

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Friday 27 June 2008****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chair:**

Mr T. Koutsantonis

Members:

The Hon. I.F. Evans

Ms Fox

Mrs Geraghty

The Hon. G.M. Gunn

Mr Kenyon

Mr Pisoni

*The committee met at 11:00***DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, \$1,755,505,000****ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES, \$163,546,000****Witness:**

The Hon. J.D. Lomax-Smith, Minister for Education and Children's Services, Minister for Tourism, Minister for the City of Adelaide.

Departmental Advisers:

Dr P. Kilvert, Chief Executive, Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia.

Mr C. Robinson, Chief Executive, Department of Education and Children's Services.

Ms C. Williams, Assistant Director, Accounting and Financial Management Improvement, Department of Education and Children's Services.

Mr G. DeGennaro, Deputy Chief Executive, Resources, Department of Education and Children's Services.

Ms J. Andrews, Deputy Chief Executive, Schools and Children's Services, Department of Education and Children's Services.

Mr R. Bos, Director, Financial Management Services, Department of Education and Children's Services.

Ms J.A. Riedstra, Executive Director, Finance and Infrastructure, Department of Education and Children's Services.

Mr P. O'Loughlin, Executive Director, Human Resources and Workforce Development, Department of Education and Children's Services.

The CHAIR: Estimates are a reasonably informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. The committee will determine an approximate time for the consideration of proposed payments to facilitate the changeover of departmental advisers. The minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed on a timetable for today's proceedings and have provided the chair with a copy. Changes of committee membership will be notified as they occur, and 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 committee secretary no later than Friday 18 July 2008. I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make an opening statement of about 10 minutes each, if they so choose. 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 and referenced. Members unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the House of 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, that it is purely statistical and limited to one page in length. All questions are to be directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers. The minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. I also advise that, for the purposes of the committee, television coverage will be allowed from both the northern and southern galleries. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Budget Statement, pages 2.45 and 2.26 and Appendix C, and Portfolio Statement, Volume 2, part 9. I call on the minister to make an opening statement, if she chooses.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am pleased to inform the committee that the South Australian budget for 2008-09 provides a significant investment across the whole of government to support children and families. In particular, this budget builds upon a long-term investment that the Rann government has made over more than six years to strengthen our services in the best interests of children and South Australia's social and economic future.

Since the former Liberal government's 2001-02 budget, spending for each child has increased, on average, by \$3,970, a rise of 52 per cent. This year the state budget provides, on average, \$11,568 for every government school student, an increase of \$364 per student from last year. We are also building on our investment in teachers and support staff. These are the people whose professional skills, care and commitment make a difference to every child's future.

As a government, we have made a commitment to provide more than \$306 million over three years under the new enterprise bargaining agreement to improve salaries and conditions for our valued state school teachers, support staff and school leaders. However, the investment we are making to support the health and wellbeing of young people and families throughout South Australia is both within and beyond the specific Education and Children's Services budget. Our whole of government strategic approach recognises that every child's future is shaped by factors beyond the classroom, including housing, family income, health and access to family services.

We cannot expect schools to address every community need, and the overall budget builds stronger structural and service support across agencies and service providers. For example, my colleague the Minister for Families and Communities has announced that the government will spend an extra \$190.6 million over four years on keeping children safe, intervening early to support families when children are at risk of abuse or neglect, and supporting the carers of our most valuable and vulnerable children. Together with other investment across government, we will better protect, educate and care for young people who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged, including indigenous children and others who are most at risk.

The budget builds on our strategic approach to improve the quality and effectiveness of service delivery in line with South Australia's Strategic Plan objectives. In particular, we are building on our long-term approach to deliver services for young people, from birth through to adulthood, and to build better schools and children's services so that staff can more effectively teach and care for children. Our approach will enable more young people to achieve by measuring their progress and intervening early to address problems.

Our strategies will connect more young people from Catholic, independent and government schools to better opportunities through stronger integration between senior secondary schools, further education and work. We are also reforming structural, legislative and red tape barriers that underpin services, and actively involving education and children's services stakeholders in that process of reform.

I am especially pleased that our national leadership in early childhood development and our investment in school to work measures, such as our Trade Schools for the Future and the new SACE, means that we are well placed to integrate South Australian approaches with the Australian government's Education Revolution investment.

With this budget we can look forward with confidence to a 2009 school year that will see significant investment and reform. There will be new compulsory education legislation in place to ensure young people are engaged in school, training or work. We will see next year's year 10 students in Catholic, independent and government schools begin a new South Australian certificate of education, and work will continue towards building six new education work schools, new children's centres and the upgrading of schools and preschools across the state.

Overall, the state budget 2008-09 provides a sound foundation to care for and educate every child. I commend this budget to the committee and also take the opportunity to thank every staff member, volunteer, governing council member and all of our parents for their contribution to helping every child achieve their best. The South Australian government will continue to support their endeavours by working with communities to improve services for children and families.

Mr PISONI: I have no opening statement. The member for Davenport will ask the first question.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The Portfolio Statement, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 8.1 and 8.2 refer to SSABSA, so in that sense I have some questions that have been flagged in this morning's media. I am intrigued as to why SSABSA has a system that notifies students in June that they have had special provisions provided for them—in my constituent's case because of dyslexia—and they get a written letter dated 20 June saying that after five years of having special provisions, that is, access to computers and access to extra time for examinations, that now is cut out. I am wondering why SSABSA has a policy of advising so late in June, so late in the process. Surely there is a better way to do this.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: First, I would point out that none of those issues relates to the budget lines. This is a process matter. You will realise that the Liberal opposition tried to oppose and block any measures whereby the minister could direct the board of SSABSA to change any procedure. I, of course, made it quite clear that I did not think it appropriate that politicians should intervene and impose or alter marks, exams, curriculum, regulations or a child's opportunity. I think it would be entirely inappropriate for politicians to interfere in a child's results process; that has never been my intention.

As you know, there has never been any power to direct the SSABSA board; in fact, the Liberal opposition opposed any measure whereby a minister could do such a thing. Having said that, I point out that SSABSA must comply with certain acts: the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education 2005, and the revisions that have been introduced through the SSABSA process (through the board) have been introduced as a result of extensive consultation with the three school sectors.

It is true to say that every parent wants the best for their child and they want the best and most advantageous circumstances for any school or out-of-school assessment, but in this regard SSABSA does introduce support and help, and additional support for people with disabilities, but it must be fair. It would be entirely inappropriate if the system were not transparent. It would be entirely inappropriate if there were no appeals process. It would be entirely inappropriate if you or I, as a politician with any degree of power, could intervene and make it easier or harder for an individual student.

So, I reject any suggestion that, as a minister, I should impose my personal views on the examination process for a child. Having said that, the system in place was the result of consultation and information sessions through 2006, so that the three sectors were involved in those changes. The changes were introduced with the support of the private sector and the public sector, and they were seen to be transparent, fair and equitable. I believe that the process in place is just that. I will ask Dr Kilvert to explain how it works, as he has done before, and point out that I have every confidence in the system.

Dr KILVERT: Schools are made known of the procedures for special provisions. They are quite detailed and they are provided through the schools information networks with SSABSA. On that basis, schools are able, through students' negotiation with their teachers, to apply for special provisions from as early as the end of year 11. The current procedures enable a young person to apply during term 4 of year 11, so at the start of the year they have the capacity to know what the special provisions will mean for the year 12 assessments in those areas which are directly managed by SSABSA, and that is in the area of external assessment of examinations or of other types of activities such as major projects or portfolios which are assessed by people outside the school.

On that basis the young person is invited to submit a range of evidence that enables SSABSA to make a determination that the special provisions should apply to that young person in accordance with disability standards. That information includes a wide range of material so we can make that on-balance decision. It would include the student's provision of a range of essays which are written over a 30-minute period, so that they are written under exam conditions.

If a student wishes to request the use of a word processor they also include an essay on a particular topic which would apply to that sort of word processor. These tasks will count towards a student's end of year assessment, so they are real tasks to make a real judgment of a student's ability. If they are after special provisions in areas that relate to their spelling, they undertake a South Australian spelling test; if it is in areas that relate to their reading ability, they also undertake a reading comprehension test, which has been developed and calibrated by the Australian Council for Educational Research.

We ask teachers to submit information about the student in their particular subject areas, and if the parent has already undertaken for the student to have a psychologist's test the opportunity is given to provide that test, but for those parents who cannot afford that, we do not insist upon it. Finally, if they have evidence or information made available by a medical practitioner we invite that to be submitted as well. So, we collect a wide range of information based upon that student's study.

A panel is then formed to consider that, and a judgment is made about whether the student has fair and reasonable access to the assessment conditions applying to an examination or to other forms of assessment. That information is conveyed to the parent or the student usually three to four weeks after the first request is submitted. At that time we also make it known that, if the student or parent wishes to appeal or if they have additional information they wish to make available, that opportunity is there.

When that appeal is received, the entire material, including the new information, is forwarded to an independent educational psychologist, who makes a determination as to whether we have got it right. Based upon the scenarios in 2007, we found that about half the appeals were upheld—and in most cases that was due to additional medical information being provided on that basis. Again, that process takes three to four weeks.

With reference to the letter in June, that could will be the culmination of a very extensive and exhaustive process wherein people would know, along the way, that that outcome was certainly a possibility. With reference to this being for over four to five years, I need to make it clear that the special provisions administered by SSABSA in that regard apply to external assessments that SSABSA itself administers. On the other hand, schools conduct internal assessments for school-based work according to SSABSA guidelines, and we leave the school with the jurisdiction and delegation to make those decisions. Again, as part of a supported learning environment, the school had often used word processors to assist that young person's learning in the first four years of the school.

So, what you have referred to is a highly complex situation where SSABSA works to support learning for individual students but does ensure, when it comes to the external assessment process, that both the disability standards are recognised and respected and all students' assessment arrangements are treated consistently and fairly.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I have a follow-up question—and again, minister, you may wish to have Dr Kilvert answer. My constituent had special provisions for extra time and access to a computer for five years, and his school gets a letter on 20 June saying that special provisions now no longer apply. You have just nominated an appeals process—which, I suspect, my constituent will take up quite strongly, and which I will support—and then say that it takes three to four weeks for the appeal to be dealt with. The school has advised this student that the special provisions are withdrawn from the date of the letter; so, from 20 June to whenever the appeal is finished, my student, having had access to a computer and extra time for assessment for five years, does not have that.

Here we are, a matter of weeks out from his assessment, and he has to go back to a handwritten form of assessment—which is difficult for him and his parents. You are saying that it will take two weeks for the appeal to be lodged and then up to four weeks for it to be dealt with, so this student could find out whether his provisions are being reinstated or not in the middle of August!

This whole process is destabilising his education. The parents are physically sitting there teaching the student, essentially, how to rewrite, because of his level of dyslexia and the level of

errors that delivers. It seems to me that notifying students so late in the process—under your system this student will find out in August what are the final rules for his exam weeks later—is surely an unacceptable process.

I accept that the process has checks and balances, but can they not be brought forward earlier in year 11 so that students enter year 12 knowing exactly what the rules are? How can you expect a student to have the rules changed in August and deliver a result in year 12 exams? I think that is simply an unreasonable request.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The member for Davenport is speaking about a case for which we have no evidence. As far as I know I have not heard of the school, the child, or the details. This is actually a *deja vu* situation that has already been played out this morning on Radio 891, where the allegations were made and responded to. The final part of the response by Dr Kilvert, which I heard very plainly on 891, was that if there were any issues they would be reviewed if the details were given to him. He gave a helpline number (8372-7421). He also very clearly explained that the school had control over the school-based assessments that have occurred over the five years of high school, and for those five years of high school—whether it was public or private, I do not know the details—the school made a decision that this young man would get some extra assistance. That was the school's decision.

I believe it is extremely unfair to blame SSABSA for those agreements not being carried through into year 12; to assert that those decisions were unfair and blame Dr Kilvert. Without his having a basis on which to respond, knowing the facts and the names, is also extremely unfair. Dr Kilvert has described the issues and responses very fairly. I know the member for Davenport would like to advocate for his constituent and the student, the young man of whom he speaks, but fairness does not always mean you get everything you want.

Dr KILVERT: I believe I addressed many of the points in my previous answer. To clarify, the student can initiate this process at the end of year 11. From the first day of term four of year 11 this process can be initiated and the information is communicated to schools. The basis of the evidence used includes students writing under exam conditions up to three essays of about 30 minutes in length. Those essays are submitted to experienced markers used by SSABSA at the end of year examinations, and it is their determinations and recommendations that are provided to determine that this student falls within a reasonable range of students who can handwrite in exam conditions. We do our utmost to base our decisions on the evidence provided.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 5, and to line 24 of the budget speech. Reference was made in the minister's opening statement to the funding per student being \$11,568. What is the state government's per student recurrent funding for the one in three students who now attend non-government schools in South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: There are variable amounts of money going into non-government schools. The balance of that funding is not delivered by DECS but by an independent committee that assesses the distribution of those funds. Those funds are distributed equitably and there is considerable variation between children as to the amount the children receive from this funding, for instance, it is distributed according to per capita grants, the needs of the school, the needs of the students, with separate funding for special schools. The advisory committee on non-government schools has recommended the split in the appropriation.

It is important to understand that South Australia probably has the most good tempered and equitable arrangements between the state government and the non-government sector, and that is reiterated by the degree of collaboration that occurs between the non-government sector and the government schooling system, whereby we work together on everything from the anti-bullying strategy to the SAPSASSA organisation. Certainly, with our senior secondary reform, the non-government sector has had a seat at the table and has been part of the working parties involved in developing the new SACE and has been given extensive input and acceptance into a variety of activities, including being involved in our legislative reform discussions.

It is worth remembering that the School Card, support special needs, non-English speaking background, Aboriginality and a whole range of issues are covered with extra funding. In the past two years we agreed to an extra \$16 million of funding for children with special needs. This is not administered by the government, of course, but the needs basis is one that is assessed on the same criteria we use in public schools. The original estimate for 2008-09 is \$131,922,000.

Mr PISONI: You have given a per student figure for public education: I am asking for that per student figure for private education.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We have not calculated that number because the distribution is so irregular and dependent on the committee that distributes the funding. It is quite complex and not easy to calculate. The number can be calculated by dividing that number by 60,000-odd. It would be maybe \$5,000 per capita, but I do not think it would reach the child at that level. It is a less evenly distributed number than in the public system.

Mr PISONI: So you cannot answer that question?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It is easy to divide \$131,922,000 by the number of students, but I do not think it is such a representative figure.

Mr PISONI: You have different categories for government schools as well. It is not as though the independent schools have the same categories: they have different categories as well from years 1 to 7 and not every government school gets \$11,568 per student, so I do not know why you cannot answer that question—you have all those staff with you.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The bulk of funding comes from the federal government for non-government schools, and the funding that goes from the state government is a special addition to that amount of money.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.39, cash flow statement, non-government schools, funding from the state. The budget shows an increase in funding of less than 2 per cent from the 2007-08 estimated result, and this Labor government now provides the lowest level of state support for non-government schools in Australia. Will the minister bring funding levels up to at least the per student national average in South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The system we have in South Australia has worked very well and is in line with the one in place when the previous Liberal government was in power. We know that the non-government schools' commonwealth grant, which is \$5,312 based on \$464,571,000 (\$5,000 per capita), and I just advised that for the state contribution it would be worth dividing those two numbers, which I cannot do in my head at the moment.

The ACTING CHAIR: (Mr Kenyon): Time having expired for this line, we now move to the Department of Education and Children's Services.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5, which relates to the objectives of the Department of Education and Children's Services. It states:

The main focus of these services will be to ensure that children and students have the opportunity to maximise their potential and aspirations to productively and responsibly participate in and contribute to society.

My question is: what exchange of information exists between schools and social workers from the Department for Families and Communities to detect children who are being neglected and abused? Perhaps the minister could expand on what skills and training are given to teachers to identify victims of neglect and abuse and point to the line in the budget where we will find that money.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think it is fair to say that this government has made a very deep commitment to keeping children safe. We have commissioned both inquiries and responded to them, and we have done so in a way that is more effective than it has ever been done before. Certainly, when we came to government, the Liberal opposition had not even had a system in place to guarantee that everybody dealing with children had had a police check. It had not retrospectively checked for criminal histories of longstanding teachers within our system, and it had not implemented a proper system within the Teachers Registration Board to check on the credentials and background of teachers.

We have invested significant sums of money in updating our Teachers Registration Board, ensuring that every teacher has a police check, and systematically going through all those people who deal with or work with children to make sure that our children are safe. In addition, unlike the previous Liberal government, our ministers get on well and collaborate. We work very hard to work across government with ministerial councils, which share issues of difficulty.

It stands to reason that one minister very rarely has the whole responsibility for an issue. For instance, the Minister for Housing can certainly never house the homeless unless drug addiction, health, family income, family breakdown and education agendas are dealt with. Therefore, we work across government with the Minister for Families and Communities to support him in his very successful work on reducing homelessness.

Similarly, in terms of keeping children safe, we have an inter-ministerial council that leads from the top and comprises the Minister for Families and Communities, the Minister for Health and

myself, and it has representation from Aboriginal Affairs, SAPOL and the Attorney-General's Department, making sure that we have a collaborative effective and whole-of-government approach. I think that, for the first time in the history of this state—in a way that would have been impossible with the factionalised, argumentative and leaking Liberal government—we have a government that works together on issues.

We know that child abuse is a scourge and, with the reports we have received (most recently from Commissioner Mullighan), we have made very significant responses to all the relevant recommendations in the education department. Indeed, we have an ongoing funding allocation of \$500,000 per year for a range of child protection strategies.

To inform you of these, the first I will describe is SMART (Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma). You will understand that we have had a longstanding investment in mandatory notification training, which includes school council members, volunteers, sports officials, and all those involved, whatever their line of engagement—whether it be through the Public Service Act, the Children's Services Act or the Education Act. We have worked hard to make sure that we have mandatory notification procedures in place. This is of course supported by very close personal relationships between all staff involved.

In relation to the SMART program, more than 1,500 teachers, school leaders and school counsellors, as well as early childhood staff, have received specialist training to help them respond, not just to the original report but also to the impact it has on children who have been the subject of a mandatory report, and give them localised support in the time after the notification. Of course, teachers are very often the first to recognise in their students the signs that they have experienced abuse, and training provides professional development to help them manage these issues.

We have also updated our curriculum. It is very important that the new curriculum we provide is age specific. It has been developed and implemented for students from preschool through to the senior years of high school. It is apparent that the information and the management of these children are quite different for different ages.

