

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY****Friday 28 June 2013****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chair:**

Hon. L.R. Breuer

**Members:**

Hon. P. Caica

Hon. J.D. Hill

Mr J.A.W. Gardner

Mr D.G. Pisoni

Ms M.G. Thompson

Mr P.A. Treloar

*The committee met at 10:30***DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, \$2,777,471,000  
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD  
DEVELOPMENT, \$228,818,000****Witness:**

Hon. J.M. Rankine, Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Dr K. Bartley, Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr D. Waterford, Deputy Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms J. Riedstra, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr C. Bernardi, Director, Finance and Investment, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr G. Costello, Head of Schools, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms P. Strachan, Head of Child Development, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr P. O'Loughlin, Executive Director, Human Resources, Department for Education and Child Development.

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committees are a relatively informal procedure and changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. There is no need to stand to ask or answer questions, and there will be a relatively flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions, and it will be based on three questions each side, alternating. Supplementary questions will be the exception and not the rule.

A member who is not part of the committee may, at the discretion of the chair, ask questions, and questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and not on other issues. All questions are to be directed to the minister and not to the minister's advisers. Members who are unable to complete their questions during the proceedings may submit them as questions on notice for inclusion in the House of Assembly *Notice Paper*. All answers to questions taken on notice must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 27 September.

There is no formal facility for the tabling of documents; however, documents can be supplied to the chair for distribution to the committee. I also advise that, for the purposes of the committee, television coverage will be allowed for filming from the area behind me—and they are

there again today. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker of the opposition have agreed to a timetable for today's proceedings; is that right?

**Mr PISONI:** No change to what was sent out, I believe.

**The CHAIR:** I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition to make opening statements for about 10 minutes each. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the Agency Statements, Volume 2. Would the minister like to make an opening statement and introduce your advisers?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you, Madam Chair; I would like to make an opening statement. The state government is committed to ensuring that every child gets the education they need to allow them to take on the challenges they will face in their life and grasp opportunities. We want a world-class education system. First and foremost, our children need to be safe so they can learn with confidence and so that parents have trust in the school system.

Last November we appointed former Supreme Court justice, the Hon. Bruce Debelle, to investigate the handling of an incident at a western suburbs school in 2010. Yesterday he delivered his report to the Governor, who passed it on to the government. I will be taking the next few days to brief parents directly involved in this case. We have already taken some significant steps to strengthen our protection of children. These include:

- working towards a more rigorous teacher registration process;
- requiring contractors to have background screening for all adults working in education settings, on top of criminal history checks;
- consulting with the Teachers Registration Board, universities and unions to develop a pre-registration system that will require university students wishing to become teachers to undergo background screening before starting their teaching studies;
- making it clear that information can be shared with parents who need that information when there is a risk children may have been harmed.

Providing the best possible environments for children to learn is a priority.

A total of \$15.9 million in this year's budget will be invested to relocate Lockleys Preschool, Morphett Vale Preschool, Sir Thomas Playford Kindergarten, Woodville West Kindergarten, Cranston Street Preschool in Port Lincoln and Maitland Preschool to school sites.

The upgrade of schools includes new funding in the budget of \$2.3 million to expand John Hartley School and \$6 million to redevelop the Evanston Gardens Primary School. This year's budget also confirmed \$3.5 million to expand the Mark Oliphant College and \$56.5 million to finalise the redevelopments of Adelaide, Brighton, Glenunga International and Marryatville high schools. Since coming to office, the state government has almost doubled the investment in education, with total funding per student increasing from about \$7,600 in 2002 to \$14,600 in 2013-14.

South Australia has the highest school retention rate of all states in the country at almost 90 per cent. South Australia also has the highest retention rate in the country for Indigenous students. Ensuring children master the basics early in life is one of the best ways we can support them to finish school. Our numeracy and literacy strategy launched earlier this year underpins our commitment to helping children gain these fundamental skills.

**Mr PISONI:** I was pleased you mentioned the Debelle inquiry in your opening statement and my first question is a question about the Debelle inquiry. I refer you to page 12.

**The CHAIR:** Which budget line are you referring to?

**Mr PISONI:** I am getting there, madam. Page 12, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 12, Objective, where you specifically refer to child protection. Have you received the findings of the Debelle inquiry yourself? I understand it was given to the government yesterday.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, I have.

**Mr PISONI:** Will you be preparing a response to the Debelle inquiry before or after it is released?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will be releasing the Debelle inquiry as soon as I have completed briefing parents.

**Mr PISONI:** The Premier said that was likely to happen mid next week.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Our hope is that we are able to release the inquiry relatively early next week.

**Mr PISONI:** Okay. Will you be releasing a response at the same time or will the response come later?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is a very extensive report. We will give it very careful consideration. There are many recommendations in the report.

**Mr PISONI:** How many did you say?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am not exactly sure how many recommendations, but all of the recommendations will be released. We will work through those. If we can give an immediate response to many of them—and I think we will—we will give that response and others may take some further consideration, but it is our hope that we have a completed response in a very quick period of time.

**Mr PISONI:** I had a feeling that the chief executive may have known how many recommendations are in the report.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We do not have it here so we are not going to speculate, but there are many recommendations. It is six of one and half a dozen of the other—they will be released.

**The CHAIR:** We can have one more question before we go to the other side.

**Mr PISONI:** Are you able to advise the committee with, first, the budgeted amount for the inquiry and what the cost has been to do date for the DeBelle inquiry?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No.

**Mr PISONI:** Will you bring that back to the committee?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** As soon as those finances are available I am happy to take that question—

**Mr PISONI:** So there was no budget—is that what you are saying?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I do not have the detail of that. That was managed through the Attorney-General. I will bring that information back to the committee.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Colton.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 at page 20, regarding the cost of provision of services. Minister, can you advise if South Australian students will be \$2,000 per head worse off under the Gonski scheme?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Colton for that question. I am really pleased to be able to inform the committee that on Friday 14 June I joined the then prime minister and Premier at the Mitcham Primary School (the school that the former prime minister attended as a student) and saw them sign the historic national education reform agreement known as the Gonski reforms.

It was a very proud moment, I think, for the Premier and it was a proud moment for me as South Australia became a signatory to an education reform which will deliver a fairer approach to education funding based on each student's particular needs. This deal, for which the Premier fought very hard, was \$1.1 billion of new money for South Australian students. There has been criticism from some quarters that this agreement would actually result in our education system being \$2,000 per student worse off. I am glad to have the opportunity to dispel this.

The review carried out by Mr David Gonski found that school funding arrangements were not meeting the needs of all Australian children, with many schools, particularly those with large populations of disadvantaged students, not receiving the resources they need. Under the reforms, every student will receive the same base level of funding wherever they are going to school in Australia. In addition, more resources will be provided to disadvantaged students, regional students, students with a disability, Aboriginal students and students from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

The level of funding needed per student to provide an appropriate education is referred to as the 'student resource standard' under this new agreement. Some states, like South Australia,

have traditionally invested more in education than other states, and we were already closer to that student resource standard than states like New South Wales and Western Australia that have been cutting funding to public education.

It would be spurious to suggest that, because some states need more federal funding to make up for their own failure to invest in education, South Australian students are in some way missing out. It would also be incorrect to claim that our students will be \$2,000 a head or \$136 million over six years worse off because of the indexation rates under the new scheme, as opposed to the old indexation rates.

The facts are that the indexation rates under the old scheme were dropping, and this is key to understanding why the system was actually broken. Under the current funding model, indexation is based on reductions in state spending which automatically link to the Australian government schools recurrent cost index. This fell from 5.9 per cent in 2011 to 3.9 per cent in 2012 because, as I said, states like New South Wales were slashing funding to their public schools. From 2014 onwards the most up-to-date information from states and territories suggests that it would have dropped to 2.9 per cent. In essence, it means the tap was being turned off.

Under the Gonski reforms the indexation rates will be stable and guaranteed. Schools will receive funding over and above what would have been going to our schools under the old scheme. So no, our students will not be worse off under Gonski; rather, \$1.1 billion of new funding will ensure that South Australian students receive the same base level of funding no matter where they go to school.

