefore, no consultancy has been paid prior to 30 June 2002 for reviews that are to take place after that date?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Not as far as I know at this stage.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister advise the committee how many of the 600 jobs to be cut from the Public Service will be lost from within the portfolio?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: We hope none.

Ms CHAPMAN: Perhaps the minister will take that question on notice and clarify the position. For the record I indicate that I appreciate that some senior members of the small group that is working in this very small department have been replaced by juniors and that, of course, has provided the minister with some of the cost savings in the total cut of the budget in this area. In any event, if specific positions are to be lost I would like those identified.

Will the minister advise the committee of the number of positions attracting a total employment cost of \$100 000 within the portfolio of the Office of the Status of Women, its department and agencies reporting to the minister as at 30 June 2002 and the estimates for 30 June 2003?

For each year (2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06) from all departments and agencies within the Office of the Status of Women reporting to the minister, what is the share of the total \$967 million savings strategy announced by the government, and what is the detail of each savings strategy? I note that, overall, the budget discloses a \$45 000 cut in the total budget for this small portfolio, so I cannot imagine it being any more than \$45 000. I ask the minister to detail those.

For all departments and agencies within the Office of the Status of Women reporting to the minister, what is the share of the \$322 million underspend in 2001-02 claimed by the government; what is the detail of each proposal and each project underspent; and what is the detail of any carry-on expenditure for 2002-03 which has been approved?

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Regarding that particular item, we did not underspend the budget; in fact, there was a small overspend of \$5 000. So, I will not be providing information in relation to that omnibus question.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am pleased to note the minister's response. I have no doubt that the diligence of the current chief executive has ensured that there would not be any underspend. I have no further questions. I thank the minister for her time.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 8.40 p.m. the committee adjourned until Thursday 1 August at 11 a.m.