We have also worked very closely, breaking down the barriers between Families and Communities and the education department, to deal with those children who are in our care. Children under guardianship have higher access to services through an agreement with the Minister for Families and Communities and his executives. We give them additional preschool opportunities and allow them to begin preschool from the age of three and to continue to attend for up to four sessions a week until they are six years of age.

Certainly all children under the guardianship of the minister—and they are children who have been at risk or are at risk—have individual education plans in place to ensure that there is a focus, collaboratively, between the Families SA case worker, the carer and the other stakeholders in the child's education. In addition, we have implemented a range of cross-sectoral agreements to develop policies on appropriate staff conduct, criminal history checks and mandatory notification training, standards and guidelines for schools responding to suicide in the community.

DECS is actually the lead agency in an initiative that I think is one of the most important that we could implement. One of the challenges within government, particularly in light of privacy legislation, is to share information and get appropriate and urgent access to that information when it is necessary. We are the lead agency for the development of a new information-sharing guidelines initiative across government agencies and key non-government organisations that will give those working with children a common understanding of what is happening in their lives, so that there are not multiple people dealing with a problem who do not know the full context and the full perspective on that child's life.

Having a single framework to allow people to work together is clearly a smart way of delivering services. We have also established a central screening unit so that we can have consistent standards for employee and volunteer screening, and we conduct that using a central database. It needs to be updated every three years. It makes it easier to see when screening for employees and volunteers is usually done again.

The investment that we have made and the commitment and the work in this area I think is outstanding. I am very proud of what the department has done; they have worked very hard to make this a mainstream part of activity in every part of our organisation.

Mr PISONI: It is not working, is it, minister? Fraser Mustard has made that comment in his report that you also refuse to table, where he describes the relationship between Families and Communities and the education department as chaos in the early learning years. I think you are

aware of that and that is why you are not releasing that report. Perhaps you can tell the committee: what are the figures for children who arrive at school and need to be given breakfast?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: First, I would point out that Fraser Mustard is one of the greatest advocates for South Australia in terms of early childhood development and education—

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The CHAIR: Order! You cannot ask your question and then comment while the minister answers. You cannot have it both ways.

Mr PISONI: Thank you for your advice, Mr Chair.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that Fraser Mustard is one of our greatest advocates. He spends a great deal of time saying that we are one of the leaders in the English-speaking world in terms of investment and commitment to the early years. I know that the member is anxious to read this report. He certainly read the front pages—it has been discussed widely in the newspapers—but I would say, having met Dr Fraser Mustard, that he is a great advocate for the early years.

I know the opposition have never supported our investment in early years. They have never wanted us to have co-located services. They have never supported a one-stop shop. They have not supported our children's centre development, and they have not supported the work of Fraser Mustard. However, this government is committed to the early years because we know that the most important period in a child's life is from prenatal to the age of five.

We have continued to make sure that our state has the highest investment and the best services for young children and their families. These involve, of course, parenting, as well as early childhood services. Fraser Mustard acknowledges that and praises this state constantly. I look forward to seeing how the opposition will manage to both dismiss investment in the early years and make demands for it because, clearly, it puts it in a very difficult position.

In terms of the relationship between our departments, I think the member is wrong. The departments communicate well. We have very good relationships with the police department and the Teachers Registration Board, incidentally, and also the Department for Families and Communities. We work very closely with these organisations in order to get the best outcomes for children at risk, whether they are children who are homeless or at risk or children who are under the guardianship of the minister.

My understanding and experience of this area is that the relationships between the departments are in fact very good, because this government has put a true focus on making sure that there is good communication and, as I have said, we have led the way in breaking down the barriers and information-sharing to be, I think, exemplars in this area.

Mr PISONI: And the breakfast?

The CHAIR: Order! The member for Stuart has a question.

Mr PISONI: And the breakfast?

The CHAIR: The member for Stuart will not be interrupted by anyone in the chamber.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: My question follows on from an earlier question on funding in relation to page 8.5, targets and highlights. I note under the heading 'Supporting elements', there is reference to 'quality teachers with a focus on achievement, engagement and wellbeing'.

The minister would know that I am very focused on ensuring that the very best facilities are provided, particularly in rural and isolated parts of the state. I am concerned about something that I read in the latest edition of the Australian Education Union's document under the hand of the president. The examples given have been brought to my attention, and people are concerned that they are not going to get a fair share of the very large amount of money which I do not object to. It states:

Our analysis of the data provided has shown that around 175 schools will be significantly worse off. We have to question the logic of the model that creates winners and losers out of schools and omits a 'no worse off guarantee.' The new funding model pays schools a per capita amount per student, per term. Consequently, schools will not know from term to term whether they can afford staff. Our leaders will be faced with making difficult decisions on whether to create a new class or to play it safe and overload existing classes when new enrolments arrive. This can only result in greater numbers of contract teachers and PATs, increased class sizes and less capacity to meet the needs of our students.

This matter was highlighted and brought to my attention, and the Booleroo Centre School has that possibility if its year 12 class drops to below 15 students. The Booleroo school has an outstanding reputation for the highest education standards possible and quality teachers, yet some of its subjects in year 12 will no longer be available. I point out to the minister that, in times of economic stress in such areas, it is absolutely essential that students are given the best possible education available so that they can be worthwhile members of the community and have good jobs. I do not know whether or not it is correct, but I have had teachers come to see me about this, and I am not one to make promises to them. I just say that it is my job to ask the questions, but I am very concerned that there will be a downgrading of leadership positions and an inability to provide subjects.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I respect the member's advocacy for regional schools. I know how good Booleroo school is, and I am pleased to allay his fears. I know that the member never takes information as gospel and would always drill down and check the facts, and, certainly, he would never quote things without being sure of their truth; so, I can put his mind at ease.

I am very confident about regional schools. Not only has this government put significant sums of money into refurbishment and rebuilding in regional areas but we have also worked very hard to make sure that they recruit and retain the best teachers. I will talk about those issues first. We have worked hard to make sure that we have country incentives—country scholarships. We have a seachange, which is a country change program, which allows the most experienced teachers to take a leadership role in regional areas, in areas such as science and maths. We recognise that the economies of scale are lost in regional schools and that there is a need to put extra funding into regional schools because they would not be sustainable if they had the same funding model as larger metropolitan schools.

Having said that, we have to be mindful of the need to recruit teachers in the future, and to have modern and new ways to deliver the curriculum in year 12. One of the issues that we are increasingly working on is to not just have the School of the Air but to also share classes delivered by specialist teachers across regional schools (that has worked very well on Eyre Peninsula), and we are working on that issue. In terms of the assertions that have been made by some members of the AEU about the EB arrangements, I can reassure the member that the idea of winners and losers relates to some modelling and documents which were given to the AEU—which are easily obtainable—and which discuss how the funding models would work in retrospect on 206 (I think) enrolment numbers.

The member would know that funding for the teacher salary part of the school currently works on a step level, so that you have to get a quantum of students before you get one extra teacher. The problem with that is that it is unpredictable and inequitable. It is of concern to parents, because if they lose one or two students they can lose \$100,000 of salary and a whole teacher. We have tried over many years to find a more equitable solution. It is fair to say that, if you have a per capita funding model, it is possible to find fluctuations from year to year, but there are fluctuations anyway.

We believe that Booleroo school is now highly vulnerable to drops in enrolment. Certainly, if one or two students were to drop out of enrolment they would lose a whole teacher, which I agree would be very difficult. The proposed program will allow per capita funding, so every student attracts a fair and equal proportion of teacher time. If you have three-quarters of a class step model, you have three-quarters of the funding. It is absolutely fair. It will actually be better for many regional schools because they will have the funding to employ a part-time teacher rather than losing a whole teacher.

In terms of the idea that Booleroo might be a loser in the new system, that is a hypothetical prediction. It is possible now that, if Booleroo, in our current funding model, lost two or three students, it would lose one whole teacher as \$100,000, say, salary. We would have a more equitable system. In order to make sure, particularly for small schools, that there is no loss of funding, our proposed model will employ 165 extra teachers to go into the funding model, and that will provide 165 extra teachers overall through the system. But, on top of that, any potential that was in the 206 modelling would not occur because we have put in extra funding of \$2.7 million that will smooth out any sudden and unexpected changes.

What the member has been told is half of the information. What he has been given is what would happen with the new model, possibly, if we did not put extra funding into the package. The fact is that the new model is fairer and more predictable, and we have put in extra money to make sure that there are no unexpected changes. At the end of the day, the winners will always be small schools, because the salary package is not the element of their funding that gives them so much

advantage. They are advantaged because they are given additional amounts of money to make them viable, because we know that they do not have the same economies of scale in those regional schools that we get in metropolitan Adelaide. We try to always make sure that they are advantaged, and they are given more than their fair share of funding in order to make them viable.

I am optimistic that a good offer has been made to the union. I know that the union wanted only 18 hours of contact for its members. Our offer provides for a maximum of 21 hours for secondary school teachers and 22½ hours for primary school teachers. Their demand was for 18 contact hours with children a week. We have not given them that in our offer. They also made a request—and I know that the member would support this idea, because he is a great supporter of maternity leave—for 24 weeks of fully paid maternity leave; we have offered them 14 weeks.

That has come up from two weeks—when we came into government; it has gone from two weeks to an offer of 14 weeks. They have asked for a range of other issues and, indeed, one of the offers we have made will be of particular importance to you in your electorate. We recognised that young teachers were stressed and that they found it hard to work in regional schools, had difficulty preparing work and working under conditions that they found difficult in their first year after leaving university. So, we have agreed to the union's request that they should have half a day off a week to prepare their classes. We have actually made some very significant offers that I believe will help your electorate. I think you can be confident that your schools are not at risk and will be better off, if the union accepts the offer we have made.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.17. What security measures are in place to protect students and teachers in our state schools?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The safety and security of students and teachers is of paramount importance. Everyone, of course, has the right to walk into a school and feel safe. Schools are not a place for people to act in a threatening or disorderly way. However, instances do occur from time to time in schools (as they do in the community) and, unfortunately, in recent weeks we have seen community disputes spill over into the schoolyard. That is why the government has implemented a range of measures to address bullying, violence and behaviour management. The latest of these measures is a program called Your Classroom: Safe, Orderly and Productive.

This program has been developed as part of the Rann government's \$10 million investment in managing disruptive students, which has been funded from 2007. The new program will provide professional training to teachers for managing difficult and disruptive students. The first priority is to train teachers who are in their first five years of work. They will take part in workshops before trialling new approaches in their own classrooms. They will also receive a package of support materials to continue their development when the practical component of the course is finished.

The new program is the last of five programs to be implemented as part of the \$10 million behaviour management initiative, which includes having mobile phones rolled out for teachers on yard duty so that staff or police can be immediately called for assistance in the event of an unlawful incident, and the anti-bullying coalition for government and non-government schools is to advise on the use of technology, including mobile phones in violent incidents. We have also introduced intruder regulations from 2004 which gave the police and principals the power to refuse entry, evict and ban people who behave in a violent or threatening manner. I should tell the committee that 52 people have been banned since 2004.

Security fencing, in designer styles for 30 schools at greatest risk of after-hours arson and vandal attacks and to keep intruders out, has been developed through a \$5 million investment over five years, as we announced last year. We have introduced tougher laws since 2005 to deliver harsher punishments to criminals who target schoolteachers and other professionals whilst they work. We give ongoing advice from the School Care Centre on safety and security measures. In addition, we are providing certification on School Watch for schools that take an active role in their safety and security issues, including completing a safety audit.

The program called Your Classroom: Safe, Orderly and Productive is additional to a range of measures to combat violence in schools. These include clear anti-bullying policies, taking a zero tolerance approach to violence, and using suspension and exclusion measures. Our schools are actively encouraged to form relationships with local police and to call them in the event of an incident. Recent incidents have shown that this relationship is strong and is working. In fact, any incident is one too many and will not be tolerated—that is the attitude we take to these sorts of events. These programs have been developed in consultation with our teachers and, I hope, will ameliorate the problems we have faced over the past few years.

Ms FOX: My question relates to green school grants: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5. What action is being taken by government schools to manage the effect of climate change?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Across all sectors, the Rann government has led by example in dealing with the realities of climate change. Initiatives such as the Building Tune Up program or the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act are just two examples of many government programs introduced to reduce our ecological footprint.

It can be argued that the most significant contribution we, as a government, can make to our environment is through our schools and our educators. Not only have we invested millions in making our schools more environmentally sustainable, but we believe that, as places of education, we can educate our future leaders about what they can do for a greener tomorrow.

In May I announced that \$1 million would be spent on 100 projects as part of our Green School grants program. Projects under this exciting initiative include energy auditing and retro-fitting, automation of irrigation systems, allowing school grounds to be watered at night, and connecting more northern Adelaide schools to the Northern Adelaide aquifer recovery and storage scheme.

It is with great pleasure that I again announce today that a further \$2 million will be spent on Green School grants. The additional funding will ensure that an extra 238 schools benefit from projects that will go ahead across every major region in South Australia. This capitalises on other green initiatives, including our Solar Schools program. We are well on the way to installing solar panels in 250 government schools by 2014. I am advised that, by the end of this year, 112 installations will have been completed.

Wind turbines and solar panels will also be fitted to South Australian schools when they undergo a major upgrade. Each solar installation saves approximately 3,000 kilowatt hours of electricity and three tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. By installing green infrastructure in our schools, students are able to gain a greater understanding of climate change and, more importantly, learn what they can do to reduce its impact.

We are proud to be associated with the Australian Sustainable Schools initiative. This joint venture between the states and the commonwealth integrates education suitability into whole school management and learning. The extra \$2 million in Green School grants is money very well spent: it will not only reduce energy and water bills but will also go a long way to making our children more aware of climate change and how they can manage South Australia's unique environment.

Mr PISONI: In response to the question asked by the member for Torrens: it is obviously not working, minister. In the last month, we have had stabbings, brawls and bashings in our schools, so there is obviously a lot of work you need to do in that area. I can understand you—

The CHAIR: Order! I will just say this to the member: you are well within your rights to make those sorts of comments if you like. You have parliamentary privilege; you can say whatever you like. However, when the minister responds to your comments, you cannot then interject, complain or take a point of order, saying that the minister is not answering your question. I just want to make the member aware of that.

Mr PISONI: Thank you for your guidance, sir.

The CHAIR: Any time; I am here to teach.

Mr PISONI: I am here to learn, sir. Thank you very much for your guidance. It is a good thing it is the education committee.

The CHAIR: Absolutely.

Mr PISONI: I understand the minister's being embarrassed about giving me the numbers on the breakfasts given to children. You have avoided that question, so perhaps I will ask you this one: what are the figures for cases of abuse or neglect reported through teachers and the department?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I cannot help but respond about the episodes in schools. I think the member again likes to talk down teachers and the education system and would like always to denigrate and demean our teaching profession. I think our teachers do a brilliant job. They work extremely hard, and they work under difficult circumstances and difficult conditions. They take children who come from disadvantage and lack of opportunity and give them optimism and hope.

It does not help when those opposite choose to glorify the occasional act of violence, many of which are actually community episodes that spill over into the schoolyard. The one thing I have noticed in the latest spate of episodes that have occurred in or around schools is that they have not been solely in the domain of the school. They have been about external activity, often, sadly, about sporting activity, from across the metropolitan region and beyond. They have been neighbourhood disputes that have spilled over into what is often open territory and unguarded, outside space. I think that consistently to talk down the education system in the way the member does is extremely disappointing. Certainly, teachers will not thank him.

I have to say that I did forget to mention the breakfast programs. The Department of Education and Children's Services does not run breakfast programs. They are not part of our funding package, but they are very often carried out under the authority and delegation of the local school community. We believe that school communities have the right, the power and often the creativity to produce a whole range of programs, and they are free to do that. However, we do not believe in having central domination and telling them when and how to do what they do. These are local decisions, and we support those. In relation to the numbers of mandatory reports—was that the question?

Mr PISONI: What are the figures for cases of abuse or neglect reported through teachers and the department?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think the member is technically wrong. I am not sure that one can classify mandatory reports in that way. If he is asking about mandatory reports, I think that might be a different question.

Mr PISONI: By way of clarification, I am not necessarily asking about mandatory reports. I am asking about reports full stop.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Well, I do not know which other reports there are. Maybe you could identify the budget line.

Mr PISONI: Well, it is clearly in your objectives.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Maybe you could identify the budget line that talks about non-mandatory reports.

Mr PISONI: Reporting to departments or to parents, or reporting to yourself, minister, is not something you expect schoolteachers to do if they suspect a child is being neglected or abused, or if they have general concerns about a child. You are not expecting to know about that; is that what you are saying?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I would be very shocked if anyone who was trained in mandatory reporting believed that they made the mandatory report to the minister for education, and I would be even more surprised if anyone who had been through a mandatory reporting training program believed they made a mandatory report to the parents of the child. I am sorry, but you will have to rephrase the question.

Mr PISONI: It is quite clear in your objectives, minister. It states:

The main focus of these services will be to ensure that children and students have the opportunity to maximise their potential and aspirations and productivity and responsibility to participate in and contribute to society.

So, you are saying that, unless something qualifies under the mandatory reporting process, you are not interested? Is that what you are saying?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am saying that mandatory reports do not go to the minister for education or to the child's family. I just would like to clarify what you are asking about. If you want me to list how many phone calls have been made to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs or the Premier's department, or refer to a letter that has been written by one department to another, or a letter from a local school to the local council about parking, is that a report? I just need to know what you mean, because mandatory reports are very precise and specific and relate to certain issues and are carried out in a certain way. Mandatory reports are not made to the minister for education.

Mr PISONI: I would have thought that, in a civil society, if there were concerns about a child at school, that is, if they were struggling or if there appeared to be a struggle in the family situation, or if they were having difficulties and continually turning up late, or if they looked malnourished or as though they were being neglected, that would be reported. What do you do with those students and how many mandatory reports have been made?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Well, you do not necessarily make a mandatory report. I think you need to understand the issues.

Mr PISONI: Well, tell us what you do.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: You need to understand the issues and, until you are able to articulate—

Mr PISONI: No, tell us what you do.

The CHAIR: Order! You cannot have a discussion with the minister as if you are in a bar. This is parliament. You ask your question, you make your reference to the budget, and the minister answers. It is not a chance for you to get your face on TV: it is about having some real debate in terms of asking questions. The minister is trying to answer, and you are speaking over her. The minister.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think the member is not articulating his concern clearly enough for us to be able to answer with clarity. If the member is talking about being late, my perception is that teachers would not make a mandatory report just because a child was late for school. Goodness! I would have been reported many times, because my children, I regret to say, were often late for school. The issue has to be that lateness is a warning sign about a range of issues. Unlike the federal Liberal government that we have just seen the demise of, and the previous Liberal government in South Australia, this government has been very focussed on school retention and engagement.