**Mr PISONI:** I have a supplementary, Madam Chair, if I may.

**The CHAIR:** I will listen to the supplementary and may count it as a question.

**Mr PISONI:** In her answer to a question the minister referred to the visit of former prime minister Julia Gillard to Mitcham Primary School. Is the minister able to advise the committee whether the DECD policy 'Political matters and DECS schools/preschools' was adhered to for that visit? I particularly point to visits by members of parliament, where timely and prior notification of visits to DECS sites by members of parliament is to be given to the chief executive's office, and, secondly, in relation to the use of equipment, materials and information that 'Departmental equipment and materials are not to be used for the promotion of a political party, candidate or lobby group'. I distinctly remember the prime minister introducing the Labor candidate for Boothby at that function.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, which budget line are you referring to?

**Mr PISONI:** This is the same budget line that the question was on. It is a supplementary question to the budget line that was—

**The CHAIR:** I do not consider that a supplementary question. It is a question.

**Mr PISONI:** Are you going to grant it or—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Let me just say that we were very pleased to have the prime minister come to South Australia and sign that deal—

**Mr GARDNER:** Former prime minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** She was prime minister at the time. We were very pleased to have her here and sign that agreement with South Australia, that will see more money going into all schools here in South Australia for our children.

**Mr PISONI:** The minister has agreed to answer the question but she has not answered it. The supplementary question was about the processes in the policy document that was prepared for dealing with political matters in schools and whether that was adhered to for the visit.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, we know what your question was. The minister has answered it as she chooses; I cannot direct the minister to answer the question in any other way. She can answer it as she chooses. Have you finished your answer, minister?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Madam Chair, I have not checked whether that policy was adhered to, but I will be making sure that in future anyone going to our schools will adhere to that policy, including—

**Mr PISONI:** But not you, or the Prime Minister—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** —members of the opposition.

**Mr PISONI:** —only others.

**The CHAIR:** Order! Member for Unley, listen to the minister in silence.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you for alerting me to—

**The CHAIR:** Minister, have you finished your answer to the previous question?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, I have; but I wanted to thank the member for alerting me to the issue.

**Mr GARDNER:** We're very happy with that document.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Good. Yes, you will be.

*Mr Gardner interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order! The member for Morialta, order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Madam Chair, I will be checking whether the candidate for Hartley, who went to Charles Campbell secondary college and was escorted by the member for Morialta, and introduced as the candidate for Hartley, also adhered to those policies.

**Mr GARDNER:** He wasn't introduced by anybody.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, he was—

**Mr PISONI:** A very hardworking candidate indeed, Vincent Tarzia.

**The CHAIR:** Order! Thank you. We will move on to the next question—

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you for getting him in the *Hansard*, minister; thank you very much.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, be quiet!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will be making sure the policy is being adhered to.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Reynell.

**Ms THOMPSON:** Thank you, ma'am. I am worried I am going to be writing requests for permission about twice a week, to visit schools in my area. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, Net cost of providing services. Can the minister explain to the committee why you are using a small section of the Gonski report about school funding to say that South Australia has the most autonomous education system in the world?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Reynell for that question. Let me begin by providing a little bit of potted history about the current funding model. The student-centred funding model was introduced here in South Australia in 2011. Under this model schools receive a specific amount of funding for every student enrolled. This has resulted in fairer, more predictable funding and introduces greater flexibility in how principals can allocate resources to support the educational needs of the students.

Under the previous funding model, which was based on a complex stepped formula, school funding levels could vary significantly with very small changes in enrolments. I am sure the member for Reynell has had principals complaining to her, as I have, about those events occurring. Available funding to support the learning needs of individual students was unpredictable and it made planning very difficult. The department has received a number of positive comments regarding the student-centred funding model, mainly focusing on the increased flexibility for the deployment of staffing resources and the greater certainty of funding on a year-to-year basis.

The section of the Gonski report the member for Reynell referred to in her question is 2.1.3—State and territory government funding for schooling, pages 42 to 44. That section of the report talks about the relationship between the funding model, which provides resources to schools, and the level of decision-making power schools have to then allocate those resources. Page 44 of the report very clearly states, 'Victoria and South Australia are the most decentralised systems.' For example, in South Australia the principal has the delegated responsibility for human resource decisions at the school level. Schools are able to advertise vacancies for most of their positions and are able to select staff through an open selection process based on merit. Some limited central management of both unplaced teachers and SSOs still occurs.

Additionally, principals manage the entire school budget and all proposed income and expenditure must be accounted for by each site's budgetary process. Further, principals, in conjunction with their governing councils, control the entire process of the allocation of available

funds. This includes all matters associated with the provision of teaching and learning services and all costs related to the provision of services to and the upkeep of all sites. Additionally, principals work in partnership with staff and governing councils to determine how site funding is used to support the professional development of their staff. These are just a few examples of the high degree of autonomy our schools have as a result of the funding model in South Australia.

To say that David Gonski was not talking about school management when he was talking about school funding is simply not correct, he obviously was. I know some people do not seem to understand this. Eleanor Roosevelt once said that understanding is a two-way street. Maybe it is a bit like the Southern Expressway; I do not know. Some people only travel in one direction. I can assure the member for Reynell that having control over their funding gives principals in South Australia enormous autonomy.

**Mr PISONI:** I have a supplementary question, if I may.

**The CHAIR:** I will listen. It may be a question.

**Mr PISONI:** Same budget line. The minister spoke about the principals' ability to manage their HR requirements. I refer her to the Personnel Advisory Committee Handbook. I have the 2011 edition here. It is a joint venture between the education department and the Australian Education Union. I refer to the issues for discussion by the Personnel Advisory Committee: deployment of staff appointed to the school; development of leadership structures within the school; planning and organisation of instruction in the school; the organisation of school, including face-to-face teaching requirements and applicable part-time arrangements, and it goes on. It is quite a substantial list.

It is also a requirement in South Australia—this is linked to the EBA—that each school will establish a Personnel Advisory Committee comprising the following membership: the principal (or the nominee), a representative elected by Australian Education Union members at the school and an equal opportunity representative elected by the school.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, this is not an opportunity to read out the whole policy. Do you have a question?

**Mr PISONI:** It is a 32-page policy.

**The CHAIR:** We do not want to hear that—although, I am quite happy if you want to read that for the rest of the day. It would save any other problems.

**Mr PISONI:** I am actually asking the minister if she can clarify her statement that HR decisions are the decision of the principal, or whether it is the decision of the Personnel Advisory Committee, where the principal is outnumbered by staff members?

**The CHAIR:** I think that is a separate question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Unley—

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Unley for his question. There seems to be some confusion—but that is not unusual—about the role of these committees. Personal advisory committees were introduced back in 1994, I understand. They serve as a consultative forum between the principal and staff to ensure their interests do not go unheard in decision-making processes in relation to the school.

In 1994, from memory, there was a Liberal government in power. The member for Unley is correct about his description of the people in the committee. There are four: the principal or his nominee, an AEU representative, an equal opportunity representative and a non-teaching staff representative, and they work in partnership, except where it is not practical because of the nature or the urgency of the matter.

The decision-making process does not extend to nor override the overarching responsibilities of the principal, under the Education Act, to make final human-resource related decisions. Under the act, the principal is responsible for providing educational leadership in the school, the management of the school's day-to-day operations and, when a school has a governing council, is jointly responsible for the governance to the school.

Although it is desirable and expected for the school's human resource management decisions to be arrived at by consensus, even the most careful consultation can result in differing views on competing priorities and opposing conclusions. While the act and the enterprise agreement acknowledge that the principal has the delegated responsibility for human resource decisions at the school, staff should have genuine and direct input into these decisions, and this is where the Personal Advisory Committee comes in.

I understand that the member for Unley has some considerable contempt for the Australian Education Union—I understand that—and he does not like representatives of staff being consulted and having some input in decisions that impact on the school community and decisions that are made at that local level, but let us be really clear: that is where the principals are coming from.

**Mr PISONI:** Point of order.

**The CHAIR:** What is your point of order?

**Mr PISONI:** I refer to standing order 127 about imputing improper motives. I ask it to be withdrawn.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am sorry, Madam Chair, I do not know what was inappropriate. The member for Unley is on the record on numerous occasions attacking the Australian Education Union.

**Mr PISONI:** Quote it.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I do not have the—

**Mr PISONI:** That's right, because you made it up.

**The CHAIR:** Order! We will move on to the next question. I do not know what you are asking the minister to withdraw; I did not hear anything that she needs to withdraw.