One of the issues we have identified is that persistent lateness is often a precursor to a child dropping out of school, and it is often a sign of disengagement. So, we have had a real focus on not only school retention and engagement but also repeated lateness. We would often recognise lateness as a sign that a child is beginning to fail at school, that they are disengaged and it is a risk factor. It is one of the areas that would provoke some of our school retention actions that are designed to stop children dropping out of school.

But just being late itself does not, I think, justify a mandatory report, unless it reflects a pattern of repeated movements between schools, itinerant activity and other warning signs. I do not think that on its own it is a cause for a mandatory report, although we do have a whole series of processes in place for late attendance. We do have targets and we do speak, through the individual schools, the teachers and the districts, about recognising this as an early warning sign.

Mr PISONI: Perhaps I could ask the minister to advise the committee as to what is required to be mandatorily reported. What situations are teachers trained in, and are they trained to recognise—

Ms FOX: Yes, they are.

Mr PISONI: Well, it is not working, is it, Chloe?

The CHAIR: Order!

Ms Fox interjecting:

Mr PISONI: We know you miss teaching and we are doing everything we can to get you back there. My question is: will the minister explain what falls under the criteria of mandatory reporting, and how many mandatory reports have you had?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am very happy to explain to the member that he should avoid insulting our teaching profession. I have a very thick skin and I am used to his barbs and his bad behaviour and I can tolerate that, but I do think it is incumbent upon him, if he would pretend to be an alternate minister for education or have aspirations in that direction, that he learn that it is not appropriate for ministers for education, potential ministers for education or aspiring ministers for education to be so rude about the teaching profession.

I would remind the member that when the Liberal government was last in office in South Australia it failed in its duty in terms of police checks and making sure that mandatory reporting was in place—

Mr PISONI: I have a point of order. This is about what this government is doing. This is clearly a question about—

The CHAIR: Member for Unley, I do not uphold your point of order because in asking the question you threw in about a good 20 minutes worth of comment. As I said to you earlier, if you do

not want comment in your answer, if you do not want debate in your answer, offer no debate or comment in your question. You cannot expect the minister to sit there and take your comments and debate and not respond. She is a politician and you are a politician, so what do you think she is going to do? So, it is up to you, member for Unley. You get what you dish out. It is very simple. If you want an orderly proceeding where you get facts and figures and actually learn something, we can have that but, if you want debate, the minister will give you a debate. You cannot have it both ways. It is that simple. You are yelling out across the chamber that things are not working, so what do you think the minister is going to do?

Mr PISONI: Thank you, sir. If the minister does not want to answer the question—

The CHAIR: There you go again.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I believe that the systems we have in place for training teachers to be involved in the mandatory reporting process, the fact that we will not allow our teachers to be registered unless they have been through a mandatory reporting training program, the fact that we require them to have updates regularly, the fact that we run programs for everyone involved with children within schools and the fact that we have invested substantially may not have come to the member for Unley's notice, because I realise that he has only recently come into this position and he may not be aware of the history in this area.

I think it is incumbent upon the member not to be disrespectful to our teachers because they teach all of our children and they are very important people within our community. I would counsel him to be a little more courteous. But for the details of how and where mandatory reports are made—because I now begin to understand that, even though the member for Unley was somewhat confused, he actually wants to focus on mandatory reports—I would ask either Ms Andrews or—

Mr PISONI: There is no confusion. I just want to know the number of mandatory reports in the past 12 months.

Mr ROBINSON: If I can make a couple of points. The department, at both school level and at district office level, undertakes a range of activities around any cases that arise where there are concerns about a student or their well-being. That is often triggered, in the first instance, by a lack of attendance at school without explanation or prior arrangement with the school. Of course, as was stated, we train all of our teaching staff, and other staff who have frontline dealings with parents and students, and require them to report any issues of abuse and neglect to the correct authorities. That will be made on a case by case basis, because obviously the circumstances can be quite different in each case.

In the recent well publicised cases our staff did make mandatory reports about children involved in those families, and the procedures were followed properly in those cases. We do put in more individual support once we have identified a situation. We have an individual learning plan with students; we follow up with their learning. If there is any suspicion of abuse or neglect coming from the families, those incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities.

Mr PISONI: How many in the past 12 months?

Mr ROBINSON: We will have to take that on notice, because we do not have those figures to hand.

Mr PISONI: In his answer to the question, Mr Robinson referred to the special learning programs, and I am happy for that to be taken on notice as well. I would like to know how many students are involved in those special learning programs.

Mr ROBINSON: We—

The CHAIR: Order! Advisers will not answer questions unless they are so directed by the minister.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Can the member clarify which plans he is talking about?

Mr PISONI: Mr Robinson referred to individual learning plans for students who were being mandatorily reported. I would like to know how many of those are in place as well as how many mandatory reports have been made in the last 12 months.

I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.18, Subprogram 3.1, 'Student misbehaviour management program', and the trial program for teachers, 'Your classroom—safe, orderly and productive'. A recent Flinders University study reported more than 2,400 cases of student misbehaviour, such as student violence towards other students and threatening of teachers at

Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth East and Elizabeth Park primary schools. What is the number of violent incidents resulting in injuries to and/or WorkCover claims by teachers and staff over the past 12 months?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I believe the member is condensing two issues. There are often research papers that have varying degrees of reality and various points of time they study; they also use different criteria. However, I think it is true to say that we have invested very significantly in behaviour management, employing extra coordinators, funding local strategies and interventions for students at risk—

Mr PISONI: I have a point of order, standing order 128. The question was quite clear: what have been the number of violent incidents resulting in injuries to or WorkCover claims by teachers and staff over the past 12 months?

The CHAIR: The minister was beginning to answer the question. I do not uphold the point of order.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think it is important to recognise that there were two parts to the question. The introduction talked about episodes and a research paper, and I am going serially through the questions and trying to answer them in good faith. If the member does not want me to respond to other parts of his question, perhaps he should not give those elements of the question before he actually asks it.

The behaviour management strategy is a very important part of supporting teachers in the workplace, and we recognise that safety in work is a very important element of their wellbeing. In terms of WorkCover activity, over time we have had a very dramatic improvement in the number of new workers compensation claims—in fact, it has continued to decline from 1,192 in 2003-04 to 1,135 in 2004-05; 1,093 in 2005-06; and 964 in 2006-07. Indeed, in one of those periods the decrease was 11.8 per cent. So, claims have actually reduced over that time.

In terms of behaviour management, that is only one of the strategies. As I said earlier, behaviour management is also dependent upon some of the physical infrastructure around the school, on the skills and experience of teachers, and also on some of the special measures we have to exclude individuals from school grounds—because I think some of the episodes to which the member was alluding do not, in fact, relate to students. There has also been a reduction in the number of children who have been excluded through behavioural issues.

The vast majority of our students are diligent, hard-working and fine young people; however, traditionally there has been a small percentage of young people who have behaved less well. In term 2 of 2007, 2.6 per cent of DEC's population of students were suspended, and 0.14 per cent were excluded—

Mr PISONI: I have a point of order, under standing order 128. The question was quite clearly very specific: what has been the number of violent incidents—

The CHAIR: I do not uphold the point of order. The minister is explaining the background to your question; she is explaining the background to the policy and she is answering your question.

Mr PISONI: She is talking about student suspensions, sir.

The CHAIR: You will not debate with me about this; it is not a debate between the Chair and the member for Unley. I have made my ruling.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The 2.6 per cent of students who, I explained, were suspended and the 0.14 per cent who were excluded amounted to 4,355 student episodes for the suspensions and 245 students for the exclusions. About one in three of those involved episodes of violence.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I would like to go back to the question raised by Mr Gunn. Can the minister confirm that the government's own figures provided to the Australian Education Union show that, under the student-centred funding model proposed by the government, 127 primary schools will be losers, 13 junior primary schools will be losers, seven Aboriginal schools will be losers, 15 combined area schools will be losers, and 13 high schools will be losers?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I do not think the member for Davenport was listening, because I explained that was not what the data showed. I explained quite clearly that the data explained that, in a snapshot of enrolments in 2006, had there been a funding model changed without extra money, on the enrolments on that day the changes would have been as predicted on

the document. However, the funding model we propose to introduce has \$2.7 million of extra funding to prevent unexpected changes, and it has \$16 million of extra funding which will provide 165 extra teachers. The problem with the debate about the documentation is that the member has chosen to look at half the information but not the other half. You cannot take half the information and extrapolate a different result, and I take exception to his view that any of our schools are losers.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: To follow on, will the minister confirm that the figures given by the government to the union were using 2006 student numbers and 2008 financials, did those figures show that the loss by those about 170 schools would be \$7 million, and is what the government is offering up only \$2.7 million? Is that correct?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I have explained previously that the present model is highly unpredictable and unfair. If a school loses a couple of students it can lose a whole teacher, which might amount to \$100,000 worth of funding. The issue remains that in the proposal the schools when they lose a couple of students will keep the money and a pro rata proportion of the funding, so that schools will have more teachers when their enrolments fall below the barrier because the school principal will have the power to use the pro rata funding instead of waiting to employ a teacher when they hit the barrier of an extra teacher allocation.

I am surprised that the member for Davenport would want to put the power back in the hands of the union. I am surprised that he would want the unions to choose when teachers are employed. We believe that the principals and school communities should make decisions about school staff recruitment.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Does that mean 170 schools should have less funding?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am surprised that the Liberal opposition would want the power to employ teachers being in the hands of the union.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I never said that. Mr Chairman, she is misrepresenting me. Can she show me anywhere in *Hansard* where the opposition said that—anywhere? I challenge the minister.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Anywhere in *Hansard*?

The CHAIR: Order! This is getting out of hand. When members on either side ask a question filled with comment, they are going to get a response of equal calibre, if not better—I do not know. It is a bit rich members complaining when they get a shot back at them. If you want a straight answer, ask a straight question. If you load a question you will get a loaded answer: it is very simple and only fair. If we want to uphold standing orders I would have ruled almost all your questions out of order and would pull the minister up all the time. But, since I am a generous and patient man, I am allowing you to ask your politically loaded questions and allowing the minister to answer in the same way. If you want a straight estimates, ask for facts and figures without political bias and comment in your question and you will get a straight answer from the minister. It is very simple: you cannot have it both ways.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The current system relies on predicted and not actual enrolments. Our system gives actual funding to actual children and is the system requested by school principals. It has been requested by primary school principals, by secondary school principals and by the organisations that are the representative bodies for school councils. It has been requested by parents and communities. In fact, the only groups that do not support giving power to the principals and the communities is the AEU and the Liberal opposition.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: On a point of order, sir, I bring to your attention that comment and I challenge the minister to show any—

The CHAIR: There is no point of order.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: —to show anywhere where the Liberal opposition has made that statement. If she cannot produce it, I bring to your attention a possible misleading of the house today. The minister—

The CHAIR: Order! The member is now asking for the house to be recalled, is he? Is he asking to end the estimates and recall the house?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No, I am bringing it to your attention so the minister has all day to correct the record.

The CHAIR: Order! If the honourable member wishes to accuse the minister of misleading the house, there are appropriate forums for you to do that: he can do it by deliberative motion, can inform the Speaker or ask to raise a matter of privilege. There is no opportunity in estimates to do that other than by recalling the house. If the member for Davenport wishes to do that, the Speaker is here and we can do it tomorrow, if he wishes. I will not uphold the point of order. If he wishes to do something further, he can do so in the house.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The point I have been making is that the current system is quite unfair and unpredictable and the system we have proposed as part of our negotiation will bring a level of certainty and give more control to principals. The evidence we have had from school principals, school parent groups and council groups is that the proposed system is fairer, more equitable, more predictable and less challenging for the leadership in schools. Whilst the AEU is opposing this reform—and I am surprised that the Liberal opposition would take its part on this—

Mr PISONI: On a point of order—

The CHAIR: I do not uphold it.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I continue to be surprised that the opposition would not see that, if the principals, parent groups and councils want this reform, and it offers more predictability, it would not be in the best interests of children because it actually funds schools not according to predictions but according to actual children, and gives the actual children a per capita allocation of teaching time. This means, as I explained to the member for Stuart, that a school that might lose one or two children and would face losing a whole teacher, will now get, pro rata, a proportion of that teacher's time available to be spent and a teacher employed within that school. That gives power to the principals.

This is one of the issues that we feel strongly about. Since coming to government we have made several reforms in the employment and advertising of principals' positions. We have made a dramatic reform in employment in that we now require teachers to have interviews and reference checks—dramatic reforms in many ways. I do not know whether the Liberal opposition supports those reforms, but I would be surprised if it took the part of the AEU and supported keeping a funding system that is unfair, unpredictable and not wanted by parents and principals.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I wish to make a personal explanation, Mr Chair. The minister has alleged that I am asking—

The CHAIR: Order! This is a committee of the parliament, not the parliament. There is no standing order—

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.18. Can the minister explain to me how it benefits Bellevue Heights Primary School, in my electorate, to be \$150,000 worse off under her proposed funding model? That is why I am asking the question, Mr Chair. How does it help the Bellevue Heights Primary School to be \$150,000 a year worse off under the minister's proposed funding scheme? It is one of 170 schools that are looking at funding cuts under the proposed scheme. It is a legitimate question to ask on behalf of the public of South Australia.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It seems to me that the member has been happy to take part of the information and extrapolate something that is not a reflection of the other half of the information. As I explained before, the data upon which the discussion and the model were based relates to the enrolment situation in 2006.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: In 2008 funding.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The modelling was taken as a way of demonstrating how the new funding model would work if no extra dollars were put in. The extra dollars were offered. It is an extrapolation, with half the information and half the facts, to produce something that is not accurate.

I repeat: the current system is inequitable and it is unfair: if you lose two or three students, you will lose a whole teacher. The proposed system will give, pro rata, maybe nine-tenths or 90 per cent of a teacher's salary to that school, rather than its losing a whole staff member.

Small schools can experience erratic and unpredictable changes in enrolment. If a small school's enrolment is falling, we are happy to help the member and help to introduce extra programs to recruit students, such as new arrivals, or something of that sort. There is a whole range of ways to improve enrolment in small schools, and that happens across the state. We are happy to help the member with that.

The reality is that our funding model has been backed up with 165 extra teacher salaries—I repeat: 165 extra teacher salaries—and extra funding to make sure that there are no unpredictable losses. It seems to me that it is inequitable in the current system whereby two extra students give you an extra teacher and two lost students lose you a whole teacher when it is such a marginal difference.

In fact, that money will now follow the students. The money will stick with the students and they will stick with the school. The most important innovation is that power remains with the principal, not the union. The power is retained within the school, and the principal can decide whom they appoint and when.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.18: Student Behaviour Management Program, particularly cyber bullying. A pamphlet was released, entitled 'Cyber bullying, e-crime and the protection of children'. It is interesting that we are talking about cyber bullying, yet we are sending out paper pamphlets, and that we are the only state that does not have a website about cyber bullying: all other states have a website. My question is: what are the statistics on the reports of cyber bullying in our school system in the past 12 months? Have we seen an increase? Other than the brochure, what has been put in place to deal with it?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am pleased to tell the member that we were the first state to identify the scourge of cyber bullying. It was something that we identified first across the nation. We have worked very closely with the private sector because we recognise that many of these issues are not related to public or private schools separately: they occur across sectors.

We have been very clear that this is a difficult emerging and moving area, and often many such areas are where parents are caught on the back foot, so to speak, whereby they are not aware of what is happening within their home. They may not have thought of supervising the computer use of their children. They may not realise that the mobile phone their child has in their possession is used at night and throughout the weekend. Many of the issues involving cyber bullying can be improved by good teaching within schools, but they cannot be eradicated because more of a child's life is spent in their parents' domain than within the control of the school.

So, the issues related to cyber bullying impact the home and the community and can be resolved only with a very close relationship with families and local communities. We have worked closely with the police, with mental health, with ministers from other portfolios and also with the non-government sector.

I have recently asked the Coalition Against Bullying, which includes the Catholic, the non-government sector and the independent school sector, to look at some other issues to do with cyber bullying. They were given this initiative to look at some time ago, but I think cyber bullying has changed somewhat in the last few months. I think we have seen an increase in young people using their mobile phones in intimidatory and bullying situations.

Sometimes those mobile phones are used to enhance and increase the level of violence. They are used almost as a provocation. Occasionally they are used as a way of producing a funny movie, rather than just recording a violent episode, and I think sometimes some of the activities are real and some of them are portrayed and acting. There is a whole range of different scenarios.

The bullying element comes in, of course, when those films are put on the web and, of course, our schools do not allow that to occur within their premises. We do not allow those websites that take these films to be accessed from our school's computers. We have bars and ways of preventing that from happening, which just highlights the fact that a lot of this happens out of hours.

It is not something that is within the direct control or the domain of a schoolteacher although, as with many social issues, the school does have a capacity to have curriculum and training and teaching, and a lot of that depends of course on the more generic values. I am always impressed when I go to schools to find how often schoolchildren can recite with alacrity and enthusiasm their school values, and it happens across the electorates of each of the members here; even the member for Unley would know that his public schools have values that they articulate very plainly. I think the same is often said in the non-government sector as well. But the issues are huge, in that parents need to understand about bullying, and a lot of our effort is about educating parents, as much as anything else, to recognise the signs of bullying: changes in habits, changes in study achievements, changes in sleep patterns, coming home from school with a different demeanour, perhaps not having eaten—a whole range of issues that can be identified.

We have also gone some way to mainstream the particular target groups because I think it is fair to say that those who are bullied may be the run-of-the-mill average student and they often are, but perhaps more often they are an unusual student: unusual because of their ethnic background, because they are very bright or a little slow, because they are of a different build or because they are of a different gender persuasion. There is a whole range of issues that highlight a child as being different.

We have mainstreamed to some extent some of these different groups. We have highlighted issues to do with disabled children as well and made sure that teachers are aware that the most likely child to be bullied is one that is different. We need to have strategies in place to deal with each of these cohorts, because probably the strategies need to be different for each of them. I know we do have online material and DVDs, but I am very happy to look at the websites. Of course, within a federation if something is on the web it is available across the whole country and I am not of a mind to reinvent the wheel, and if there are good websites against bullying in other states, I hope that we can access them here.

Certainly I do know that this is not an issue that is identified solely in South Australia. We are working across the nation with an organisation called the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to develop a more safe cyber environment for our children. I think it is worth remembering that these are issues that affect the whole of the Western world—and probably the non-Western world—and, in fact, South Australia was the first to identify cyber bullying and name it as such in our country.

Mr PISONI: So you obviously do not record, because you cannot give me any numbers of reports?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am sorry, I did not give you the numbers; I got carried away with the discussion. We do not keep numbers on these matters, but I know that the police do, because I have seen those figures somewhere. I do not believe they come as a report to me, but I know that the police do publish data on these issues, and we will see if we can obtain them for you.

Mr PISONI: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.18: the 'Performance Commentary' lists 'Broad strategic plan literacy and numeracy targets and examples': where do the schools of the forgotten north, such as Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth East and Elizabeth Park Primary Schools, fit in here? Are they receiving the same percentages that you are listing in those performance targets? What information can you provide about the results in those schools, and what steps are you taking to ensure that they are reaching the same percentages?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am delighted to hear that the member for Unley is interested in literacy results. Certainly, when we introduced our \$35 million literacy package, which continues as more than \$10 million per annum, four years ago there was ridicule. I remember that the then opposition spokesperson on education ridiculed the Reading Challenge and no doubt found herself out on a limb, because it has proved to be one of the most popular initiatives of this government.

Parents are quite rightly aware of the fact that literacy is a marker for achievement in life, and we have identified the basics as being the ones that money and time should be invested in. Certainly getting back to basics is one of the issues that is quite difficult within the education system, because always there is an idea that we should be dealing with bullying, entrepreneurial activity, car driving, road safety—a whole range of somewhat peripheral issues that can tend to crowd out the curriculum even in primary schools.

We have had a very strong view that we should get back to basics and deal with core business, and that is literacy and numeracy, and our focus on literacy in the early years is indeed paying off. Interestingly, we have not just put the money into junior primary school (because that is, of course, when children learn to read mostly): we have also put significant funds into preschool because we recognise that preschools teach pre-literacy. I am not talking about hot-housing or investing in teaching toddlers how to write. I am talking about the identification of shapes, sizes and contours, which are very important to the pre-literacy skills of a child.

We have trained all of our kindy teachers in pre-literacy. We have trained staff in running records which identify pre-literacy skills in the early years, and we have trained staff in reading recovery. We have put literacy and numeracy results on the performance agreements of our staff, and we have a regional and district focus on literacy skills.

It comes as no surprise to those here that, of course, literacy and numeracy skills are very important, and parents have grasped this with extraordinary enthusiasm. That is why the Premier's

Reading Challenge has been, as I said, one of the most significantly successful activities in the term of our government. In its fourth year, this challenge has been an amazing success, with 748 schools participating—that is a massive 93 per cent of both government and non-government schools that would be eligible.

In 2007, over 100,000 students completed the challenge—a 10 per cent increase on the year before. On top of that, in the first year, 86 Aboriginal students from the APY lands completed the challenge for the first time, and we have raised the number of participating Aboriginal students across the state to 2,278—a 22 per cent increase on the year before. That has not occurred by accident; it is because we looked at the result, saw where we were underperforming, and went out and made sure that the program was promoted, and we recruited. In addition, one would realise that now that we have gone through the initial certificate—bronze, silver and gold—we will be moving on to 'legends' and 'hall of fame' status, because the children want to do it for longer.

The reading challenge is part of our focus on literacy and numeracy. I have to say that it definitely has been paying off. I must pay tribute to our teachers in all schools, because in years 3, 5 and 7 the 2007 literacy and numeracy tests were the highest results on record since tests were introduced a decade ago. The 2007 state literacy and numeracy test results in government schools show the highest ever mean scores in literacy and numeracy at years 5 and 7 and the second highest in year 3. They also show that significantly more students in years 3, 5 and 7 achieve results in the highest skill band in literacy and similar results in numeracy at years 5 and 7. I think our massive investment has paid off.

I refer to some of the suburbs that the member wishes to target. I resent his inference that these are forgotten suburbs. He may not go there very often and know much about them, but they are part of the constituencies of many of our members, and they are the focus of a significant amount of attention. The reality is that educational outcome tends to shadow family income and the academic achievements of parents. It comes as no surprise that in the disadvantaged suburbs there is a tendency—not one that we should accept—to perform less well; and we have particularly focused on those suburbs with extra funds and resources.

[Sitting suspended from 12:48 to 13:50]

Membership:

The Hon. L. Stevens substituted for Mrs Geraghty.

Mr PISONI: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5, Targets and Highlights: Premier's Be Active Challenge. Has the minister found that the name change from Be Active—Let's Go to the Premier's Be Active Challenge, and cutting the annual funding from \$4 million per annum to \$425,000, has helped children at our public schools to engage in more physical activity?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The member for Unley, once again, persists in saying that funding has been cut. The funding allocation, which was a time-limited allocation, reached the end of its period. It was extended for an extra year but, in reality, the Be Active grants gave small sums of money for schools to create programs, train staff, and buy bats and balls. The reality is that it was always known to schools (which applied for and used those grants) that it was a short-term program. Once teachers had been trained in those new teaching methods, or balls and bats had been bought, there was no expectation that it would be ongoing.

Subsequently, following the introduction and huge success of the Premier's Reading Challenge, we thought we would try another initiative. Much as the member for Unley might like to think that everything that was done by the previous government was right, or everything done by any government was right, my observation is that if we knew how to prevent obesity there would be no fat children. The reality is that nothing that has been done to date has had a profound impact on the growing issues of obesity, ill health, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, coronary artery disease, cancer related to obesity, or the morbidity problems that relate to overeating and bad diet.

So, in fairness, we decided that what had been done before needed to be adopted in a new wave of reform and change. Part of the attack on obesity was, of course, to ban junk food in canteens. I know that some people would rather we carried on selling unhealthy, greasy, salty, fatty crisps and chemical-laden doughnuts and all sorts of appalling foods that are bad for children, but

we believe that parents want the best for their children and would not want profits to go before good health.

Our healthy eating guidelines, our Right Bite strategy, the Minister for Health's investment in the early years food production, both in child care and kindy, and our Be Active Challenge are new ways for new times. On top of that, the Minister for Health is investing in the EPODE strategy which, I think, has the capacity to be one of the biggest reforms in that it does not tackle schools solely as the arbiters of good eating habits and it does not expect teachers to effect community standards in health; it actually works with families and the whole community—through the commercial sector, producers, restaurants and community education—to provide a healthy network. I am sure that the member for Bright will again welcome our visiting French colleagues who have been helping us train for this initiative.

The Be Active Challenge (which those on the opposite benches have so clearly sought to denigrate) is a new way of looking at these issues. Last year 7,500 students completed the challenge and those numbers have almost trebled this year. As we found with the Premier's Reading Challenge, it takes a while for children in schools to become committed to these initiatives, but the rate of growth has been very dramatic.

Part of our strategy is to again use ambassadors. We know how much children like role models—good role models, healthy role models—so we have Natalie von Bertouch and Ryan Fitzgerald (who, I must say, demonstrates extraordinary charisma in the schoolyard), as well as Warren Tredrea. These sorts of ambassadors go into our schools and support the Be Active Challenge, encouraging young people to keep moving. However, the challenge of health, diet and obesity is much more complex than some people would have us believe.

Mr PISONI: I refer again to the same budget line, Targets and Highlights: Premier's Be Active Challenge. The budget gives a figure of 7,457 (you slightly exaggerated it previously, minister) students from reception to year 9 completing the challenge, which equates to 6 per cent of the 130,000 students in our government schools in reception to year 9. So, what we see here as a highlight for the government is a physical education program completed by less than 6 per cent of eligible students, which is actually computer-based (not that active), is available to a limited number of schools, and runs for only 10 weeks of a school year. In your budget papers you have a column for targets and one for highlights; I suggest you might need one for embarrassments as well.

The CHAIR: Again, the question is full of comment.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I have to say that the member likes to spread vitriol and ill-will across public education schools. He likes to undermine and, by abusive attacks, intimidate our teachers, children and families who seek the best for their children. In fact, when we have volunteers and ambassadors he besmirches their reputations as well by attacking our great sporting heroes. He does himself no credit, as his predecessor (when she was the member representing the opposition in the areas of education and children's services) did herself no credit in attacking those many families who loved the Reading Challenge.

The reality is that 20,000 students this year are enrolled in the Be Active challenge. That has trebled from last year, and we are optimistic that those numbers will grow. Programs are not compulsory; we do not believe in compelling children to be involved in all activities. They have compulsory hours of activity as part of the SACS framework, which predicates how much activity there should be within the school week. This is additional; it is on top of their normal sports activity. It is not just about those traditional sports; it is occurring in a range of activities which are likely to be life skills. Much as those of us who love sport might wish to think otherwise, not every individual wants to be an elite athlete or be involved in competitive sport. Many people enjoy being mobile and active, and enjoy outdoor activities, and the good thing about this is that it is not only competitive sports that qualify.

Whilst the member for Unley might wish to denigrate the efforts of our teachers and our children, undermine the efforts of families to keep children healthy, and, while he is about it, insult private schools—non-government schools are involved in this program, as well—I think he should actually recognise that doing the same thing is not a good option in any line of institutional activity. In my book, it always works better if you assess what you have done before, admit it has not worked, and do different things.

Mr PISONI: Obviously, the best form of defence is attack, minister. You are very good at that.

The CHAIR: Order! I warn the member for Unley. The reason the minister is, in your words, 'attacking' is that you did the same in your questions. If you wish to stop this banter, simply ask questions without comment; it will all end, trust me.

Mr PISONI: Thank you, sir; I welcome your advice. I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 2.26, Expenditure and Savings Initiatives. Last year the budget had savings initiatives of \$170 million over four years, and we then saw a back-down by the government to impose a sum of \$17 million on schools for WorkCover. This year there are no savings initiatives, and \$25 million of savings over the forward estimates. Can the minister advise if the savings outlined in last year's budget have been realised, and what cuts were made to realise those savings?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: First, the member needs to get his terms more accurately defined. The Department of Education and Children's Services is a WorkCover-exempt body, so his comments regarding WorkCover are irrelevant and inaccurate.

The reality was that the suggested savings in the area of workers compensation were reversed, and that is not a savings strategy. However, having said that, I think any organisation of the size of the Department of Education and Children's Services has an obligation to treat its staff fairly, to support them when they are unable to work, and get them back to work as soon as possible. I have to say that I think our management of lost days has improved dramatically—I think they fell by almost 8,000 over the previous 12-month period—and the cost of claims has fallen. So, I think our management of workers compensation issues has improved, and that is a good thing.

Mr PISONI: Minister, the question was about savings. Last year the budget had savings initiatives of \$170 million over four years, and this year there are no savings initiatives and \$25 million of savings over the forward estimates. I am asking the minister if she can advise whether the savings outlined in last year's budget were realised, and what cuts were made to realise the savings.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The member is withdrawing. He spoke at some length about WorkCover; he talked about savings and he mentioned WorkCover. I explained that we are WorkCover-exempt and that we did not have to make those savings. We are not making savings this year, but we have come in more or less on budget this financial year, or very close to budget, so we believe we have managed this department and portfolio responsibly.

Mr PISONI: So, where is the \$25 million savings in the forward estimates coming from?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We will do more over the coming years. We have a budget of \$2.2 billion. I do not believe that any organisation of that size cannot find more effective ways of doing business. I think that, if it were your business that had a \$2.2 billion turnover, you would expect to find more effective ways of doing things. The more ways we find to do things effectively, the more money we can invest in teachers, schools and core business. I believe in finding any means possible to invest money appropriately and better and drive those dollars further.

Mr PISONI: So, have you identified the \$25 million savings in the forward estimates?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: There are many ways we will work on this matter. If the member turns to page 2.3, it states:

Details of the specific measures that will achieve the first tranche of savings from 2009-10 will be presented in the 2009-10 budget.

Mr PISONI: You cannot tell the committee now what the \$25 million savings in the forward estimates are going to be?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I appreciate that the member has not looked at a \$2.2 billion budget very closely or run one himself, but the reality is that \$25 million as a percentage of a \$2.2 billion budget is within the area that a good administration can cope with. Over the next couple of years, we will present that information in the budget.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.6: Education Works under highlights. Can the minister advise whether the government will insist that the privatised PPP project for super schools will carry monoline insurance?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I believe that you misunderstand the nature of our PPP procurement process. The education department has, of course, been integral in developing the education brief for the specific performance criteria for the buildings. We have committed to the size of the educational facility required and we have decided on the location and the elements that

are within and without scope, but I inform the member that the actual details of the tender selection process sit with the Treasurer.

Mr PISONI: So, you are not aware of contingencies in place, such as monoline insurance, to deal with a PPP consortium partner that is unable to deliver? What happens if a PPP—

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I explained to you quite clearly, and I will say it again slowly: the education department has dealt with the brief, the details and the requirement, because we are the end user, but the Treasurer is managing the tender process.

Mr PISONI: So, you have no involvement in the Education Works program?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The member might wish to twist my comments in that way, but I have just explained that we have set the parameters for the building works, and we have employed considerable effort in designing what we would like—without designing the building, that is—the parameters that will need to be met by the PPP successful tenderers.

There are three consortia still in the bidding, and the final decision will be made and the process of diligence will be worked through by the Treasurer's department. So, it would be appropriate if you redirected your questions about the specifics of those financial arrangements to the Treasurer.

Mr PISONI: Minister, you are putting out press releases every week about the government's super schools, and you are telling me that you cannot give me the details about how they are going to work? It is a major part of your budget, and you cannot tell me, first of all, whether you are able to get monoline insurance and, if not, what your contingencies are? I find it hard to believe that you cannot answer a simple question about insurance that is there to protect your interests as the Minister for Education dealing with a budget of \$2.2 billion under your own name. You have confirmed the size of your budget, yet you are telling me that you do not know anything about monoline insurance, which is a critical part of any PPP project.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I understand how the member for Unley worries about the profitability of the private sector and I would like to guarantee that they are properly insured—

Mr PISONI: This affects your budget, minister.

The CHAIR: The member has asked his question, so sit quietly and listen. Follow the example of the member for Stuart.

Mr PISONI: Thank you, sir, for your advice.

The CHAIR: Wisdom comes with time.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I repeat my response: I know it irks the member for Unley to imagine that I am not in control of the whole of cabinet business, and he would like me to manage everything, but it is not the way it works. Within a cabinet process, one divides up responsibilities. We understand quite clearly that the tram going to the Entertainment Centre belongs to the Minister for Transport, not the Minister for Tourism. The functioning of government is split, and any insurance programs related to the survival of the PPP proponents will be dealt with through the diligence of the Treasurer's department. If you want to ask about particulars of the financing, I respectfully advise you that you should ask the Treasurer.

Mr PISONI: Okay; I accept that you do not know the answer. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.6: Education Works, the provision of six new super schools. Minister, there is a counter trend away from larger schools in the United States and problems associated with discipline are emerging in larger UK comprehensive schools. For example, in the United States, the Bill and Belinda Gates Foundation alone has invested \$1.8 billion to assist in the opening of 1,000 smaller schools that accommodate 400 students. In view of the overseas experience, what has been done to prevent students from being lost in the crowd, becoming invisible or disengaged and to prevent our new super schools from becoming a rack 'em, stack 'em and pack 'em exercise?

The CHAIR: Minister, you have a pretty straight question there, with no comment or innuendo in it at all, so I am sure you will give an equally straight answer.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I realise the member for Unley has not visited many schools, and perhaps he needs to get out more, but he would understand that the most popular schools in our state are actually the larger ones. The member might like to realise that the ones with the waiting lists—

Members interjecting:

The CHAIR: Order! You are going to be on TV tonight; that is enough.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: —are the larger schools. Certainly, people tend to vote with their feet. The most popular schools in the state would be schools like Glenunga, even Unley, in the member's electorate, and Adelaide High, and they all have enrolments, in the secondary years, of more than 1,000. The second largest primary school in the state, from memory, might well be Burnside and then Woodcroft. Burnside has a very large number of students, and Woodcroft, again, is another large primary school with a waiting list.

The member for Unley seems to be caught on the rhetoric. Just because some people have wanted to call them super schools, the member for Unley misunderstands that as being some kind of enormous consortium or giant schools with thousands of children. I know that in some parts of the world there are schools with 8,000 or 10,000 students. Certainly, in the United States they have very large schools, much larger than anywhere in Australia. But perhaps the largest schools are the private schools, schools like Pembroke, which must have a couple of thousand students, and Trinity, which would have 3,000 or so; they are very popular schools with a very large enrolment.

If the member for Unley would like to listen, I will be able to tell him how big our new PPP schools are. The Gepps Cross Primary School, which goes from 0 to year 7, will have an enrolment of 485 children, including the children's centre. The State Sports Park will have several separate campuses. The girls only campus will have 400 students, whilst the coeducational secondary school will have 800, well below the level of enrolment of our most popular secondary schools. The largest of our schools will incorporate four separate campuses but will still have only 1,400 students.

The member might like to regard his rhetoric as the truth, and one imagines that he does not want the facts to get in the way of a good story. However, the reality is that these are not actually very large schools and are smaller than our most popular secondary schools, smaller than the state's most popular private schools and certainly much smaller than the models in the United States. I know the member does not want to hear this, but the facts do not support his assertions.

On top of that, in good large enrolment schools they break up the student cohort into small groups and campuses and, very often, they break those up again into groupings for houses or sports groupings. In fact, the member's fears are not justified and are based on inaccuracy. They are not substantiated in any way whatsoever.

Mr PISONI: I refer to the same budget line. Have you had advice that you may require principals with specialist expertise in discipline to deal with problems that may be identified in larger schools for kids in particular who may not be engaged in the school itself, or the education process?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I fear that you were not listening: I actually explained that these were not large schools. I do not know whether the member wants to suggest another line of questioning, but I think my response was that these are actually not very large schools.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, 8.6: Education works. Under the privatised super schools, will the minister advise what the new staffing formula for teachers and SSOs will be?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that the member really does need to check his rhetoric. We are not the ones who worked on privatising the TAFE system by corporatising it and getting it ready for sale. It is not this government that has forced the closure of schools. It is not this government that believes in privatising utilities. We are the government that has done none of that and, in fact, we have committed not to. We are the government that has reopened some of the schools that the former government closed. We are the government that has reversed the privatisation of hospitals. We are not privatising schools, even though the member would perhaps like them if they were, because I know that he is very supportive of private education. These are not privatised schools. The reality is that they are managed and staffed by government DECS staff.

Mr PISONI: So, the minister is not a supporter of private schools and choice in education; is that what she is implying?