**Mr PISONI:** Can the minister just clarify whether the decisions of the Personal Advisory Committee are binding on the principal?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is not an agreement body, but the principal is required to consult.

**Mr PISONI:** So are they binding? Yes or no.

**The CHAIR:** Order! The minister has answered your question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have answered your question.

**Mr PISONI:** No you haven't.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, I have.

**Mr PISONI:** No, you haven't.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** Principals want to know.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, order! The member for Kaurna.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, School Education, Objectives, 'high quality public primary education'. Minister, can you advise the committee whether students will receive less than the mandated teaching time as a result of the new workplace agreement for teachers?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member Kaurna for his question. No child in South Australia will receive less than the mandated teaching time under the new arrangements, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this issue. There have been concerns, I think, peddled in relation to this new agreement. Architecture for the current enterprise agreement was negotiated in 2010. The current iteration of the enterprise agreement was negotiated in 2012 and provides for some minor changes to maximum individual workloads for teachers, such as face-to-face teaching duties and access to a meal break.

Teaching conditions are set by the Education Act, and the industrial conditions established in the enterprise agreement, as well as by decisions reached on particular matters in the Industrial Relations Commission. The Education Act requires that students be given between 1,575 and 1,650 minutes' instruction per week. This is a mandated teaching time which will not change under

the new arrangements. Most schools provide 1,600 minutes of instruction time and, compared with other states, South Australia generally provides more instruction time for students, and teachers work greater face-to-face teaching time than many other states.

Schools make local decisions about how they manage these changes, in consultation with their governing councils and parents. Most schools have had a smooth transition to the new agreement and, for the few who are grappling with how to meet industrial requirements, I would encourage them to consult with their school community and seek the support of the department. As I have said, we have one of the most decentralised school systems in the nation, and David Gonski recognised this in his report.

**Mr PISONI:** I have a supplementary, if I may, on this same question.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, I am getting a bit sick of your supplementaries, and so far all the supplementaries I have counted as questions, so I will be listening to this very carefully.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you very much.

**The CHAIR:** You know that supplementaries are the exception and not the rule.

**Mr PISONI:** And they are exceptional supplementaries, Madam Chair. Obviously on the same budget line, is it the case that students eating their lunch and being supervised by teachers is being counted as face-to-face teaching time under the EBA arrangements that were signed on 18 January 2013?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Unley again for his supplementary. Yes, as I understand it, 10 minutes of supervised eating time in each of the school lunchbreaks are supervised by teachers, and it has been determined by the Industrial Relations Commission that that 10-minute supervision time is actually linked to the curriculum and, because it is linked to the curriculum, and because they are supervising, that is deemed to be face-to-face instruction time.

**Mr PISONI:** So, prior to that agreement, the eating of lunch was not part of face-to-face teaching time; is that what you are saying? I just want to get some clarification here.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised that that varied from school to school; some counted it, some did not. However, the Industrial Relations Commission determined that, because the teachers were supervising students for 10 minutes and it was linked to the school curriculum, it was face-to-face teaching time. In South Australia, the minimum legislated face-to-face time, as I have said, is 1,575 minutes, that is, 26 hours and 15 minutes a week, and that is the minimum. As I said also, it is generally 1,600 minutes in South Australian schools, and I understand that it has been that amount of time for many years, and that is not new. In Victoria, the minimum weekly instruction time is 25 hours, I am advised.

**Mr PISONI:** That is minimum, isn't it, not maximum?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have just compared two minimums: South Australia's minimum is 26 hours and 15 minutes and Victoria's minimum is 25 hours.

**Mr PISONI:** Did the—

**The CHAIR:** The member for Colton. You have had eight questions, member for Unley, compared to three on the other side.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I refer to Budget Paper 3, pages 60 and 62. Can the minister comment on suggestions that the government has set targets for parents to raise, through sausage sizzles and quiz nights, and that families are now expected to contribute through this, \$774 million over five years as part of the state government revenue?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I note and understand why the member for Colton would raise this, because Budget Paper 3 shows an obvious adjustment to the amount of revenue taken by schools. This budgetary adjustment has been done by Treasury to reflect the latest income data and suggests schools will generate more money for themselves in the coming year. It is important to stress this revenue does not pass through central office, nor does anyone other than the schools have control over it. It is an example of school autonomy. They are free to fundraise, as well as enjoy profits from their canteens or uniform shops. With the approval of their community, they can also raise the amount of the materials and services charge.

In 2013, the standard sum for a primary student is \$214, and this rises to \$284 for a student at high school. This money aims to cover the costs and services for things that students will use as part of the standard curriculum. As part of the Education (Councils and Charges)

Amendment Act 2000, the materials and services charge was legislated by the previous Liberal government in February 2001. It allows school communities who wish to provide materials and services over and above the standard choice to do so.

Before they do this, however, they must seek approval by polling their school community. It is therefore wrong to say the government has any expectation that parents must contribute to the government's bottom line. It is not likely the Premier attends every governing council meeting to heavy parents to vote in a certain way, I can assure members. Interestingly, in the last year, the percentage of schools that voted to increase charging above the standard sum was 0.2 per cent, so there is no substance to suggest that this budgetary adjustment has come as a result of a massive increase to school fees.

It is also worth noting that the standard sum is indexed annually to the City of Adelaide June quarter CPI. A simple rule of budgeting is that, in order for something to be spent, you first need to make a record of the money coming in. As schools are an entity of the state government, they must be accountable, and this is why the papers show money coming in and it is also what has been, and ultimately will be, spent. As an experienced businessman, I cannot follow how this is lost on a person who has made this actual statement. It makes me wonder how successfully they actually manage their own business.

**Mr PISONI:** Point of order, Madam Chair: 127, imputing improper motives to the member for Unley, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**The CHAIR:** I do not think there was any implication. It was a general statement. That is how I heard it.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Madam Chair, I did not refer to the member for Unley at all.

**Mr GARDNER:** I would have thought you would know the rules about identifying people.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Who did I identify?

**Mr GARDNER:** You described somebody.

**The CHAIR:** No, I think it was a general statement. I do not think the member for Unley was mentioned.

**Mr PISONI:** I have a supplementary.

**The CHAIR:** Well, I will listen to your supplementary.

*The Hon. P. Caica interjecting:*

**Mr PISONI:** So you are telling them what to do, are you?

**The CHAIR:** Order! What is your supplementary, and I will rule it a supplementary or another question.

**Mr PISONI:** Can the minister provide a breakdown of the schools revenue line for the 2012-13 year and the 2013 revenue year?

**The CHAIR:** That is not a supplementary. That is another question. I am sure it was on your list.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I will just check how time consuming that will be. We are already spending a lot of time on other matters, providing information to people. Basically, no.

**Mr PISONI:** Sorry? Did you say no you will not provide that information?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes; it is not possible to provide that information.

**Mr PISONI:** Well, how did you get your figures then? How did you get your figures if you cannot provide the information? It's outrageous!

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We get it at the gross level, I am advised. It is an enormous piece of work. We would have to go to every school around the state to collect that information.

**Mr PISONI:** But you've got it—it's in the budget. This is the most ridiculous thing I have heard. No wonder the department's a mess.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Ms Riedstra will explain it to you.

**Mr PISONI:** Because you can't—because you can't explain it?

**The CHAIR:** Order! Member for Unley, order! I'm not putting up with this all day long. Sorry.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** She will explain the complexities of your request.

**Mr PISONI:** Because you can't?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I can explain to the committee, if you like, the hours upon hours that have already been expended in the last financial year compiling information for you. I can give you the hours if you like, or I can give you the dollar cost—what would you like?

**Mr PISONI:** I would like the answer to my question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Nearly \$50,000 in a financial year: freedom of information requests from the member for Unley have already cost, in the last financial year, this department something like \$50,000. What a disgrace!

**Mr PISONI:** Why is that a disgrace? Why don't you just hand the information over? Why is it so secret? Why are you so offended by FOI requests?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is the cost, the complexity, the trawling—

**Mr PISONI:** What are you so offended by FOI requests?

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** What are you hiding, Jennifer? What are you hiding?

**The CHAIR:** Order! The member for Unley, order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Day in, day out, trawling.