The CHAIR: Can the member reference that to a budget line? No, he cannot. I rule that question out of order. I give the member a second warning.

Mr PISONI: I do send my kids to government schools, and the minister is aware of that. I am a strong supporter of choice in education and I have chosen the government sector. I refer to

the same budget paper, page 8.6: Supporting elements, healthy performing and accountable leadership. What classification will principals for the new super schools be employed under?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am pleased to say that we have already advertised for three of the new school principals, and I am optimistic that we will be going through a very good field of applications. As I understand it, these principals will be at the top scale of employment of principals, and I imagine these will be very popular appointments. I am optimistic that we will get good principals from this process.

Mr PISONI: Level 8; is that what you are referring to?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Depending on the type of schools, some are 8s and some are 6s.

Mr PISONI: What arrangements will be made for second-tier leadership, for example, the team below the principal?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Those matters will be resolved later. I do not know that we can comment yet. These schools do not exist at the moment. We are making the appointment ahead of the building because the building of the infrastructure is only part of the work that needs to be done. Clearly a massive amount of work will go into developing a school community, amalgamating school councils, devising the plan for the school and even getting to the stage of working out the name of the school and type of uniform that will be worn. All those issues will be worked out prior to all the staff being appointed, and that will be a very big ask over the next 18 months.

Mr PISONI: On the same budget line and reference: what will be the arrangements of ongoing tenure for SSOs, student counsellors and so on, with the closing of schools under the super schools plan?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The employment structures within the schools will be no different from that which we have currently in that there will be the same ratios. I do not believe you have mentioned this, but some people have worried that there will be different size classes, but that will not occur. We have a commitment: we are the government that reduced junior primary class sizes, so there will be no likely desire or impact in this direction. They will be employed under exactly the same terms as the rest of the system. They are members of DECS staff and will be treated in the same way, and all permanent staff will be offered jobs.

Mr PISONI: Permanent staff at a school to be closed will have a position elsewhere, whether they are counsellors, teachers or SSOs?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We do not treat staff differently. We give all our staff the tenure they have.

Mr PISONI: There will be no effect on tenure for the SSOs and school counsellors in particular?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: No.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.2, workforce summary, Department of Education and Children's Services. The 2007-08 estimated figure for FTEs is given at 20,691, or 954 more than the budget estimate of 19,737 in last year's budget papers. How many of those employees or full-time equivalents over and above the budgeted number are classroom teachers?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: There is an anomaly with the way these staffing numbers are estimated: I understand they are a head count. There are differences in the counts between the annual report and the budget. The annual report is the head count on a particular day, so it fluctuates depending on whether the day counted is in the middle of a flu epidemic, in which case you have appointed extra people, so there are some anomalies in the numbers. I can give the number of teachers: primary teachers, 7,610; and secondary teachers, 5,115.

Mr PISONI: So the rest of the staff are made up of what?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We have preschool staff, 644; and SSOs and a range of other staff as well.

Mr PISONI: You spoke about head counts, but the budget refers to FTEs.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: That is in the budget. The annual report often produces different numbers because they are a snapshot in time.

Mr PISONI: I am talking about the budget.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I was explaining why the numbers are so different, in case you are confused.

Mr PISONI: There is no confusion, minister. I was not comparing the numbers between the annual report and the budget: I was comparing the estimated result and the budget estimate from last year. I did not mention the annual report at all.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am trying to explain why the numbers are always different. It is very difficult to track the numbers because we have a very mobile, part casualised, part temporary and fluid large workforce, so the numbers often fluctuate quite dramatically. Can you clarify the question?

Mr PISONI: There is an estimated result of full-time employees for the 2007-08 year of 20,697, which is 954 more than the budget estimate from last year's budget papers. It says 'full-time equivalents' (not 'head count'), so I am trying to determine how many of those 954 who are over the budget estimate are classroom teachers.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: You mean the estimated result?

Mr PISONI: The estimated result of FTEs is given at 20,694. The budgeted estimate in last year's budget was 954 fewer.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Was it 19,737?

Mr PISONI: That is correct. Of that 954 who have come in over the estimated budget amount, how many are classroom teachers?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The estimated result for 2007-08 was 20,691. Is that the difference between the numbers you want?

Mr PISONI: Yes. If we take 19,737 away from 20,694, it gives us 954 budgeted.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I don't think that's true.

Mr PISONI: I am trying to determine how many of those 954 were classroom teachers.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I will ask Mr DeGennaro to answer that because I think you are presuming something that may not be true.

Mr DeGENNARO: To clarify, last year's budget papers, which are being referred to, show 19,737 and do not include workers compensation or long service leave employees. The figure of 20,691 on page 8.2 of this year's budget papers, through changed requirements for definitions, now includes the number of workers compensation and long service leave employees, which is a reasonably significant number.

Mr PISONI: It is 954.

Mr DeGENNARO: I do not have the precise detail with me, but it is several hundred on long service and other types of leave, given the size of our workforce.

Mr PISONI: Where were the 954 people on WorkCover last year? Where were they?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: There has been an accounting change.

Mr PISONI: It is an accounting change, but they must have been counted somewhere. Where were they counted last year?

Mr DeGENNARO: As I said earlier, in last year's figures they were not included in the definition for that number, so they were not published in that number.

Mr PISONI: Where were they included, minister? Where were those on WorkCover? Where were they last year?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It is an accounting change.

Mr PISONI: It is all very well say to say that it is an accounting figure.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Well, it is.

Mr PISONI: We know it is an accounting change.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: You may not like it, but it is.

Mr PISONI: Changed from where? Changed from what?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: You might not like it, but it is true.

Mr PISONI: I think it is a reasonable question. A significant number of people (954) were not on the books last year but are on the books this year, and you say that it is due to an accounting change.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It is.

Mr PISONI: That doesn't make any sense at all.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: You might not like the answer, but it is true.

Mr PISONI: Where were they last year? I think it is a fair enough question.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: They are still there. Don't worry; they are okay.

Mr PISONI: But where were they counted?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: They were there; don't worry.

Mr PISONI: But where were they counted.

The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Kenyon): I think we have probably gone about as far as we can with this question.

Mr PISONI: I will make it easy for you, minister, and put the question on notice. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.18: Investing Payments Summary. The summary shows a total spend on new work this year of only \$1.9 million. It sounds as though you are ripping the guts out of our schools for the super schools. It indicates that some of these works are funded by the commonwealth. How much of the commonwealth's share is in that funding?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that the member is really being quite offensive. We have spent \$790 million on school infrastructure since we were elected. In that sum, we have increased consistently \$2 million a year extra in terms of maintenance. We have made a significant School Pride investment, and we have taken out more asbestos than ever before. There have been very significant investments in infrastructure.

In the next year, we have 14 projects worth \$40.2 million, so the member's assertion about there not being capital works investment is clearly not true. We will find the budget line and explain it for him. I will ask Ms Riedstra if she will explain how the member is in error in his interpretation of the figures.

Ms RIEDSTRA: Could I have the budget reference again?

Mr PISONI: It is page 8.18, New Works.

Ms RIEDSTRA: The figure is \$1.903 million.

Mr PISONI: The sum of \$1.9 million is to be expended this year on new capital works.

Ms RIEDSTRA: That is the first year's cash flow for the new works that have been announced this year—just the first year's cash flow.

Mr PISONI: Yes; I understand that—\$1.9 million.

Ms RIEDSTRA: Out of a total cost of \$40 million.

Mr PISONI: It is also indicated that some of the works are funded by the commonwealth. What is the commonwealth's share?

Ms RIEDSTRA: The estimated contribution from the commonwealth in 2008 is \$20 million.

Mr PISONI: So, you have \$20 million for these new projects, but you are spending only \$1.9 million this year.

Ms RIEDSTRA: No; the \$20 million is across our whole program, so it can be across—

Mr PISONI: So, of the \$70 million presented in the budget, \$20 million is commonwealth money; is that right? The \$70 million, which is in the new and existing work and which is being expended during the budget in the forward estimates, and work that has fallen behind and you are catching up on in the budget—

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: This is new work.

Mr PISONI: Does the \$20 million mean that the state's contribution of the \$70 million you boast about is only \$50 million?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am not sure what you are talking about. You just said that we were talking about \$1.9 million; now you are talking about \$70 million and \$20 million.

Mr PISONI: The sum of \$1.9 million is being spent on new work this year. That is what your budget papers tell us.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I don't think that is—

Mr PISONI: No; your budget papers tell us that. It is not a matter of yes or no: that is what the budget papers state. We have just been told that \$20 million of the expenditure on capital works has come from the commonwealth. You issued a press release that states that \$70 million is being spent on capital expenditure in the education program. I am simply trying to determine how much is being spent. I have had confirmed that only \$1.9 million is being spent this year and that only \$50 million of that \$70 million is your money, minister. The rest of it is commonwealth money.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I have to say that I would like to think it were my money but it is not: it is the community's money. The budget has always been framed in the same way. You might not like the way it is framed, but the announcements about capital investment have always incorporated and acknowledged those funds given by the commonwealth. The point you are making that we are—you said ripping the guts out of something or other; I cannot quite remember—investing only \$1.9 million in capital is not correct.

Mr PISONI: I didn't say that, minister. I said spending this year is \$1.9 million—it is quite clear.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The issue is that when you announce a new project, much as one would like to turn the sword and open the doors within one financial year, it mostly takes much longer because you have to go through consultations, deal with architects, deal with planning issues and utilities, and the reality is that they do take several years. I think most capital works projects take two to three years and so, with the best will in the world, if you announce capital works you spend very little in the first year. The bulk of the expenditure is in the second or third year.

Mr PISONI: But is it not misleading to put out a press release saying that you are spending \$70 million this year in capital expenditure when the bulk of that expenditure is on projects that should have been finished six months earlier, have been in the pipeline or have been worked on for a number of years previously?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that the member is confusing several areas of expenditure. Clearly, we expend about \$12 million a year on maintenance, which comes up every year. Clearly, we have major projects where there are delays for various reasons, and they are completed in the next calendar year. The member is confusing the cash flow issues with the investment issues. Perhaps the member would like to point out the line that he is actually identifying, but I think that he is confusing several matters.

Mr PISONI: There is no confusion, minister. It is quite clear in the budget papers. There is a small list of new works on page 39 of the Capital Investment Statement in Budget Paper 5. The proposed expenditure for 2008-09 on those new works is \$1.9 million. It is quite clear. Then there are pages and pages of works in progress. Many of those works are behind schedule, and yet you have said in numerous press releases that you are spending \$70 million on capital investment projects for the education department. Yet what the budget papers tell us is that, this coming year on new projects, you are spending only \$1.9 million.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think the member is disingenuous. We are spending that amount of money, but we can spend only a very small amount of money on new projects. As I explained, the schools wait for the announcement in the budget that they have the opportunity to have some new infrastructure. It might be \$1 million, \$2 million, \$3 million or \$4 million worth of infrastructure. It is obvious to anyone who has renovated a bathroom that the time between the decision and the work starting involves many steps: the architect has to be engaged; the plan has to be finalised; the work has to be approved; the tenders have to go out; the builders have to be chosen; and then something happens.

I would have thought that it was abundantly obvious that you announce a series of projects but, in the first year, you can actually spend relatively little so there is a very strong back-end flow

of money in that, generally, the money gets expended in the second and third years. I think the member is trying to bark up several trees simultaneously and is getting himself in a knot, because you cannot spend all the money in an infrastructure investment in the first year; it is not possible.

Mr PISONI: There is no knot there, minister. You have made claims that this government is spending \$70 million on infrastructure, and what the budget papers—

The ACTING CHAIR: Order, member for Unley! I think we are just getting into a backwards and forwards situation here. Perhaps the member for Stuart has a question.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: On page 8.10 of the document we have before us, minister, can you provide more details about the Rural Care program? It says that, during 2007-08, there were 11 rural locations including Bute, Booleroo Centre, Cleve, Kingston, Melrose, Peterborough and so on. Could the minister indicate whether any of these programs will be changed or discontinued? I understand that one or two of them are under some pressure. Could the minister give us any updates on that particular program?

May I say that rural care and preschool and family day-care centres are exceptionally important in rural areas at the present time, where it has been absolutely necessary for spouses to seek employment, and I wonder whether the minister could give us any information.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I commend the member for his advocacy for these organisations. They do a brilliant job. One of the challenges in regional areas is to maintain as many of them as people would like. I have recently, for instance, been in Melrose, and I know that Melrose and that vicinity has problems in maintaining numbers.

Again, the issue is the viability of very small services. We would like there to be a massive network around the state, but clearly we have to try to put them in the most populated areas in regional South Australia. Of course, they work together with RICE (remote and isolated children's exercise), and there is a lot of collaboration between different departments. We would not intend to close any services but, clearly, from time to time, the focus changes.

If the member has any particular communities that are under threat or concern, we would be happy to look at them because I know how important they are. One of the other challenges that I know the member for Stuart is always interested in is how we deal with the school buses. One of the challenges for school buses, of course, is getting underage children on buses and arranging supervision when their brothers and sisters of school-age are there for a full day: it is technically quite difficult.

Also, there are issues of compliance with safety issues. If there is a seat belt, they require different seating arrangements for small children, so there are difficulties and we understand and respect the difficulties in rural communities because of the drought, and we know how difficult it is. We have put a moratorium on the closure of school bus routes. As the member would know, from time to time we increase or decrease school bus routes depending on numbers, and that is always contentious. Clearly, we look at the rural care services to see what we can do under the same circumstances. If the member has a particular place that he would like us to look at, he can tell us.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Tomorrow is the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the School of the Air at Port Augusta, and some of us will be attending. Can the minister give an undertaking that the necessary resources for the continuation of this excellent facility, which has been staffed by very hard-working and dedicated people and which has given great service to people scattered over a wide area, will continue in the future, because it is terribly important to people in the vast outback of South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I have to say how delighted I am that you are able to attend. I regret that I will not be there. I think the School of the Air is a gem. It is one of the most significant innovations and one of the most astounding organisations. I never cease to be impressed by its achievements, and I join with you in commending them. I have always been mindful of the difficulties of isolated groups of children and the challenge in teaching them. It is clearly resource intensive, but I think it is money that has to be spent. A lot of the experiences that have come from the School of the Air, in terms of distance learning, are experiences that we are utilising in different ways now that we have whiteboards and the capacity to teach across communities.

I am really pleased with the way the bandwidth expansions have helped the School of the Air. I know that there are still a few dark holes that do not quite get the connection we would want, but we are working on those areas. We want to maintain their resources, and we wish them well. I

know that the CE is attending the celebrations. I am very supportive of the School of the Air as an organisation, and I think the staff are absolutely brilliant.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.5, which refers to your department's objective. It states:

To ensure...children and students have the opportunity to maximise their potential and aspirations to productively and responsibly participate in and contribute to society.

I would like to clarify some earlier remarks made by Mr Robinson. He indicated that DECS staff made mandatory reports about children involved in this week's well-publicised cases. Can the minister tell the committee whether that was for one or both families, when the reports were made, and is a report being prepared for the minister in regard to DECS' actions?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that, on the occasions where mandatory reports are made, they are matters between Families and Communities and the Education Department. I believe that the Education Department has very good systems in place for mandatory reporting. We also intervene very extensively in other ways by sending attendance officers to parents' homes, by counselling parents, and by having special interventions for particular groups at risk. I understand information is available on some of the issues you raise.

I think that a lot of effort and resource activity is being put towards the wellbeing of those children, and I am confident that systems are now in place to protect them. In terms of the numbers of mandatory reports, clearly some reports were made, and they have been discussed by the Minister for Families and Communities, who I think has the matter in hand.

Mr PISONI: Can the minister tell the committee whether the mandatory reports made about the children involved in the well-publicised cases this week related to one or both families? When were the reports made (I would like a date), and is a report being prepared for the minister in regard to DECS' actions?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I believe that the families that have been the subject of an intense media scrutiny over the past week or so are being well protected. There is a massive intervention on the part of not just Families and Communities but also the Health Department. There has been, obviously, significant investment in their schooling and intervention in relation to either attendance or achievements within their schools.

I believe that mandatory reports have been made over time by the Education Department. The best way to analyse the information and the achievements and interventions is carefully. I do not think that budget estimates is an appropriate place to discuss personal details about an individual family, particularly a complex family with extensive family relationships. I am fearful of giving misguided information, because I know that the names of family members are difficult to interpret. There are many family members with different surnames, presenting with different names at different times. The information given by the minister is probably the most accurate available.

Mr PISONI: Minister, I am not asking for any personal details, and I did not raise this in estimates. This was raised by one of your officers. In answer to a question, he actually raised more questions than answers, and I am trying to determine those answers. I think it is quite simple. If the officer has made the claim that reports were made about the family—and you have been boasting about how well you have been dealing with the Department for Families and Communities—I want to know whether it is one or both families and when the reports were made.

That is important because, as soon as a child in this family was taken to the hospital, a report was made immediately. That is how Families and Communities were made aware of this situation. We have been told at this estimates committee that mandatory reports had been made about these families. I am trying to determine what was done and how that mandatory report was dealt with. I am asking whether it was for one or both families, when the reports were made, and is a report being prepared for you in regard to the actions of DECS?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It is fair to say that whenever there are difficult family situations reports are made. I believe that the Department for Families and Communities, through its minister, has informed this house on those matters. I do not think it is fair for you to suggest that the Education Department has failed in its duty of care because I know there are many different kinds of families with difficult situations, living in difficult circumstances, where it does intervene.

The information I have is that these families (the subject of this media intervention and activity in the media recently) had extensive interventions by our department in terms of education and support. In reality, there was a range of activities in terms of counsellors and social workers—a

whole range of interventions. I believe that they were ongoing and offering a great deal of support to the family.

A the end of the day, clearly, there will be further assessment of how the relationship between our state and other states works. Clearly, there will be an analysis of how we can do things better. I am the first person to admit that we can always do things better. However, an analysis of the sort of family complexities faced by this group of individuals is probably best left to a more sober analysis of what has happened than trying to provide information on children who need to go to school, who need to get back into a normal routine, and who have really been denied an opportunity to do that over the last week.

I think it has been very difficult for the families living with a stake-out outside their homes. It has been very hard for them to access services. I think that, in many regards, we need to get the job done and work collaboratively (as we have been) to make sure that these children are safe.

Mr PISONI: I will ask again: when were the reports made? These questions are not about this particular family; they are about your processes. I am trying to determine whether your mandatory reporting requirements are different from those of health workers. It was because of the actions of health workers that we saw the intervention by Families and Communities to the extent that we saw this week.

It appears, from the information that we have been given at this estimates committee today, that there was no action as a result of the mandatory reporting to DECS. That is what I have determined from this estimates committee: that DECS was told about what was going on but there was no action; a health worker reported what was going on and there was action. Why is there a difference? Do you have different rules?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think you are confused again. I will explain to the member for Unley that a mandatory report is not made to DECS; DECS makes mandatory reports. I will say it again: a report does not occur and be directed towards the Minister for Education or to DECS. Mandatory reports are made by individuals who make that report to Families and Communities, Families SA. It is a different target for the report. It is not DECS receiving reports. DECS may make a report.

In relation to the difference in the procedures between health and education, I would have thought the substance, criteria and issues relating to a mandatory report (out of any organisation) would essentially be very similar. However, clearly, a health professional would see the results of a physical examination and would have different issues to respond to. Whilst the core values and judgments would be similar, the data received and assessed by the professionals would be different.

It is a complex matter to draw up any kind of comparison between how mandatory reports are made by different organisations. However, I am very happy to try and find out what differences there are in those procedures. They may well be non-quantifiable and rather esoteric, but I am happy to find out.

Mr PISONI: My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.39: cash flow statement, grants and subsidies. There appears to be no extra infrastructure or project money from the state government in this budget to replace the \$33 million for the Investing in Our Schools Program, which has been slashed by the Rudd government. My question is: where will primary schools be getting that money from for things like computers and—

The CHAIR: Are you asking the minister about a federal program that has been cut?

Mr PISONI: The line refers to grants and subsidies.

The CHAIR: Yes, I understand that, but are you asking a question about a federal government grant?

Mr PISONI: Because we know that Mr Rann was a very strong supporter—

The CHAIR: Order! I asked you a simple question: are you referring to a federal grants scheme?

Mr PISONI: What I am referring to is grants and subsidies in Budget Paper 4, Volume 2.

The CHAIR: Sure, and the grant scheme is?

Mr PISONI: The grant scheme is Investing in Our Schools.

The CHAIR: And that is a federal government grant?

Mr PISONI: It was, before it was cut by the Rudd government.

The CHAIR: Order! The question is out of order; move on.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I take a point of order, Mr Chair. I respect your chairmanship—

The CHAIR: Thank you, and I respect your services.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: On a number of occasions when I have taken points of order on minister Wright accepting questions about the impact of WorkChoices on South Australian workers on the argument that it is a federal issue and the minister is not accountable, the Speaker has ruled that those questions be allowed because they have an impact on South Australians. I would argue that the member for Unley's question is based on exactly the same principle; that is, if \$33 million is taken out of the South Australian education system by way of grants, that clearly has an impact on schools. The member for Unley is asking a question about the grants and subsidies line and, on that basis, the question should be allowed.

The CHAIR: I have heard what the member for Davenport has to say, and I understand what he is trying to say, but this is a very different example. I do not think it is in the same scope as WorkChoices: this is about a direct government grant. I rule the question out of order, and the member for Davenport can take it up with the Speaker when parliament resumes. We will now move on to the next question.

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The CHAIR: That may be the case, but I am telling you that this is about the South Australian budget, not the federal budget. You may have noticed that we are in the South Australian parliament.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 3.39, 'Contingency provisions—employee entitlements'. Can the minister advise what the cost will be of bringing former state ombudsman Eugene Biganovsky out of retirement to settle the dispute between staff and school councillors at Linden Primary School? Will the cost be met through this contingency provision or some other provision? Three years have passed, and the minister's department has failed to resolve this issue.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It is regrettable that, under some circumstances, it is not possible to have a good relationship in a school such as this. Overwhelmingly, we have governance in our public school system, and the current situation at Linden Park has been difficult. There have been personality clashes and a whole lot of issues have been raised. We believe that this school, as the recipient of massive capital works investment and as a school with very high literacy and numeracy results and as a school with huge potential, and a potential that has been well achieved over the years, it is worth the extra investment to get a harmonious leadership and council on board.

We have worked hard with a range of mediation processes and negotiations. I understand that there will be an election for a new council shortly. I have been very pleased with the impact that Eugene Biganovsky has had in dealing with the sometimes complex relationships in this school. I think the school community is very supportive of the intervention. I believe the local member has been very supportive of engagement. Whilst the member for Unley might complain that we have taken this rather unusual step in engaging—

Mr PISONI: I have a point of order, sir, under standing order 128. I did not complain at all, minister; I was simply asking how much it cost—

The CHAIR: Order! It is obvious that there is no point of order. Let us move on.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Thank you, sir.

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The CHAIR: Order! The member is being disorderly now.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Whilst it may not be seen as an appropriate way to invest money, I think it is a very good way to spend money, because I believe this school deserves support to get its systems back in order. The sum of money that is involved we are prepared to fund from the central office. I do not have the exact cost of it at the moment, but I am happy to provide that information at a later date.

Mr PISONI: The minister can take that question on notice. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.25. Can the minister provide a detailed breakdown of the borrowing costs of \$845 million listed on that page?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think it is \$845,000.

Mr PISONI: Sorry; \$845,000.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Mr DeGennaro will answer that question.

Mr DeGENNARO: Those interest costs reflect the capital works assistance schemes for schools. We obtained those funds from government, and there is a repayment schedule and interest costs. So, that is what that \$845,000 represents.

Mr PISONI: What is the interest rate?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I can check that, but I imagine that it is the government rate and quite a credible one. We will take that question on notice.

Mr PISONI: My next question refers to the same page and the same budget paper. The budgeted amount for intergovernment transfers has been reduced by 28 per cent of the estimated amount for 2007-08. Can the minister provide an explanation for that?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: My sense is that those transfers relate to cross-portfolio activities. They fluctuate from time to time, according to programs. Where we have joint initiatives, funding for activities may come into our department from Families and Communities, SAPOL or a whole range of areas. They are particularly used for things like school retention plans, healthy food guidelines and a whole range of transfers, and they fluctuate from year to year, according to projects.

Mr PISONI: I refer to the same budget paper, page 8.26, 'Long-term borrowings'. Can the minister explain what the long-term borrowings are for, and will she advise whether this will be an ongoing drain on the education budget because of the PPPs for the government's new super schools?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We are not involved in borrowing as part of the PPPs.

Mr PISONI: So, what are they for?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: This is another matter that has been on our books for many years. I will ask Mr DeGennaro to explain it for you. I reiterate that we do not borrow in order to fund the PPPs; that is not how they operate. You might ask the Treasurer to explain it to you.

Mr PISONI: So, the funding of the interest payments on the PPPs will not be coming out of the education budget; is that what you are saying?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The building costs are not funded by borrowings. The PPP does not operate in that manner. I think the Treasurer has explained it to the member. I will get a copy of the *Hansard* report and send it to the member again.

Mr PISONI: I think you are able to answer this part of the question: will the payments on the PPPs be coming out of the education budget for the super schools?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: That is not what you asked. This is a different question; it is morphing. I was explaining that the PPPs are not funded by borrowings by the education department.

Mr DeGENNARO: I think we are looking at the line which has a negative \$327,000 in the 2008-09 budget line. When we go back in time, we had some lease liabilities in 2006-07, an amount of \$420,000. There have been a number of adjustments and we have now, essentially, got a zero balance. There is a minus \$327,000 under there as a long-term borrowing, and that will be adjusted in our annual accounts, I think, to zero, because the lease liability has now been completed, from the information I have before me.

Mr PISONI: Are you able to answer the question about payments on the PPPs?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The question has been answered, in that we do not borrow as part of the PPPs. The reality is that we are not suffering a blowout of borrowings and repayments, because we have just explained that it is going to be brought back to zero.

Mr PISONI: Who makes the payments to the consortium that builds the PPPs? What I am trying to determine is: does that come out of your budget?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: There is a budget line that accommodates that. I believe it is not in my lines.

Mr PISONI: But it comes out of the education budget?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think you will have to refer those questions to the Treasurer.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.6: Supporting elements, healthy performing and accountable leadership. Is the minister able to explain the policy of dealing with an employee in a leadership or managerial role who is charged with indecent assault or sexual offences? If they are stood down, is it paid or unpaid?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I will direct that question to the HR manager, Mr O'Loughlin.

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: I understand the question was: when an employee or manager is charged with a crime are they stood down with pay or without pay?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Yes.

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: That is a discretionary authority that resides with the chief executive and a decision would be made based upon the nature of the charge and the particular set of circumstances.

Mr PISONI: Are there certain charges where the decision is automatic; there is a direction from the minister or elsewhere?

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: No; I believe the answer is that it is a discretionary matter and it would depend upon the particular circumstances of the case.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: But we would always err on the side of protecting the child and err against the civil liberties of the teacher.

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: Absolutely.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: So, we take a position of acting in the best interests of the children first and teachers second.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: In the capital works program there is a reference to the extra funding which is going to be spent on the Kapunda High School, I think it is the old Sidney Kidman homestead which, as the minister is aware, is in urgent need of an upgrade so it can be adapted for modern management purposes. Will the minister indicate if this year's allocation will complete that upgrade, or whether there will be more funds coming in the future, because it is long overdue?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I reiterate the comments of the member. It is a fabulous school, and I particularly like the matters to do with the Kidman building because I do think it is an exquisite heritage building. On my first visit to the school I was fairly shocked by the state of the laboratories, so I was very pleased when funding went to upgrade those laboratories, because they have had a long history of good science teaching and the building did not reflect the quality of either the teaching or the enthusiasm of the students. The first upgrade was of the science labs, and they have been completed, but I cannot give you the actual details about the Kidman building. Ms Riedstra?

Ms RIEDSTRA: The administration and resource centre upgrade, which I believe involves the Kidman building, is scheduled to go to tender in October of this year, with a completion in December 2009.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We would be very happy to show the member any details of the plans, or anything we have got, because I can see he is interested in the building.

The CHAIR: Using the discretion given to me under standing orders, I allow the member for Mitchell to ask some questions.

Mr HANNA: I refer to the savings targets of \$15.1 million on page 2.26 of Budget Paper 3. Will the minister detail comprehensively how those savings targets are to be achieved?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: As discussed earlier this afternoon, there are no targets this year. We have a large budget of \$2.2 billion and we have been set a savings target for the out years. As the Treasurer said at the beginning of the document on page 2.3, details of the specific

measures that will achieve the first tranche of \$25 million from 2009-10 will be presented in the 2009-10 budget.

The issue for us is that we have a very large organisation and continually assess what we do, decide whether it is the best or most effective way to spend money and redirect internal funds all the time, which is part of the business of a big department. We will carry on looking at those processes and see if there is anywhere that it would be possible to make savings or offer up better ways of doing our job, but with a \$2.2 billion budget, although it sounds rather large, within the scheme of our operation it is quite an acceptable figure.

Mr HANNA: Secondly, in relation to employee benefits costs, referred to on page 8.25, I refer to the calculations made in terms of expenditure reduction for the department in respect of the following factors: first, the retirement of older teachers and their replacement by incoming junior teachers on lower salaries; secondly, the scrapping of the country incentives payments; thirdly, changes to WorkCover provisions; and, fourthly, reductions in pay-roll tax.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I will try to get through the questions. We have retirement, replacement, country incentives, workers compensation and pay-roll tax? I am not sure how retirement and replacement are reflected in those numbers, but Mr DeGennaro will give specific answers. Country incentives are not being scrapped and workers compensation issues may relate to the \$7 million target.

Mr HANNA: The changes to the law will make changes in forecasts.

Mr DeGENNARO: There is no change in scrapping the country incentives scheme. With regard to retirement of the existing workforce and new members of the workforce coming in, these figures relate to the costs we budgeted this year and expended in prior years. These figures do not include any prediction of changing in cost profile. That will emerge over time if there is such an effect.

In relation to changes in workers compensation legislation recently, our figures reflect current cost. Any actuarial reassessment will emerge in counting in due course, but again the figures do not contain any prediction of the impact of the legislation on our figures. In relation to pay-roll tax, any changes in pay-roll tax for a government agency are adjusted out of our budget, so when Treasury reduces pay-roll tax and we pay it to Treasury, our budget is also adjusted so there is no gain for an agency from pay-roll tax adjustments.

Mr HANNA: Thirdly, I refer to the Education Works project, which is referred to on page 8.6 of the budget papers. My question is: are there any plans whatsoever for similar Education Works projects in the south-western suburbs?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The south-west of the city has some projects that have come out of the second part of Education Works; the first part is the six new PPP schools, and the second part is the alignments decided upon by local communities. I am sure that there are some schools that have made application to Education Works 2.

However, in relation to whether or not we envisage any major new buildings in the same way as the six that have been built in the north and the west, my view has been that, if this works well, we would of course look at expanding the program in the future. It was seen as such a complex undertaking, and such a new policy direction, that my view was that it was proper and sensible to ensure that we could manage it first in one area. Clearly, in the future, one would like to repeat it if it is successful, as we believe that it will be.

I think that the capacity and the capability to manage many of those projects simultaneously is quite a big ask. We have had such a very large reform agenda going on in the past four years. We have had all the work towards the new SACE. We have lifted the school leaving age and the age of compulsory education. We have built and opened the 10 trade schools, and we are in the process of developing our 20 children's centres. We have been doing normal capital works investment.

On top of that, we have reworked a lot of the early years in terms of cooperation and collaboration, and we have had our literacy programs and reduced class sizes. I think that with that massive amount of reform, the amount of hands-on involvement required to do our six PPP schools and the extra Education Works 2 projects is actually such an enormous workload that I have not felt it fair to have the department try to do too many things at once because I think that it will become dangerous.

My sense of the past year is that I have wanted to deliver on our commitments and not try to go in too many different directions. With time, I think you are right: it would be great if we could do these projects down south, but it will depend on seeing what is possible and what we can afford and working through those issues with the community.

To clarify some previous questions, we have some answers we would like to read into *Hansard* and give to the member for Unley; one relates to borrowings and costs. We identified the line the member highlighted as not being relevant to PPPs. We can give that to him, together with the reference to the place where they can be found within the budget papers. There are a couple of other items Mr DeGennaro wishes to clarify.

Mr DeGENNARO: I would like to correct a point I made earlier, namely, that the PPP payments are in the DECS budget. From memory, they are within the Capital Investment Statement as a series of payments. The PPP payments are in the DECS budget. Another point relates to commonwealth capital funding. The capital funding from the commonwealth for 2008 is on page 39 of Budget Paper 5, which again is the Capital Investment Statement. The final point is that the interest rate that was asked about is a South Australian government borrowing. It is set by the South Australian Financing Authority, and presently it is 7.55 per cent.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: An additional item is the cost of the intervention at Linden Park. It has not been completed; when it is finished, we will be able to report on the cost.

Mr PISONI: My question relates to Budget Paper 3, paragraph 5 on page 2.3: Expenditure. Where are the provisions in the budget to fund commonwealth election commitments for the Digital Revolution computer fund?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The member for Unley keeps repeating his assertion that the state government will be funding the Digital Revolution. As you know, this is a \$1.2 billion capital investment, and most people will be delighted that the new government is putting \$1.2 billion into public or private education across the country. That sum of money is, frankly, enormous, and most people would be very delighted that it is going into the education system across the country.

Our enthusiasm for this is that, while South Australia has quite a high ratio of computers to children within our schools, some of those computers are ageing. We are very fortunate in the first round of allocations to have, for example, 349 new computers going to Henley High and 200 new computers going to Birdwood High School, and 47 schools will receive funding in the first round. We do not believe that there is any extra cost, and the reason is that the extra costs might well relate to the licences or to the infrastructure. However, our infrastructure is in a state that means that we are able to join up these computers easily without additional issues.

We also have sufficient licences because we have many licences in our schools and these are replacement computers. The view expressed repeatedly by the member for Unley is that it will cost money in electricity. However, I reiterate that these are replacement computers: there are already computers there. They are replacements, and new computers will use less electricity than old computers.

So, the assertion that this is costing money is actually nonsense because, with the number of computers we are buying, whilst there is 1,000 per unit available, by bulking up the orders we are buying them somewhat cheaper than that. The additional installations and costs are incorporated within the funding allocation, and that has been worked through very carefully between the states and the government.

I know that the member for Unley might find it difficult to applaud an investment of \$1.2 billion by the Rudd Labor government, but we are very pleased to accept this funding allocation for South Australia, as I must say are the non-government schools. I have not heard them complaining, I have not heard parents complaining, I have not heard teachers complaining, children have not complained and the South Australian state government will not complain, because this is a fabulous investment in the children of our country and our state, and we are very pleased to accept this funding.

Mr PISONI: It is \$5.5 million this year, minister, as opposed to funding of \$33 million last year into our school system from the federal government. I want to take you back to your own budget papers in referring to that question, as follows:

A number of commonwealth government election commitments are being progressed as part of the Council of Australian Governments process, including initiatives in health, education, training and housing. While it is

anticipated that the commonwealth government will fund these proposals, a provision is contained in the budget for possible implications on relevant state operations.

What are they, and where are they in the budget?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that you are asking about computers and I have given you an answer to that. That is the only agreement that is now about to be fulfilled and about to be enacted. I am giving you the information that we have. Clearly, if you do not have a computer, you are grateful to receive one and many of the schools even without the licences—maybe in the private sector—or the wiring or the cable width are still grateful to get those computers because it is cheaper to only pay for the cabling than it would be to pay for the box, the cabling and the licences. So, people are achieving extra funding.

We are in a particularly favourable position, as I have explained, because we have negotiated with the federal government, we have worked through with them the costs of the installation, we believe that this arrangement is cost neutral, and we are delighted and grateful to receive the contribution because it is a saving for the South Australian government.

In the future there may be many budget discussions, and certainly COAG has on its agenda a massive range of interventions, both specific and national partnership agreements, that will be negotiated over the rest of this year. The negotiations for those agreements will be carried out predominantly by the Treasurer with the treasurers from around the country and they will be progressed through COAG. Whilst it may disappoint the member for Unley not to have a Liberal government, we have a Labor government and it has set the agenda; it has made election promises and it is committed to fulfilling them.

Mr PISONI: The budget papers refer to provisions for federal government election commitments, and in Senate Estimates, Dr Arthur, who is a public servant on minister Gillard's staff, stated:

As the policy has been executed, the specific funding for the Computers in Schools program is not intended to cover every cost in terms of computer operations in schools.

What have you done to cover the cost that the federal government's program will not cover?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I do not know how many times I can give you the same answer. We believe that our costs—

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: In the last estimates, it was 17 times straight.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: As I have explained before, we are replacing computers, therefore there are cables. The cost of installations and any extras are covered because when you buy many thousands of computers, the cost per unit falls. The allocation of funds given by the federal government is enough to cover all our costs. When your costs are covered, there is no shortfall. My memory of the election commitment was that the \$1 billion might have been increased slightly to \$1.2 billion.