**Mr PISONI:** What are you hiding?

**The CHAIR:** Order! The member for Unley, and you do not address the minister by her first name—you know that is not convention.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Trawling.

*Mr Pisoni interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order! Minister, would your adviser like to explain?

**Ms RIEDSTRA:** Schools keep their own general ledger and we keep collect summary data at a consolidated level. We do not have access easily to the details within their general ledger.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Member for Reynell.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, delivery of high quality public primary and secondary education. Can the minister provide details on how the drift to the non-government sector has slowed?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Again, I thank the member for Reynell for her question. Students attending both our public and non-government schools achieve excellent results and give us real reasons to be proud of our education system here in South Australia. I respect that parents make choices about their children's education, and the reasons and motivations leading to parents choosing a particular school are varied and diverse.

In fact, in my electorate in Golden Grove, every school is co-located with a public or private school, and it works very well in my area and I have a great relationship with all the schools, but it is wonderful to see both public and private schools working collaboratively to give the students, no matter which school they attend, the best opportunities. It is particularly evident at the high school campus, where we have two private schools and the one public school, with students having access to all schools and an enormous variety of subjects which they can study.

There has been a drift, and the drift has been nation wide, from government schools to non-government schools, but that trend has slowed and stabilised here in South Australia. The drift from the government sector to the non-government sector for full-time equivalent students between 2011 and 2012 was just 0.2 of a percentage point, the same as the movement in 2010 to 2011 and from 2009 to 2010. In 2003 it was 0.9 per cent. There were almost 600 more full-time equivalent

students in public schools in 2012 than in 2011. This stands in stark contrast to the 3,000 students that left our public schools from 2001 to 2002.

It is really important that public schools are treated with respect. Clearly, the South Australian public value our public schools and our public school teachers, and it is disappointing on occasion to hear how our public school system is derided by some people, very often with baseless assertions. I will continue to work as Minister for Education to support our public school system and support our non-government system, to ensure that we get the best outcomes for our children. They are the most important thing in the scheme of things.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 24, Highlights, literacy and numeracy strategy. My question to the minister is: can you advise what is being done to improve the literacy and numeracy of South Australian students, and what role is the Head of Schools playing in that important task?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Kaurana for this question. Our Head of Schools in March this year, Mr Garry Costello, gave a presentation to principals on the Fleurieu Peninsula that said South Australian students were not achieving as highly in numeracy as they could. People will know that I recently launched a numeracy and literacy strategy here in South Australia. We recognise we want our students to do better, and the purpose of this presentation by Mr Costello was to show principals where student achievement could be improved. Some schools simply are not achieving as they should.

Principals have a high degree of autonomy here in South Australia. They are the lead educator in our schools and they have responsibility for managing our schools. Principals need to be able to fulfil both of these roles. The purpose of Mr Costello's presentation was not to talk down public education, as some have done, but it was about highlighting to these principals where improvement should and could be made.

In the majority of literacy and numeracy categories South Australian results are closer to the national minimum standard than in previous years. I am pleased that the member for Unley has indeed said, and I will quote this, 'What we don't measure, we can't improve.' I agree wholeheartedly with that. It is true that we can do better, particularly in numeracy, and we are taking steps to achieve this.

We have introduced minimum instruction times for many subjects in junior primary, including 90 minutes a week learning science, 300 on mathematics and numeracy, and 300 minutes on literacy. Students in years 4 to 7 will spend at least 120 minutes on science a week, a minimum of 300 minutes a week on both mathematics and literacy and, as I said, I launched the numeracy and literacy strategy in April this year. Quite frankly, I expect frank and fearless advice from my public servants, and it is for this reason I think Mr Costello is doing a great job.

It was disappointing to have the member for Unley seize upon the presentation with such gusto because he sees it as another opportunity to talk down public education in our state.

**Mr PISONI:** Point of order, Madam Chair: the minister is imputing improper motives on the member for Unley—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No I'm not.

**Mr PISONI:** It's pretty obvious. That was not my intention—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Madam Chair, I don't—

**Mr PISONI:** That was not my intention at all, and she has no hope of proving that. She cannot just make the claim—

**The CHAIR:** Order. Okay, you have made your point. I would ask the minister to go back to the question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Madam Chair, can I correct something that the member for Unley put out publicly. He was using an example of some bricklaying apprentices attending a TAFE college and saying they could not tell the difference between imperial measurement and millimetres on a tape measure. There were some shocked radio commentators who had some concern.

However, if the member had bothered to check, he would have realised that Mr Costello was using an example from 2009 statistics from a Gippsland TAFE, a TAFE college in Victoria. He was giving an example of Victorian students, not South Australian students.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Minister, have you finished your answer to the member for Kaurna's question?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have, thank you, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to take you back to the Debelle inquiry, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 12. You said that you had been briefed on the inquiry—that you have the inquiry. Are you able to tell the committee how many DECD employees gave evidence to Justice Debelle?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No.

**Mr PISONI:** Sorry?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, I cannot; I do not have that information here.

**Mr PISONI:** Because you do not know?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I do not have that information here.

**Mr PISONI:** You said earlier that you had the report and you had been briefed on it.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have received the report and, no, I cannot give you that information; I do not have it here. I am happy to take it on notice. When we release the report publicly next week you will have that information.

**Mr PISONI:** Are you able to inform the committee how many ministerial staff, both serving and former, were interviewed by Mr Debelle?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No. That information will be made available next week.

**Mr PISONI:** Has the department put a team together to deal with any of the Debelle inquiry's recommendations or a response?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, we have.

**Mr PISONI:** Could you give the detail as to who is heading that, how many staff and what department is managing it?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Mr David Waterford is responsible for implementing recommendations from the Debelle inquiry.

**Mr PISONI:** How many staff are involved in the implementation and response?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will be using the expertise of our department as appropriate in doing that.

**Mr PISONI:** Is it a special team or is it just simply public servants who will be delegated tasks?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, it will not be a special team. We will draw on appropriate staff as needed.

**Mr PISONI:** This is Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, child abuse victims compensation, page 12, Objective. The third paragraph states 'aims to create a state where all children are safe.'

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Can you give me a minute to find that reference, please?

**The CHAIR:** Can you repeat the reference, please, member for Unley?

**Mr PISONI:** Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 12. It is regarding your objectives, minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Can you show me where you are talking about?

**Mr PISONI:** It is the third paragraph, regarding your objectives. Third paragraph, 'aims to create a state where all children are safe'.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr PISONI:** Can the minister advise how many families are currently engaged in legal action against the department relating to child sex abuse incidents on DECD sites or involving DECD staff or contracted staff?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I will take that on notice, thank you.

**Mr PISONI:** Do you have a compensation fund established for families that may be granted an award or an amount due to their child being abused in a DECD site or by DECD staff or a contracted staff member—or a contingency?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, we do not have a fund.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Colton. I allowed you seven questions then, member for Unley.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 13, Workforce summary. Minister, does the department employ qualified auditors within its Investigations Unit, and can you provide an update on investigations relating to financial and conduct concerns at Murray Bridge High School?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, I can. The department has qualified accountants working both in its finance and internal audit sections. As the Murray Bridge matters are under investigation there are some limitations to what I can advise the member for Colton, but I can advise that investigations began in November last year following initial contact being made with the Investigations Unit.

The allegations of financial misconduct are subject to investigation by the Investigations Unit. The matter is quite complex and involves a number of counter allegations. Should there be any indication of criminality, those matters will be referred to SAPOL. The chief executive has made this investigation a priority for completion; however, all parties concerned are entitled to procedural fairness while the facts in this quite complex matter are being ascertained.

I do have to say that there have been some concerns by staff members working at the high school, quite dedicated staff who are proud of their school. They made comments in *The Murray Valley Standard* a month or so ago. The statement said:

We are proud to be staff at Murray Bridge High School, support the right of our colleagues to a process which offers them natural justice and know that our school continues to offer a quality education to all students.