The reality is that there are negotiations around the country, and my view is that South Australia has been very well positioned to accept this funding. We are not expecting to pay extra money for electricity because these are newer computers that use less energy. We are not expecting to have to buy more licences because we have enough licences to cover the computer software. We are not expecting to have to pay to put in extra bandwidth.

That being said, obviously new computers will still have to be maintained in the future, but we have provisions for that within our budget, and it would not matter whether we were maintaining old computers or new computers. The number of computers will not produce a significant increase in costs.

The reality is that it has saved the South Australian government money by the government not having to buy new computers. If your disagreement with this project is based on the fact that you do not want new computers in schools, or you do not want the Labor government to make a decision on the basis of its election commitments, then that is another issue, but you cannot create an electricity cost blow-out just because it fits your prejudice.

Mr PISONI: You are saying that it is a computer replacement program for South Australia. Are you saying that you have one computer to share between two students in year 9 to year 12 in every school in South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am saying that the election commitments are being progressed and met. There will be several rounds. In the first round, we have been given our allocations. We have bulked up the cost of the number of the computers—the unit price has gone down—and we believe that looking at the number of computers installed, the extra cabling is minimal, the extra licences to be bought would be minimal and the extra electricity is a fiction. We do not believe that there is a shortfall in funding in this round. I am sorry that it is not the answer that the member for Unley wants, but I am giving him the facts.

Mr PISONI: Why is the electricity irrelevant when the Department of Transport and Infrastructure website costs the running of a computer at \$150 a year? I assume what you said in your last answer was that we do not have a computer to be shared for every two children in our high schools now, so there will be more computers in high schools. You also mentioned earlier that the costings have been worked out with the federal government. Can you tell us what they are? Premier Carpenter in Western Australia said that for every \$20 spent another \$80 will need to be found to install the computers. Do you agree with that figure?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The member for Unley may not want new computers in our schools, but the reality is that we have been buying computers annually, and we have recognised that \$1,000 is far in excess of the cost of a new unit. Therefore, the additional funds can be used for either cabling or the odd licence, but the electricity is powering the current computers. If we were to replace a computer, the likelihood is that the new computer would have a lower energy use. I do not quite understand—

Mr PISONI: So there will be no new computers. Is that what you are saying? There will be only replacement computers?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Mostly, in this round the number of computers is—

Mr PISONI: No; for the program.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It will not be a totally new unplaced computer in South Australia. In some of the non-government schools there may well be new computers. In the independent or Catholic schools it is possible that they are increasing the number of computers. My information is that, for most of our schools, we will predominantly replace old PCs, and we do not believe there will be an additional cost. You can disagree with the numbers, you can predict that it is not the case, but I am giving you the information I have.

Mr PISONI: I just want to clarify. You are telling me that for every year 9 to year 12 student there is one computer for every two students to use now.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am not telling you about computers; you were asking me about the money. I am telling you about the money and federal government funding. If you do not like the program, if you do not think it is appropriate, if you do not want us to have new computers, that is something that you might take up with your federal colleagues and ask them to attack in the federal parliament. It is a good program; it gives new computers to schools.

Mr PISONI: Minister, I think you know me well enough to know that I am happy for any spending in our schools and for any improvements to our schools' facilities. To suggest otherwise is scurrilous, and I think you know that. So, we still do not know; you still will not answer the question as to how many computers are in schools now. You still will not confirm that we have one computer for every two students in years 9 to 12—I will accept that.

Senate estimates was told that the money will go into state government accounts on 30 June this year and that it will be up to the individual state governments to decide on how that money is distributed, how it will be spent and who buys the computers. Which department will buy the computers? Will it be DECS, the department of infrastructure, or will each individual school be given the ability to buy and choose their own computers? Where will they be serviced from? Will they be serviced from India or will they be serviced locally?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think the member for Unley was not listening. I did explain that we will be buying the computers in bulk, and that we would not be buying individual computers in small groups. I explained that that is how we got the economies that will allow us to get the best deal for our schools. This is the community's money. It stands to reason that if we buy large numbers of computers they will be at a better price, and that is what we will be doing: we will be buying them centrally.

Mr PISONI: It is a well-known fact that if schools purchase things themselves they get the government price. Which department will buy the computers? Yours, the infrastructure department,

or will individual schools buy the computers and get the government price? It is a simple question: who is buying them?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It is a simple answer, but you do have to listen. I explained—

Mr PISONI: I am listening but I am not hearing.

The CHAIR: Order! The member for Unley is now baiting and verballing the minister. It is extremely unprofessional and, I have to say, a little bit disappointing. Can we just get back to you asking referenced questions? The government is not asking any questions. You have had the entire day to question the minister. I think a little bit more politeness would not go astray.

Mr PISONI: I am terribly sorry, Mr Chair, that I have disappointed you. I am trying to determine which departments will be buying the computers.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I said we will be buying them, not the individual schools. We will get a better price. It has been part of the negotiations with the federal government. It is particularly pleasing to deal with a federal government that is able to deal respectfully with us and come to a result which is for the good of the community. We believe that we will get the best price and that there will be economies of scale; it has been agreed to by the federal government. The federal government has agreed that, for the purposes of this grant of funds, computers older than four years will count as needing replacement. That is why we are getting so many replacement computers in government schools in the first tranche. I cannot speak for non-government schools. The purchase of these computers will be received gladly by school communities because they will get something they would not otherwise have received.

Mr PISONI: Which department will be buying the computers?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I fear that you are not listening.

Mr PISONI: You said, 'We'. Who is 'we'?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think the member is being cute. When I say 'we' it is our department. The reality is that he may not like the answer, but I have given it several times.

Mr PISONI: It is quite simple. Which department will be buying the computers? DECS or the department of infrastructure?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: This is the fourth time.

Mr PISONI: The department of infrastructure runs the computers in the country—

The CHAIR: Order! Do not talk over the minister. You have asked a question and I think the minister has answered it. Let us move on.

Mr PISONI: Will they be serviced by a call centre in India?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Our service arrangements will be identical to those we have currently.

Mr PISONI: On the same budget line, 5 per cent of schools identified in the Senate estimates that were eligible for the first round of the secondary school computer fund did not apply because they were not ready. Were any of those in South Australia?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am not able to answer that. I believe that we performed an audit and identified all of our schools, but I do not believe we are in a position to speak for the non-government schools. It is an interesting question. We believe that the 47 who applied were the appropriate schools. Those applications were coordinated through the department which supported the schools in their internal audits. We did the negotiations with the federal government about how we would benefit as much as possible from this initiative. Our negotiations allowed us to buy computers by bulking up the orders and using the additional funds to pay any incidental costs.

As far as I know, all the schools that applied were successful. Because we assisted the schools in making proper applications we may have actually overcome some of the difficulties that may have occurred in other states. We were proactive in going to our schools, helping them audit what was within the school, and making sure that they made the best applications possible. I think we were interventionist, supportive and proactive in making sure that the best applications got in. When the results were announced on 12 June, we were happy to get all 47 schools. I cannot speak

for the non-government schools, but I believe that we did the best we could to get everyone into the tent.

Mr PISONI: Again, Senate estimates were told that funding of \$1,000 per computer would be sent to the state government on or around 30 June. For government schools are you able to inform the committee as to when the computers from the first round will be delivered?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I cannot give you the arrival dates. I know how excited you are to see these computers because you have obviously shown support for the scheme. Our 47 schools will certainly get the computers as soon as we can have them delivered.

Mr PISONI: When will the Catholic and the independent sector be getting the money to purchase their computers?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think you might approach the Catholic and independent sector and ask them that question.

Mr PISONI: According to Senate estimates, you will be getting the money and distributing it, so when will they get it?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: As soon as we get the funding we pass it on. We have an arrangement whereby—

Mr PISONI: So, 1 July?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: No; I said as soon as the money comes in we will pass it on. They will get their computers when they order them. I am in no position to predict when they will order their computers. Perhaps you should ask them that question.

Mr PISONI: How long after you get the money will they get the money?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: As soon as it arrives we will pass it on. We have a process within the state government where non-government funds are not resident within state government coffers for more than seven working days. One would certainly aim to have it in and out as quickly as possible. However, in relation to when they will get their computers, I am in no position to tell you and, again, I suggest you contact Catholic Education or ACER. I can provide you with the telephone numbers so perhaps you can ask that question of them.

Mr PISONI: I have those answers, minister. They are not in control of when you hand the money over. You mentioned in an earlier answer that the costs of installing the computers has been discussed and confirmed with the federal government. Can you tell me what those costs are? Over what period have you expanded those costs?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We will be in the market negotiating the best price possible. The indications are that the computers will cost significantly less than \$1,000.

Mr PISONI: Yes, but what about the on-costs?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: There are on-costs now. As I explained, we are having replacement computers. There are on-costs for the old computers. The advantage of the new computers is that they will be newer, so the costs of maintaining them and replacing them will be less, because they will need to be replaced at a later date.

Mr PISONI: So, in rounds 1, 2, 3 or 4 (or however many rounds that we need to get these computers out), are you saying that there are enough power points in classrooms, there is enough cabling in classrooms, and there is enough furniture in classrooms so that no other money will need to be spent over and above the \$1,000 allocated to buy the computers and to install them?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am saying that the information that you ask for relates to the budget papers and to round 1. I am not in a position to predict the nature of telephony, computing and gadgetry in the next decade. It seems quite likely that things will change dramatically. The rate of change in computing has been enormously rapid over the past decade. Who knows what the future holds? I can only tell you what we know, what we can budget for and where we are today—and that is the information I have given you.

Mr PISONI: This question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.17: the computer fund is available for years 9 and above. Is there any funding in the budget for primary schools?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Could you repeat the question?

Mr PISONI: The digital revolution is for year 9 and above. I am asking whether there is any funding in the budget for computers for primary schools.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Are you asking about the federal budget?

Mr PISONI: I am asking about your budget.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: But the digital revolution relates to the federal budget.

Mr PISONI: Well, we have just heard from you about how you are implementing it with federal funds—that those are all covered, and what a great idea it is. I agree; it is great to have computer access. My daughter told me this morning that it is very difficult to get onto a computer at her school because there are so few. In previous years, schools have bought computers; in fact, Parkside Primary School spent \$95,000 of the Investing in Our Schools money on electronic whiteboards. I am just trying to establish whether there is any investing in computers in our primary schools in your budget this year.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I will repeat that the digital revolution refers to senior secondary years. I have no knowledge of the future intentions of the federal government. Maybe it will have other policy initiatives, but I think we should await notification on that matter.

Mr PISONI: So, there is nothing in your budget, minister?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I can only comment on the question, and you prefaced it with a discussion about the digital revolution. I have answered that question.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 2, page 5. The Treasurer's speech refers to a per student funding level of \$11,568. Minister, I would like the breakdown of this figure. For example, how much money is allocated and spent on schools?. How much is for teachers' wages, how much is for administration, how much is for maintenance, and how much is for other school costs? I would like that breakdown for our most disadvantaged schools at category 1 and for our most advantaged schools at category 7.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: As you have highlighted, we have increased the funding to children per capita on average by 52 per cent and, in addition, we had a significant investment in capital. The actual calculations and the breakdown of those figures essentially suggest that about 80 per cent of the funding goes in staff salaries and the rest of the money would go in other costs.

Mr PISONI: Are you saying that Unley Primary School, for example—which is a category 7 school—would receive \$11,568, and all but 20 per cent of that would be to pay their teachers?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: No, I am not saying that. What I am saying is that, within our \$2.2 billion budget, about 80 per cent goes in salaries. That is because we have a very strong service delivery department. We are not one of those departments that gives out grants. We actually do things. We have services, we have schools, we have childcare centres and we have preschools. As a service delivery organisation as opposed to a granting body—as opposed to most federal government departments, for instance—the majority of our funds go on personnel. The specific details that you request may not be able to be answered precisely because they are complex. That level of detail will have to be taken on notice.

Mr PISONI: Just so that it is clear, I would like to know how much funding per student the most disadvantaged category 1 school gets, right through for category 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, our most advantaged schools. I would like to know how much is allocated per student for each of those school categories, both primary school and high school. You mentioned earlier that 80 per cent of that money goes into salaries. What I am interested in is: how much goes into classroom teacher salaries?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: In reality, the question you ask is actually quite difficult to respond to, because there is no such thing as an average category 1 or category 7 school. What you are asking actually relates to the children, because one of the great joys, perhaps, of our system and one of the ways it works particularly effectively is that we have many parts of the funding mechanism for schools based on individual students. For instance, the federal government's funding of non-government schools is based on an SES calculation of the postcode of the school, which is pretty strange because, very often, children come from different postcodes.

The way we work our index of disadvantage and, indeed, our School Card mechanism is to allocate funding based on an individual child. So, it would not matter whether a school were in the poshest part of town, in the leafy green suburbs: if 90 per cent of the students came from the other side of the tracks and they were impoverished, disabled or disadvantaged, that school would get

more money because the funding relates to the children within the school. So, whilst your question about levels of disadvantage might highlight some differences, I think that the response would be notional. You might find it easier to speak to your local school and ask them about their budget.

Mr PISONI: I have spoken to my local school, minister, and according to one of my local schools—and I will not name it—they end up with about \$5,000 per student. That is why I am trying to determine what \$11,568 per student actually means for teachers on the ground. I do not think that is an unreasonable question.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: If you want us to look at one school in particular, we can do that.

Mr PISONI: No. You must have averages for category 1 schools and averages for category 2 schools—and I could go on. I imagine that the \$11,568 is an average figure. You mentioned earlier that it is an increase of 52 per cent, but you did not mention that the overall state budget has grown by 55 per cent in that same period, so it is struggling to keep up. The point here, minister, is that I am trying to determine just how much of that \$11,568 is actually spent on paying for classroom teachers.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I can give the member a figure that I hope will respond to that question.

Mr PISONI: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2: healthy foods in schools and preschools. Will the minister confirm if the junk food ban under the Right Bite strategy only applies to food and drinks sold in canteens and vending machines?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I thank the member for Unley for his question. I think the member may not have been listening because we have constantly said that this is a prohibition on the selling of junk food, by which I would say we would be discouraging and stopping the sale of high salt, high fat, high carbs, greasy food, and encouraging the sale of healthy, fresh produce. We are in no position, and would not attempt, to prevent parents feeding their children as they thought appropriate. We would not attempt to search or investigate children's property and what they were eating. However, we are able to control what is sold in canteens, and I think that this has been clarified over and over again.

The confusion that appears to have arisen for the member is that the healthy eating guidelines suggest that it would be appropriate to reduce the intake of those banned foods in other activities. For instance, it is possible to fund raise, it is possible to have birthday cakes and other school activities, but our guidelines encourage schools to find more appropriate rewards and treats for children than the greasy chip and the chemical-laden donut, because we do not believe that that is the most appropriate way to reward children.

So, whilst our prohibition on junk food applies only to the food that is sold in canteens or vending machines, and it is only part of our healthy eating strategy and the funds that have gone into the Eat Well SA Schools and Preschools Healthy Eating Guidelines, it is part of a spectrum of change and we believe that the educational opportunities in schools to teach children about good healthy eating should extend farther than just what we are banning within our canteens.

We have spent some considerable time building up the expertise and the profiles of our school canteens. We have run training and development sessions for canteen managers. We have helped to support providers from the private sector and helped manufacturers of food stuffs to look at things they can produce that will allow them to make profits, but I will repeat that we have only banned the sale of junk food from canteens and vending machines.

Mr PISONI: Why then did the minister tell the member for Bright last year, in answer to a Dorothy Dixier, that while school canteens would be the focus of the policy, the food standards also apply to vending machines, school excursion camps and events such as sports day?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Because the guidelines apply to everything that goes on in the school but compulsory prohibition, the banning of junk food only occurs in canteens and vending machines. Quite clearly, it would be irrational to have healthy salad rolls, fruit on sticks, frozen juices, falafels, glorious homemade soups and pasta dishes in the canteen and then take children on camps and fill them up with nasty junk food. Clearly, the guidelines are in place to encourage schools, not to compel them but to suggest to schools that if they are going to have treats and excursions those guidelines that we have introduced should be taken into account, because we want children to be healthier.

Mr PISONI: There is a memo from the Department of Education and Children's Services, signed by Jan Andrews on 27 February, that clarifies the Right Bite program. One of the dot points states:

The ban on junk food under the Right Bite strategy only applies to food and drinks sold in school canteens and vending machines. The ban does not include special events such as fundraisers and school celebrations. Birthday cakes and food or drinks provided to children from home are not covered by the ban.

There seems to be some confusion still about what is banned and what is not, and what events are banned and what are not.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The only person who is confused is the member for Unley, because he has repeated what I just said and claimed it was the words of Ms Andrews and that they were in contradistinction to what I had said earlier; in fact, they seem to me to be identical.

Mr PISONI: Well, they are not: they mean two different things. You made a comment earlier about 'the chemical-laden donut' being banned. Is that the reason it is banned, because it is chemical laden?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: No. I think that there are many junk foods within schools, and there is a mass of additive-added, chemical-laden substances. I know the member for Unley would like the Education Department to take on the role of banning all additive-laden foodstuffs, but the reality is that if schools adhere to our guidelines within their non-canteen eating habits and their special times then the well-being of the children will be enhanced and their weight will be reduced.

Our Right Bite strategy is about vegetables, fruit, prepared food which is not laden with salt and sugar and fat, and our guidelines are absolutely directed at having the least manipulated foodstuffs, which are the most healthy. Our guidelines are about fresh, healthy, nutritious foods, and I am surprised that anybody would seek to complain about them. The chief executive would like to make a point of clarification about something he said earlier.

Mr ROBINSON: I want to clarify an answer that I gave earlier today in this morning's estimates, where I said that in recent well publicised cases our staff did make mandatory reports about children involved in those families and that the procedures were followed properly in those cases. I did not intend to suggest that any notification had been made in respect of the family that had recently moved from Victoria.

Mr PISONI: I refer to the same line in the budget. Last year in answer to a question on healthy food in schools the minister claimed there would be the introduction of mandatory healthy eating guidelines. Will she explain how the guidelines are mandatory—obligatory, compulsory, fixed, binding—and what action she or her department takes to ensure that schools comply?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The mandatory part of the process is what is sold in canteens and vending machines in schools, but we would expect—and from my travels around schools I note such—that many schools would move in the direction of having treats, birthday events, camps and other activities provide more healthy food than might have been expected a decade ago. In my view parents want the best for their children. I would be very surprised, if you polled parents, if people said that they would like their children to be obese and unhealthy and to have their life expectancy reduced.