This is clearly a difficult time for all those at Murray Bridge High School but I think it is fantastic that the staff are maintaining their professionalism and focusing, as I have said previously, on the education of our children.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question relates to Budget Paper 5, page 21, line 24. Can the minister advise the status of the expansions at Adelaide, Brighton, Glenunga and Marryatville high schools, and advise when they will be able to accept additional students?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** This Labor government committed to expanding our four most popular public schools in 2010, and this was to allow them to meet increased demand and take in some additional students. Let me be really clear what the commitment was. For Adelaide High we committed to cater for an additional 250 students from 2013. The time line for Adelaide High was adjusted after the minister at the time decided that the plan needed greater community consultation. The revisions were approved unanimously by the school's governing council, which includes the member for Adelaide.

Whilst the budget papers show the anticipated completion of these projects, they do not illustrate when the new classrooms will be completed that will allow for the increased intake to begin. Once the classrooms are up and running work will continue in other parts of the project, including landscaping and construction of non-teaching buildings. This is what the budget papers are referring to in relation to project completion.

For both Brighton Secondary and Marryatville High we said we will cater for up to an extra 250 students from 2014. As new classrooms will be ready by then, I am advised that this work is on track. For Glenunga, the government committed to cater for an additional 100 students from 2013. I can confirm that Glenunga has already expanded its intake to over 1,400 students. New classroom space will be available as promised, and the expanded intake to around 1,500 students will begin at the start of the next school year. Whilst the space will be available, I can see the logic in beginning to expand enrolment at the start of the school year rather than part way through.

As result of these expansions, I can understand that a lot of communities are keen to see what revisions may be in place as a result of subsequent review to school zoning, and I will be taking proposals to cabinet once all the work is complete.

There has been some confusion around the construction of these upgrades and just what those construction deadlines will mean for the start of the expanded intake at these schools. The

budget papers clearly show that construction at these schools will run up until the middle of 2015 but, quite rightly, they do not show when the new classroom space will become available. I only wish that the member for Unley had bothered to do his research before spreading concern and misinformation in our communities for the sake of another headline. Can I just correct what I said before: Brighton is an expansion of 250 and Marryatville is 200.

**Mr PISONI:** So, you got that bit wrong, did you?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, I did, but there is a lot more you have got wrong and we will go through each of them today.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, line 26. In relation to the Farrell Flat declared school bus run, can the minister advise if rural students from independent or Catholic schools are being discriminated against by the department's transport policy?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Kaurana for his question. The department's transport policy has been supported by successive Liberal and Labor governments and it treats students from both non-government and government schools equally. In relation to this matter, I note that the member for Unley, in *The Flinders News*, said that about 22 students are being discriminated against. This is completely untrue.

The state government supports 16,000 students a year through country school buses and other assistance at a cost of something like \$33 million. This allows students in rural South Australia, who live at least five kilometres away from the nearest government school, transport assistance to that school. In many cases this involves transport on a bus. It does not matter if they attend an independent school, they will still receive the same service. So, I fail to understand how anyone is discriminating.

In the case that was highlighted in the media, the department was advised by the principal of Clare High School that the Farrell Flat bus was overcrowded with 63 students listed to use a 43-seat bus. A review by the transport service unit found that only 39 of the listed 63 students were eligible under this policy to use the service from the Farrell Flat area to Clare. Whilst many independent high school students were able to take the bus into Clare, the policy precluded mostly primary students who were bypassing their closest government primary school, either in Burra or Farrell Flat. I have worked closely with the member for Frome to extend the use of the current bus on the Farrell Flat route until the end of term 2. This will allow the parents of those students who are ineligible three months to make alternative travel arrangements.

A new air-conditioned 43-seat bus fitted with seatbelts will be provided from the start of term 3 for all eligible students. I understand the opposition has flagged a change to this policy should they win government in March. I would be pleased to hear the details of that policy today, including how it will work and how it will be paid for. Will there be cutbacks in other areas of the education budget to pay for their new policy? I would especially be interested to learn if the member for Unley is suggesting that South Australian taxpayers should fund transport to any school for any child no matter the distance and no matter how many schools are closer.

**Mr PISONI:** You will have to wait and see, won't you?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Come on, be open with the South Australian public.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** I have a supplementary.

**The CHAIR:** I will listen to your supplementary. It will probably be a question.

**Mr PISONI:** The new 43-seat bus, when the size was specified for that bus in the new contract were non-government school students taken into account for the numbers?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** All eligible students were taken into account.

**Mr PISONI:** No; that was not my question. My question was: were all non-government students taken into account who use that bus?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Eligible non-government students were taken into account, yes.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, do you have a question?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes, I do. I would like to now take you, minister, if I may, to Budget Paper 3, page 112—National school funding reform, and refer to the media release of the Premier and the

education minister, which states that there will be \$84 million extra for schools next year, and that would be, I think, a \$28 million state government contribution.

On 6 May the Budget and Finance Committee heard evidence from Mr DeGennaro that there were specified and unspecified savings efficiencies of \$77 million expected for that year: \$27.987 million in specified savings and \$49.085 million in unspecified savings. Is that \$84 million after those savings are made or before those savings are made, and what is the net difference when those savings are taken into account?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Could you repeat your numbers so that we can check those?

**Mr PISONI:** I am reading the *Hansard* from the Budget and Finance Committee hearing here in the parliament on 6 May this year. Mr DeGennaro referred to the 2014-15 savings: specified savings of \$27.987 million and unspecified savings of \$49.085 million.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** While Ms Riedstra is checking that, the advice I have is that despite the savings target, taking that into account, the department's budget has increased by \$152 million in the 2013-14 year compared to the 2012-13 budget. My advice is that that is without the increase of Gonski.

**Mr PISONI:** Does that \$152 million cover the additional costs for that year due to the increments in the enterprise bargaining agreement?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, it does.

**Mr PISONI:** Does it only cover that?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, it is the budget increase.

**Mr PISONI:** So what is the EBA obligation? What is the cost of the EBA out of that \$152 million?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The \$152 million includes higher employee expenditure, the budget adjustment to reflect the actual expenditure trends of schools, additional resourcing for children requiring alternative care arrangements—

**Mr PISONI:** Sorry, minister, my question related to the cost of the increases under the EBA.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You did want to know—

**Mr PISONI:** No, we have moved on from there. The cost of the—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, I am giving you a comprehensive answer.

**Mr PISONI:** —EBA increases.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Madam Speaker, it is impossible to answer questions here.

**The CHAIR:** I am not sure what is going on here.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** And higher expenditure for the schools maintenance program, growth in student enrolments and higher derecognition of asset expenses in 2013-14 in respect of properties held. In relation to the EB, I am advised it is approximately \$93 million.

**Mr PISONI:** I want to take you back to Gonski again. I want to try to get an answer for Tyndale College as to what their funding will be next year. They have an enrolment of 1,425 students for 2013 and an SES score of 92. The commonwealth recurrent funding in 2012 was \$99.75 million and their state recurrent funding in 2012 was \$2.68 million. Are you able to advise the committee what the funding for Tyndale College will be for the start of next year under the new education reform?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Well, of course I cannot, you know I cannot, it is a silly question. All of these matters are being worked through. Tyndale, a school which is in my electorate, is part of the non-government sector. All of those issues are being worked through in great detail now and schools will know over the coming months what their allocation will be next year. Of course I cannot do one school calculation.

**Mr PISONI:** When will they know, minister? Generally they know about 18 months in advance, so when will they know what funding they will receive for next year?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Part of working this out relies on the August census, I understand, so we are still some considerable way away from that.

**Mr PISONI:** What do you mean it relies on the August—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** On their enrolment.

**Mr PISONI:** By this time of the year—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, they do not.

**Mr PISONI:** —non-government schools know what their government funding will be.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised, we rely on the August census for calculations.

**Mr PISONI:** For next year, do you? So, you are happy to put that on the record, are you?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That is what I am advised. If that is not correct, I am happy to come back and correct it.

**Mr PISONI:** As you have done often.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Well, you can be comforted by the fact that you are not brought into the house to correct the inaccuracies that you put forward nearly on a daily basis.

**The CHAIR:** I will allow you one more question.

**Mr PISONI:** One more question, thank you. Are you able to confirm, minister, the savings that were laid out by Mr DeGennaro at the Budget and Finance Committee on 6 May from the 2012-13 year through to the 2015-16 year by specified and unspecified savings totalling \$262 million—so, \$109.5 million in specified savings and \$152.5 million in unspecified savings?