One of the most frightening opinions that has ever come my way is the view in recent publications that our children will be the first generation of children who will not live as long their parents, because for the past century consistently each generation has lived longer than the one before. We are facing a very different scenario where our children could perhaps not outlive us, which would be a great pity. That is a result of their unhealthy habits, food, diet and a whole range of issues, and obesity is one of the strong indicators of shortened life and a strong indicator of the likelihood of diabetes and a whole range of other problems, such as coronary artery disease, renal failure and a few cancers.

Doing nothing is not an option. It is easy to say that parents find it difficult. It is difficult to cook a meal every night, but doing nothing is not an option. It is not an option for us as a government education service or as providers of quality preschool education or for us as the licensers of child care centres. To do nothing is an abdication of responsibility. We have at least to make some change and attempt to stem the tide of obesity and obesity-related diseases. Banning junk food is just one element of the many things we have done in this state. I also draw member's attention to the activities of the health department in providing support to child care and preschools. We have been involved in a massive training program of those involved in working in canteens, and we have produced guidelines that are not mandatory.

Some people think we should be draconian in our involvement in children's eating habits. People have suggested that we should police lunchboxes and school bags, that we should search children for sweets or compel parents not to buy things in local shops, but in reality that is not the sort of country we live in. We support compulsion in the areas we control, such as education and training, and we support ongoing community involvement in other ways. I think we have the right balance of compulsory and educational measures.

We will soon be trialling the EPODE system, a method that has proved successful in northern France and has spread across Europe, and I am optimistic that that will be an effective program. Doing nothing is not an option. I do not want to see children waddling, unfit and developing diabetes. It is not good in public policy terms. It is immoral for us as legislators and as a government, and it is not supported by families who would want us to make changes. In many regards it is easier for parents if we ban junk food in canteens because it does not then produce an argument at home as it has been imposed on the children at school. This is as far as we reasonably can go, and doing less would be unacceptable. Ms Andrews may be able to tell us what would happen to a school not complying with the guidelines.

Ms ANDREWS: If a school is not complying with the guidelines, we would identify that from the regular contact between the district director, who is the line manager of the school principal and the school, and seek to understand what was going on. We would talk to and counsel the school about the issues in regard to why it was not complying. I understand from my district directors that they have been constantly checking on this over the past few months and that the degree of take up, enthusiasm and understanding about the policy is increasing.

To assist we have developed a resource package in collaboration with SA Health, which informs the preschool and school leaders, teachers, parents, canteen managers and food suppliers about the food standards and types of healthy food options that can be considered part of the regular daily food supply for healthy choices in schools and preschools. As the minister said, for exceptional times—celebrations or camps—some variants are exercised in the food taken by children, but the daily standard, as represented by what is in the school tuckshop or canteen, is very clear. We have involved key stakeholders through district seminars, training and development and a website we update regularly with information, and regular communication from the healthy food in preschools and schools project team within the department about the food standards and requirements for compliance. If we find that a school is not complying, when we look it that we can make any of those supports available again or in more detail for the school concerned.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Sorry to keep you awake, Mr Chair.

The CHAIR: Order! That is completely unnecessary and unprovoked.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: You may want to take this question on notice, minister. However, given your answer about healthy eating and the government's commitment, will you provide the committee with the total number of student hours of students involved in the past three years in the Be Active—Let's Go program? Could we have an annual figure of X number of student hours one year and X number this year? Could we have the total number of student hours involved for each year of the Premier's Be Active program? I accept that those questions will have to be taken on notice.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Can I offer a point of clarification: the Be Active program was a funding regime that allowed small sums of money (\$6,000 or so) to buy equipment or to go through training programs. So, they are not directly equated to hours of activity because they are not regarded as curriculum or contact hours. I do not think that we can respond to those questions. It is actually about a grant that was not designed to produce a pro rata amount of activity. Is that a fair comment?

Ms ANDREWS: That's correct.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I do not think those are questions that can be answered.

Mr DeGENNARO: From memory, the previous program, which had a life and came to an end, was a series of grants and, from memory, it was about \$7 per secondary student. Under that scheme, if there were 1,000 secondary students in a school, the school would receive \$7,000; from memory, for primary school students it was \$22 per student. I would have to check, but I think that those are the numbers. So, a school of 200 primary school students would receive \$4,400, and that was the totality of the grant scheme. How the schools applied that money was essentially up to them. The indirect information coming back was that it was largely spent on pieces of equipment.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: How does the government assess that it is getting a better bang for its buck out of the Premier's Be Active program compared with the Be Active—Let's Go program if the department did not keep any records on the amount of student participation? The physical education teachers I was involved with told me that the Be Active—Let's Go program was very successful in getting students to participate in physical activity and that the Premier's Be Active program is a lesser investment.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that the issue of granting funds to schools is actually very interesting. Everybody likes extra funds going into schools, but the nature of life is that these grants tend to be for limited periods—three or four-year funding cycles. Every program one implements is always popular; I have never yet seen one that was not popular, as it was new and different.

There is some caché about having a new investment in schools. I think that this was a very popular program because it bought new equipment. It was a relatively small grant. If you are talking about a school with a budget of \$2 million, \$7,000 was a very small grant, but it allowed equipment to be replaced. The problem is that, if a program goes for three or four years, equipment is replaced every three years, and there are only so many times you can do the same thing.

Therefore, it seems appropriate to have a bolus of money going into the system for certain activities and then moving onto another project. With due respect, I think that the member has misunderstood the purpose of the grant. It was used for physical activity, but it did not predicate, generate or suggest a different outcome at the end of the period, other than having more equipment or training, as there was some training as well.

I do not think that you can compare apples with apples in these two programs because the Premier's Challenge is specifically designed to increase activity, and its measurables are increased activity. We can definitely give you the outputs or the achievements of the Premier's Be Active Challenge, but I do not believe that we can quantify those in the same way for the previous funding rounds. Mr DeGennaro has some exact budget lines to quote.

Mr DeGENNARO: To clarify, I mentioned earlier that the PPP payments were in the DECS budget, and that is the case. I referred to the capital statement, and that was incorrect. I was referring to our operating budget. The PPP payments are in our operating budget for when the PPPs are ready and operating.

The Hon. A.L. EVANS: When the government decided to go from the Be Active—Let's Go program to the Premier's Be Active program, given that you have just told us that that program was about more physical activity, how did you assess that you would get more physical activity out of the Premier's Be Active program when no-one actually asked the department how much physical activity it was getting out of the Be Active—Let's Go program, which had a higher budget than the Premier's Be Active program?

With due respect, for all you know, minister, and for all the department knows, the Be Active—Let's Go program may have been delivering a greater physical activity outcome than the current Premier's Be Active Challenge, but no-one knows. So, you have actually made a change in policy based on no information.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The member is jumping to conclusions.

Ms ANDREWS: As the minister has outlined, the previous program went in small grants to schools essentially to expand their physical education infrastructure and, therefore, I am told, to increase the interest of children because they could do different sports or have updated equipment. The same number of minutes of PE were required per week in the curriculum: 120 minutes up to all students including year 10 at the present time. What the latest Premier's Be Active Challenge has done is taken a generational renewal and, building on the basis of the Premier's Reading Challenge, we were fairly sure that there would be an enthusiastic extra take-up of activity, and there has been, and we have measured that and we can provide that information on notice.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Let me understand what you are telling the committee. You are telling the committee that you can show that there has been more physical activity under the Premier's Be Active Program than the Be Active—Let's Go Program.

Ms ANDREWS: No, I am saying I can provide—

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I am just trying to clarify—

The CHAIR: I don't care. It is very clear in the standing orders that you cannot ask questions directly to advisers, and advisers are not permitted to respond. It is for your own protection. Only through the minister.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Can I just respond to that. I think the member has misunderstood and keeps talking about replacements. With funding, there is very often a three-year cycle, sometimes a four-year cycle. The funding on this initiative was extended for an additional year and then the funding stopped. One always knows that funding comes in bursts. There are cycles of funding and there are some things which are mainstreamed and other things which are not.

If this were such an effective program, we would have curbed the number of overweight children. It clearly did not have that effect; it did not have that impact. In subsequent years, we have invested more money in a whole range of programs for fitness through both health and education, and this is a more competitive attitude in terms of competing against yourself for the Premier's Be Active Challenge.

I think it is very comforting to keep doing the same thing you have always done. It is very easy to keep renewing the same programs forever, but there comes a time when you have to do things differently. You might not like it, but that is what we have done.

Mr PISONI: I return to a matter that was raised earlier (Budget Paper 4 Volume 2, page 8.5: Objectives). Minister, your officer clarified some statements that he made earlier and I am still a little bit confused about the status of that situation. He made reference to the family from Melbourne that the mandatory notification did not apply to, but did that apply to the second family?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Several issues have been spoken about with this family. I personally feel that the family has been the recipient of significant intervention from Families and Communities, Health and Education, and I think that is highly appropriate. They are clearly in need of support.

Having said that, I am not in a position to describe the family members, their names, their place of birth, their place of domicile, even, because they are clearly highly mobile. I am not able to explain to the member which family groupings they were in, and I think it is more appropriate that that information be given (as it has been) by the Minister for Families and Communities.

Mr PISONI: It is quite simple, minister. The Minister for Families and Communities told the *Advertiser* on Tuesday 24 June:

Given the physical state that they are in, I think it would be difficult to imagine them being at school and teachers not being immediately aware of their circumstances and making the relevant notifications.

My question is quite simple. Your officer mentioned one family but not the other family in his clarifications. I just want further clarification: were any of those families—and you have already spoken about one family; both families have been raised in estimates today and now for some reason you are saying we cannot talk about the other family. We are not mentioning names, we are not mentioning birth dates, we are talking about notification.

The minister himself has made a claim about the state that those children were in. Either they were not in our education system or, if they were, the minister is suggesting that it would be virtually outrageous to believe that they would not be reported.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think the member is trying to read something into my comments that is not there. The reality is that the family or the families involved are complex and intertwined. The family or families—I am not quite sure whether it is singular or plural—have complex relationships and are highly mobile. They have a degree of transience in their history that has taken them back and forth across the borders.

I frankly do not believe that I can give any more information than the Minister for Families and Communities has given, except that I do know that the education department has been interventionist in supporting the families, supporting their attendance and supporting their education over some years.

Mr PISONI: I am still a bit confused. It states here that the Minister for Families and Communities has said:

I think it would be difficult to imagine them being at school and teachers not being immediately aware of their circumstances and making the relevant notifications.

I can only assume from that that none of those children have perhaps ever attended school in the last three months in South Australia.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that there are several families involved, and I am not sure which group the member is talking about, but I do know that those children that have been involved and enrolled and have attended school have been the subject of significant intervention in South Australia.

Mr PISONI: Returning to the topic of school canteens, minister, are you able to advise what consideration was given to the effects of food additives on children's health and learning when building the Right Bite program?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Can I return to this issue of the Healthy Eating Strategy. The member seems to have a fixation about food additives. In reality, there are many additives in food, and these are in food and drink in Australia and New Zealand. They are approved for use by Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ).

It is their role to specify which additives are safe and acceptable. As much as the member would want to criticise that organisation, it is not for a mere minister of education to take on food standards nationally and set up an alternative strategy, a series of labelling requirements and a series of recommendations. It is not for us to do that. However, our healthy food strategy is absolutely focused on reducing additives, almost by virtue of the fact that they recommend fresh, wholesome food and vegetables that are prepared with a light touch. The fact that, at the end of the day, they have fewer additives must be a bonus for someone with the conviction and passion that the member for Unley has in his campaign against food additives.

Fortunately, our guidelines should be seen by him as an honourable and decent thing to do, which makes it even more bizarre that he has spent the past many months campaigning against our healthy food guidelines, criticising them and, on occasion, implying that we would be better to allow canteens to go off and do what they like, making money out of selling unhealthy food. I am at a loss to know what the member for Unley wants, but I point out that our healthy food guidelines are focused on fresh, healthy wholesome food. Those are the very ones without salt, fat and sugar and without those additives that he so much despises.

An individual education department is not an appropriate body to campaign against food additives around the nation, particularly in the knowledge that businesses sell these products in corner stores, delis and supermarkets. It is entirely delusional to expect schools to run a campaign against commonly available food. The role of parents is significant. Parents have an obligation to look after their children and to feed them appropriately. I think that the member's campaign about additives should go to the federal level. He should take it up with Food Standards Australia, and he should campaign against local shops selling these products. He should not be attacking the schools because, as I said, doing nothing is not an option. We have banned products of the type that he despises in our canteens. I would have thought that he would applaud us for doing so.

Mr PISONI: It is absolutely extraordinary, minister. You are saying that you can affect the amount of fat, sugar and salt that is in food but you cannot, through your Right Bite program, take anything else out of the food. You can reduce the fat, sugar and salt. High fat, sugar and salt items are available at every corner store and supermarket, but they are not available in our canteens. Of course, what has happened is that a number of manufacturers have redesigned their products to accommodate the fat, salt and sugar levels of your Right Bite program by adding more chemicals for flavour—more MSG, more 211—and that affects children's learning. It surprises me, minister, that you have no interest whatsoever in the affect that food has on children's learning. To suggest—

Mr KENYON: On a point of order, I am curious as to whether the member for Unley actually has a question.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. It is an excellent point of order, and the first one that I have upheld all day.

Mr PISONI: What number standing order is it?

The CHAIR: I will get back to the committee on that. I uphold the point of order. Get to a question.

Mr PISONI: I will get to a question, sir, and I appreciate your guidance. There is plenty of research to show that MSG is a major contributor to childhood obesity. Why did you not consider the effects of food additives in your Right Bite program?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think the member is confused. He clearly wants us to go back to greasy chips and nasty doughnuts.

Mr PISONI: I have a point of order under standing order 128.

The CHAIR: Given the level of debate in your opening statement, which took about five minutes of my life I will never get back, I think the minister is entitled to respond with debate.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think the member for Unley cannot have it both ways. He wants us to go back to selling junk foods, to stop a mandatory junk food ban, to make sure that canteens can make a profit, and he wants us to ban additives. As much as I might be prone to think that we can do extraordinary things in South Australia, I think it would be delusional to imagine that the department of education could prevent additives being sold across every shop in every place in South Australia. I actually think parents—

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The CHAIR: Order! Do not talk over the minister when she is giving an answer. You have had every question all day.

Mr PISONI: You have been very kind, sir.

The CHAIR: I have been very kind. Let the minister finish her answer.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Parents also have a role to play. If schools provide food which is low in fat and salt you will have pasta bakes, veggie rolls, noodle things, a whole range of fresh fruits, frozen fruits, mulched up fruits, vegetables, and a whole range of fresh food ingredients. They will not contain the things that the member for Unley despises. If he would like to run a campaign against Food Standards Australia, I can give him its address, website and phone number, and he can speak to his federal colleagues. He can reshape the face of food in Australia, but I am a woman of more modest goals. I am not attempting to do that; I am trying to improve the health of children. For someone who has campaigned relentlessly against the healthy food guidelines in schools, and campaigned against the junk food bans in schools, I think he needs to get his story straight.

Mr PISONI: I have been campaigning against your management of the program; that is what I have been campaigning against. I would like to move to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 8.6: targets, supporting elements, effective community engagement and governance. I have a letter here to Ms Clare Tizard, (addressed to the Richard Llewellyn Arts and Disability Trust), applying for a grant of nearly \$60,000 from that trust, which was established 18 months ago. It allocates \$200,000 a year to disabled artists to fund projects to enlighten their lives and give them the ability to participate in the community doing the sorts of things that we, being fully able people, take for granted.

One of the guidelines of the fund is that the grant itself has to be instigated by somebody with a disability. However, Patricia Winter, Director of Disability Services Statewide, has applied to the Richard Llewellyn Arts and Disability Trust for a grant to adapt a music program to enable disabled children to participate. My question is: why is the department seeking funds from the Richard Llewellyn Arts and Disability Trust for its day-to-day running?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: As usual, the member for Unley has grasped one end of a stick, run up the wrong tree and barked up another, and has become totally confused. I will just clarify the issues. The grant application states very clearly that it can be related to individuals, non-profit groups, arts and cultural groups, federal, state and local government agencies—they can all apply. The first response is that the member has made an error in his statement.

The second matter is that the department was jointly working on a potential project with Musica Viva. The member for Unley may not support Musica Viva (I do not know what his personal taste is in music) but it sought to expand its operations to provide additional music opportunities for students with disabilities. I do not know anything about the program. I have no particular axe to grind about this matter. I have no knowledge of it. However, it wants to provide opportunities for students with disabilities—I suppose that is an honourable thing to do.

The funding was to provide a teacher with the opportunity to work with Musica Viva on a project for that organisation. The funding would have allowed the position to be filled, as I understand (to backfill it) so that the job the person should have been doing would be carried on and that person could work somewhere else. In a way, I suppose that is an interesting idea. You might not want Musica Viva to expand their activities to disabled students, you might not—

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The CHAIR: Do not speak over the minister. It is very simple: it is polite not to do so. She is answering your question.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The department's staff are employed to do jobs currently. They are involved in supporting and helping students currently. Musica Viva sought assistance, through this granting body, to do something different. It was not our core business; it was not our desire to outsource or send a person to work in another department. It was not something that would have particularly benefited only students in DECS. If the teacher had been awarded the grant he or she would have been developing a curriculum to help teach students about music—students with disabilities.

As it happened, that grant application was not successful. However, I believe it would have had several other impacts. It would have given a teacher currently working in our employ an opportunity to go away and do something entirely different. It would have given that person an expansion—

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The CHAIR: I warn the member for Unley the third and final time.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It would have given that person, if you like, a professional development opportunity to develop a curriculum. That person could have come back to the organisation with extra skills but, more importantly, the funding would have supported Musica Viva. If you do not support Musica Viva, that is fine; but it is also the department seeking to give the expertise of our staff off-line to an organisation, getting some sponsorship that would allow their job to be backfilled. Whilst it is very easy for the member for Unley to suggest how we should manage the department, there is no reason why a member of staff in our organisation should not be seen to partner an external organisation, to form a relationship with a non-government organisation, and expand their capacity and leave a legacy. I would have thought that being involved in these sorts of activities was good for our staff. However, the member for Unley does not support upskilling of teachers and being involved in other projects. That is fine; he has the right to have that belief.

The CHAIR: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the proposed payments completed.

At 16.59 the committee adjourned until Monday 30 June at 11:00.