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Point of order: I have tried to follow this very carefully and I have tried to follow the member for Unley's question, but I would like it to be related back to a line in here, as well.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, I have just had a discussion with the clerk about that. This committee is not responsible for evidence that is given at the finance committee and, so, really you have to relate this back to a budget line, and I am not sure where you are coming from there. Do you have a budget line?

**Mr PISONI:** Page 13, Program Costs, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** The minister does not have to answer to evidence presented in another committee but she may choose to do so.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am sorry, but are you asking what the unspecified savings are?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes, please, that was my next question, but I will take that now.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The unspecified savings have not been agreed to yet.

**Mr PISONI:** Have the unspecified savings for the 2012-13 year been agreed to—the unspecified savings and efficiency dividends totalling \$9.464 million? That has just finished.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** All savings in 2012-13 financial year, I am advised, have been made. We have come in essentially on budget and I understand that the savings were met through TVSPs and some efficiency measures.

**Mr PISONI:** What were those efficiency dividends?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That could have been reduction in staff without a TVSP.

**Mr PISONI:** So what was the total reduction in staff?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** In June 2012, the department requested expressions of interest from staff for a second round of TVSPs, and offers were made in September. For 2012-13, we are forecasting achieving a reduction of 87 FTEs under the TVSP scheme, and this is anticipated to save something like \$9.4 million in a full year, including on-costs.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 14 at line 38. Minister, can you confirm whether asbestos has been found in a poor condition at six government schools?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Colton for this question: I know he has a particular interest in this issue. I assure him that all asbestos found to be dangerous in a state school or preschool is removed as it is identified.

Since 2010, the government has spent almost \$10.9 million on asbestos removal at schools and preschools. DPTI conducts an annual process of inspections for each site where asbestos is recorded. The source of this data is continually updated as new information is received from removal projects or when new material is found.

As we know, in May, it came to my attention that 47 children and some staff at Littlehampton Primary School received a low exposure to asbestos when, in 2009, interactive whiteboards were installed in the school. At that time, there was no record of asbestos being present where the work took place. As soon as we found out, a sensitive and appropriate strategy was planned to advise the school community. In the interests of transparency, I made a statement in the house but deliberately did not name the school. I could think of nothing worse than learning on the news that my child had been exposed to asbestos without knowing all the facts.

Following the statement, the school principal was to contact parents and fill them in on exactly what had happened, giving particular detail on the very low-level risk involved. Unfortunately, following my statement, the member for Unley leaked details to the media of the name of the school, which led to great upset, confusion and anger. The member for Unley also wanted South Australians to believe that, as a result of an FOI he received, some schools had asbestos in a dangerous condition that had not been regularly inspected.

He caused great chaos and anxiety in these school communities. I think he should ask himself how both students and parents would feel when, during NAPLAN testing, they turn on Channel 7 News to learn their school is an unsafe environment, and that is what happened to the students, parents and staff of Adelaide High, Craigmore High, East Marden Primary, Henley Beach Primary, Hallett Cove South Primary and Edward John Eyre High.

For the record, inspections were completed at these schools on the following dates: Adelaide High School, 11 January this year; Craigmore High School, 25 October last year; East Marden Primary School, 14 February this year; Henley High School, 13 December last year; Hallett Cove South Primary School, 16 October last year; and Edward John Eyre High School in Whyalla on 18 September last year.

It is somewhat understandable that all but two of these schools took the trouble of sending notes to parents explaining how wrong the member for Unley was. It does not say much, I think, when schoolchildren can be so upset during NAPLAN testing and, as far as I am aware, no apology has been issued.

So, in answer to your question, member for Colton, I can confirm that asbestos has not been left in a dangerous condition at these six schools, and I would ask the member for Unley to offer an apology to the parents, students and staff affected for the commotion he caused.

**Ms THOMPSON:** I refer to the child protection curriculum, Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 12, under Objectives. How is the government implementing the Keeping Them Safe child protection curriculum to support the safety and health of schoolchildren in South Australia?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you, member for Reynell. I inform the house that in the past year teachers have continued to deliver the Keeping Them Safe child protection curriculum in schools across the state, and the Principals Australia Institute has recently been contracted to deliver training sessions to our teachers. This builds on the 18,000 teachers who were trained across the state by the department in 2006-07, and more than 1,000 others were trained under the contract by the Council for Education Associations of South Australia between 2008 and 2012.

The departmental policy, 'Child protection in schools, early childhood education and care services', which is freely available on the DECD website, makes it a responsibility for principals to ensure that staff access approved child protection training at least once every three years. It also makes it a responsibility for principals to ensure that children and young people in schools and preschools access approved child protection curriculum. On 2 February this year, a reminder was issued to all principals and preschool directors to reinforce these responsibilities.

The curriculum is divided into categories to ensure suitability for children: the early years band, for ages three to five; early years band, reception to year 2; primary years band, years 3 to 5; a middle years band, years 6 to 9; and, a senior years band, 10 to 12. Improvements are regularly considered, and I understand the material is being reviewed in the context of the new Australian curriculum. The department is also examining improved compliance procedures for schools.

I note that an undated, unsigned, unofficial document was quoted in parliament during the past year to cast doubt on this program. Despite this document not having official approval, I understand it may have been retained illegally by a former employee and provided to the member for Unley in contravention of a separation agreement. A freedom of information request from the member for Unley has uncovered other documents by the author of the unsigned, undated and unofficial document.

In these, the author states specifically that he is not an expert on child protection and repeatedly quotes and misquotes Kylie Minogue songs to support his argument. In contrast, the official program has been designed by child protection specialists and is being rolled out by a reputable and trustworthy organisation. The program is of such high quality that it is used under licence by educators in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 16, line 5. Will the minister explain why the government offers TVSPs to employees over 65 years of age?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Reynell for her question. An employee will only be offered a targeted volunteer separation package (TVSP) if their position is considered surplus to the ongoing requirements of the department. The offer must also ensure that it will deliver an ongoing saving to the department. Young, old and everyone in between—employees of all ages—have a right to be treated fairly and have the same opportunities as everyone else. Provided a position is identified as being surplus to the department's ongoing needs, it does not matter how old the recipient may be. In each case, a substantive position was abolished, and this generates an ongoing saving.

**Mr PISONI:** This is the same budget line: can the minister explain why, under the department's classification—or their ruling application that was granted by the Australian Taxation Office (CR 2012/46) for what is commonly known as the \$50,000 burnt-out bonus that was applied for late last year and expires on Sunday—a requirement exists in that program for teachers to be under 65 years of age in order to qualify for the tax saving?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** They are two different programs. You are referring to the—

**Mr PISONI:** You were just talking about the discrimination of older workers earlier, so I was just asking you to clarify why there is discrimination in this—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am sorry, but am I allowed to get more than three words out before you correct me? I do not interrupt you while you are asking the question. Give me a chance to speak. We are talking about two different programs. The Teacher Renewal Program was designed specifically to encourage teachers who felt they were not as enthusiastic about teaching as they once were to take the opportunity to retire. It was essentially self-funding, and the only way that could be done was by providing opportunities for young teachers to come into those positions.

**Mr PISONI:** Can you advise why that application was made and whether the department followed through with offering that scheme to teachers?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We applied to the Australian Taxation Office for concessional taxation purposes as an approved early retirement scheme for the 2012-13 financial year.

**Mr PISONI:** That which expires—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, that is right.

**Mr PISONI:** Was that offered to teachers? That is the question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have only had one scheme, and that was offered in 2011.

**Mr PISONI:** It was gazetted last year that:

This Ruling applies from the date of Commissioner's approval to 30 June 2013. The Ruling continues to apply after 30 June to all entities within the specified class who had entered into the specific scheme during the term of the Ruling.

I am asking: did anybody enter into the scheme that was set up for this tax ruling?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have a tax ruling that allows us to do it, but we have not proceeded past the 2011 year with that.

**Mr PISONI:** No, sorry, this was a second tax ruling; you are looking at the first tax ruling that has expired. There is a second tax ruling and I am asking why that was applied for and why it has not been acted?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have the opportunity to do it, but we have decided at this stage not to proceed with it.

**Mr PISONI:** It expires on Sunday.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That is right, and we have decided not to proceed with it at this stage.

**Mr PISONI:** Can you explain why?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Well, we have not decided to proceed with it at this stage until some issues are sorted.

**Mr PISONI:** There were no reasons for not proceeding with it?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have two matters before the Equal Opportunity Commission that we need to finalise before we proceed any further.

**Mr PISONI:** Can I have some details on those matters, please?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** What details would you like?

**Mr PISONI:** Could you explain what the matters are and why they are relevant to not proceeding with this scheme?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We need to resolve issues in relation to the criteria of the scheme through the Equal Opportunity Commission before we can proceed further with—

**Mr PISONI:** Is that the age limit?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** —any further offers. They are issues around young graduates receiving it. I am advised that it is around the cut-off level for step 3 teachers.

**Mr PISONI:** Has there been a challenge to the department's decision to only offer the replacement positions to teachers of a certain employment level or step?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is fundamentally about our ability to restrict offers to step 3 and below teachers. That is the issue.

**Mr PISONI:** Has the department been challenged on that decision? Have there been teachers who are temporary who have challenged the department's criteria and is that what is in the Industrial Relations Commission?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** There are two matters before the Equal Opportunity Commission and they relate to the level of the teacher; it is around the level of pay that teachers receive.

**Mr PISONI:** Yes, and have both actions been taken by DECD teachers who are on contract, or former DECD teachers?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised yes.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you. There is another class of employee to whom the scheme applies, and is open to all DECD employees: one of the descriptions is here—and this is specifically to deal with getting the tax-back status—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Getting the what?

**Mr PISONI:** —and it is teachers who are identified as being unable to perform assigned teaching tasks at the required skill level. Are you able to inform the committee just how many teachers are in the system who cannot perform teaching tasks at the required skill level?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That is a very difficult and wide-ranging question. I do not quite know how I could answer that question. Could you be a bit more specific about what you want to know?

**Mr PISONI:** It is a condition of the tax exemption. The previous 102 or 103 teachers—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Each case is considered on its merits. Each person would have their case considered on its merits in relation to this scheme.

**Mr PISONI:** Does the department sign a document on behalf of the recipient that goes to the tax department to confirm that they are identified as not being able to perform assigned teaching tasks in order to get their tax deductibility or the full tax benefit?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised that we administer the scheme in compliance with the tax ruling.

**Mr PISONI:** I am trying to determine, minister, whether the department identifies these teachers who apply for the \$50,000 and how many of them get the full tax exemption based on the fact that they meet the criteria: that they are permanently employed members currently appointed to or have a right of return position, have accumulated at least 10 years of permanent service, are younger than the normal age of retirement, and are identified as being unable to perform assigned teaching tasks. Must they meet all of that criteria in order to receive the tax benefit? Do you confirm that they meet that criteria when they apply for that tax benefit?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have had one scheme and we have administered it within the department and applied the tax ruling to the process.

**Mr PISONI:** Who determines whether—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We do.

**Mr PISONI:** You determine that they meet the criteria?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am told that we contracted the scheme out and have an independent judgement over who qualifies.

**Mr PISONI:** So do all the teachers who have accepted the \$50,000 burn-out bonus meet the dot point requirements to entitle them to have the full tax benefit?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We applied the ruling, and the appropriate people got the tax benefit.

**Mr PISONI:** So 102 in the first scheme were as the tax identified, as not being able to perform assigned teaching tasks as required?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I know that you will be very keen to go out and run that as a headline today. I would caution you against that—

**Mr PISONI:** Point of order, Madam Chair. The minister is imputing improper motives.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No; it is just track record.

**Mr PISONI:** Madam Chair, I ask for it to be withdrawn.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am happy for the member for Unley to give us an assurance that he is not going to go out and run that as a headline, like he has done in the past, saying that—

**Mr PISONI:** Madam Chair, please rule on my point of order.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, I think perhaps you had better change your wording, and hope that the member will not go out and do that today.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I would hope, and I would be happy for him to give us an assurance that that is not his intention, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Would you like to finish your answer, because that may be relevant to the point of order. You started to say—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I started to say that I would caution, I would request, I would urge the member for Unley not to go out and denigrate people who have put many years of hard work into teaching children here in South Australia.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Member for Colton.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** My question, minister, refers to the resources allocated to the areas with responsibility for investigations and critical incident management, and I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 13, Workforce summary. Of the department staff referred to in 2012-13 and 2013-14, can the minister advise how many and what sort of positions deal with critical incidents and investigations?

#### **Membership:**

Ms Sanderson substituted for Mr Treloar.

**The CHAIR:** Minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the most important concerns of any community is the health, safety and wellbeing of its children and young people, and protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect is paramount. That is why the state government, through the Department for Education and Child Development, has boosted its staffing in units that manage critical incidents and conduct investigations.

There are four areas that have had an additional 7.5 FTEs allocated in the past year. The Care Concern Investigation Unit looks into serious allegations involving children under the guardianship of the minister and consists of a manager, a principal investigations officer, four investigation officers, a project officer analyst (0.8 position) and one office manager. The School Care Unit receives and assesses critical incident reports ranging from natural disasters to serious illness, injury or conflict; anything that may impact on the health and wellbeing of our staff and students. This unit includes a manager, a critical incident coordinator, one intervention order support officer and 0.5 principal consultant, emergency management (a temporary position).

The department's Investigations Unit looks into allegations of serious misconduct. Staff have professional investigative backgrounds, including local and overseas police experience. Four of the additional 7.5 FTEs in the past year have been added to this area, that now consists of an investigations manager, an analyst, six investigators, one admin and one admin officer. Finally, the HR Support Misconduct and Incapacity Unit has seven staff, an increase of three FTEs compared to the year before. So, as of 1 July 2013, there will be a manager, a principal HR support officer, four senior case managers and one administration officer. This unit provides advice and consultation services related to employee conduct and incapacity and makes recommendations in relation to the adjudication of disciplinary matters.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Supplementary, please, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** I will listen carefully to your supplementary, but the same rule applies to you as to the opposition.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I notice how well you have enforced that rule too, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** We have only had three so far today.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** With these resources in place, can you explain to the committee the variation in how long it takes before parents are notified about allegations of abuse in their schools?

**The CHAIR:** I consider that a question, not a supplementary.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That is a bit tough.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** That is very unfortunate, but that is okay. I am not going to dispute your ruling, Madam Chair.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** For the member for Colton's benefit, I advise each case of an alleged sexual abuse is unique and each case has to be treated on an individual basis. The department works with South Australia Police in determining when a letter should be sent and if the alleged offender can be named. In a case from earlier this year, the department worked with the non-government organisation that employed an alleged offender to determine what sites the person worked at and the students who were in contact with them. It was then necessary to verify addresses and contact details for each relevant person and determine whether a notification should be provided to the students or their parents.

This last matter included consideration of each student's age and residential status, as some of the students were in their late teens or had moved out of home. All of this occurred alongside other critical processes, such as seeking legal advice and confirming with police that notifications would not impede their investigations. The letters were sent four weeks after the arrest of the individual, an event that occurred during the Christmas holidays. In other cases, letters were sent within a matter of days. This included a situation where allegations were made against a departmental employee who made admissions about the allegations and worked in a single location with a specific group of students.

It is clear that differences such as these may result in different notification periods and in complex matters advice is also sought from a task force, including chief executives, senior police, the Crown Solicitor and sexual assault specialists. My clear expectation is that parents should be told as much as possible as early as possible to protect their children. The purpose of the letters is

about getting the right support to the right people and making sure the courts and police can take action against alleged offenders.

I note that in another recent case the department wrote to parents in February of this year and the case was raised in the media by the member for Unley on 5 May of this year. By his own admission, he had known about the case for two months but had not raised it with my office or the department. This raises serious questions about commitment to child protection. When the member for Unley held his press conference on a Sunday morning outside Flinders Street he claimed that: 'We still don't know if parents have been told', because he had not bothered to ask anyone. All the while, he was sitting on allegations of child sexual abuse and had not sought any confirmation that the predator had been removed from contact with children, that the victim had been supported or that the alleged perpetrator was being prosecuted.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question relates to underperforming teachers, which has been slightly touched on but not comprehensively dealt with. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, line 25. Can the minister advise whether suggestions that there is a 48-step process to removing underperforming teachers are correct?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for this question. The process to remove a teacher is evidence driven; it is not a prescriptive process. Employees are obviously given opportunities over a reasonable period of time to access appropriate resources and support to improve their performance.

When a principal becomes aware of performance concerns, they inform the employee and give them an opportunity to discuss any mitigating circumstances, like health, personal issues, workplace conflict, for example. They should then discuss how they will work together to address the concerns with the aim of improving that performance. This is often sufficient. If the employee's performance does not improve, the principal should then begin a formal performance process to address specific concerns, using strategies and resources recommended by the department's Performance and Development Unit. These include mentoring, further training, counselling, as well as observing other staff that perform satisfactorily.

The principal will meet with the employee regularly, giving them critical feedback, setting clearly stated expectations and goals and specifying tasks with clearly identified deadlines. The length of time will vary, obviously, depending on if there are other factors, like a health matter that is impacting on performance.

If there has been no satisfactory improvement by the end of the formal process, the matter will be referred to the executive director for human resources for further action. Disciplinary action may range from a reprimand to dismissal. Following a recommendation, only the chief executive can subsequently impose a disciplinary sanction. If the employee is dismissed, the chief executive has a legislated obligation to inform the Teachers Registration Board. The board then makes its own decision about the teacher's ongoing registration.

I understand it was the member for Unley who claimed that a 48-step process was in place to address unsatisfactory performance. He is obviously wrong. I can quote *The Advertiser* on March 22, where he said:

Underperforming teachers remain in the system because the process to deal with them by principals can take 48 stages and more than a year before it reaches the executive level.

This is clearly wrong. Whilst we have key principles in place that are reliant upon natural justice and procedural fairness, it seems the only procedure the member for Unley embraces is one of inaccuracy.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 14, high school expansions. Why did the government promise on 16 March 2010, four days prior to the 2010 election, that students from Prospect or Walkerville, for instance, will be able to attend Adelaide High School and now the government tells us that it is doing a review of the zones?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Because we always committed to do a review of the zones. Unfortunately you were not here when I answered a question about high school—

**Mr PISONI:** No, you didn't. Read the media release of 16 March. You promised.

**The CHAIR:** Order! The member for Adelaide has asked the question.

**Mr PISONI:** You promised.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Promised what?

**Mr PISONI:** You promised that Walkerville and Prospect students would be able to go to Adelaide High School.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Sorry, maybe the member for Adelaide would like to repeat—yes, you can hold that up—the line you just quoted for the member for Unley's benefit. Please repeat that line.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Certainly. The inference given four days prior to the election was that the people of Prospect and Walkerville would be going to Adelaide High School.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, sorry, can you please repeat the line.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Students from Prospect or Walkerville, for instance, will be able to attend Adelaide High School.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you. As the member for Adelaide is on the governing council of Adelaide High School, she would know that there has been a delay in expansion simply because of the issues we had to deal with regarding the Adelaide Parklands. I have answered a comprehensive question already in relation to Adelaide High School. We are working on the zones that will apply for Adelaide High School—

**Mr PISONI:** But that's not what you promised. You promised that Walkerville and Prospect students would get access to Adelaide High School.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am sorry; would you like the member for Adelaide to repeat that?

**Mr PISONI:** Four days before an election—you promised that.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No. Would you like the member for Adelaide to repeat that again? We are working on the zones and, as soon as a decision is made, I am happy to inform the member for Adelaide what areas will be included.

**Mr PISONI:** Just like you promised you would not encroach on the Parklands and you did that as well. Broken promises.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Point of order, Madam Speaker: the member for Unley continues to interject and speak over the minister when she is talking; yet he is the first person to take objection if something is done which offends him. I ask you to draw him to order, please.

**The CHAIR:** I absolutely support that point of order. Member for Unley, the member for Adelaide asked a question. It is not an opportunity for you to argue across the floor. Minister, would you like to answer the question?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I did not get a question.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Can the minister confirm in what year the capacity of Adelaide High School will reach the extra 250 places or 1,500 students that was promised in 2010?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, and again, I have already answered this question, so I am happy to do it for the member for Adelaide's benefit if she likes. We committed to catering for the additional 250 students from 2013. The timeline was adjusted after the minister decided the plan needed greater community consultation, and you know all this because you are on the governing council. Those revisions were approved unanimously, as I understand, by the governing council, and I am assuming you were there for that meeting, so those revisions were—

**Ms SANDERSON:** It was not our choice; we were only given certain choices, so it was not the choice of the governing council and it was not our first preference, either.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The revisions were approved unanimously by the governing council. The budget papers show anticipated completion of these projects but what they do not illustrate is when the classrooms will be completed for intake to commence. So, there is a big difference between having classrooms ready for students to start in the school, and completing the entire project. Completion of the entire project can include non-teaching areas—and I understand it does—it includes landscaping, and it includes a whole range of things.

**Ms SANDERSON:** When will the 1,500 capacity—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** If you just let me finish. Calm down. We will answer the questions. I am happy to answer your questions. I understand that the three-storey building which is underway—is it, no, not yet—is expected to be completed in August 2014, next year.

**Ms SANDERSON:** My understanding, then, is that the existing students will move into that building so that works can start on building No. 4, so no extra students will be admitted, I believe.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I do not know what buildings they are decanting. I cannot give you an answer to that.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I also understand that it is only 50 per year, so it will be five years before the 250 extra is reached.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We are going through an expansion. We have committed the funding to expanding Adelaide High School and we are going through that process.

**Ms SANDERSON:** We are misleading the people of Prospect and Walkerville to believe that 250 extra will be admitted.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Clearly they did not accept the policy that we put forward, did they?

**Ms SANDERSON:** Why are you building it then?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** But they did not accept the policy, did they? Did they?

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Ms SANDERSON:** I do not know what you are talking about now.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You don't?

**Ms SANDERSON:** So, both of the inner city primary schools, both Gilles Street and Sturt Street, are concerned that they are not linked to a high school. Are there any plans for making formal links between the city primary schools and the city high school?

**The CHAIR:** Point of order.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** My point of order is about the use of the words 'misleading the people' or whatever it was, and I think that it should be withdrawn.

**The CHAIR:** I did hear that statement.

**Ms SANDERSON:** I am not sure I used the right word there. They are led to believe something that is not correct.

**The CHAIR:** I think just withdraw the term 'misleading' and we will let it go.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Withdrawn; but they are led to believe that and it seems to be incorrect.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** What is incorrect?

**Ms SANDERSON:** By putting in the words 'for instance'—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, we gave an example.

**Ms SANDERSON:** Yes, and people who live in Prospect and Walkerville believed you were saying to them—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No area has been ruled out. No area has been confirmed.

**Ms SANDERSON:** But we have been waiting 3½ years for you to announce the zones.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That may well be the case but the buildings are not finished yet, as you have just highlighted.

**The CHAIR:** You had a second question?

**Ms SANDERSON:** Yes, whether there are plans for any formal links between the primary school students.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** As zoning applies currently, the policy is that zoning applies to where you live, not where you go to school.

**Mr PISONI:** Minister, if I can take you back to Adelaide High School, when will the extra 250 students be attending Adelaide High School? In what year will the extra 250 students be attending Adelaide High School?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The increased capacity, as I understand it, is derived through the continual intake through year 8. It is planned for 250 additional students and that will be year on year as they come into year 8, progressing through the school.

**Mr PISONI:** Can I have the year that 250 extra students will be at Adelaide High School?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That will depend on the enrolment policy of the school, I understand, and the mix of special programs.

**Mr PISONI:** When will it have the capacity for 250 extra students?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** When the buildings are finished.

**Mr PISONI:** When the promise was made, there were 1,200 students at Adelaide High School. When will there be 1,450 students at Adelaide High School, in classrooms?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** As I said, I cannot give you the exact date that we will reach the 250 additional students. They will be taken in at year 8 year on year, and that is how we will build the capacity of the school, and we will start doing that as soon as the buildings are complete.

**Mr PISONI:** The election promise says, and this is a media release put out by the Labor Party on 16 March 2010, four days before the election:

Adelaide High School, the state's first free high school, will be expanded to cater for up to 250 more students from 2013 without encroaching on the Parklands.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Up to 250.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr PISONI:** The current enrolment was noted as 1,200 students, so the question is: when will the 250 students be at the school? What year will there be 1,450 students at the school? It is a pretty simple question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It depends on how they manage their—

**Mr PISONI:** It wasn't complicated when you made the announcement.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It depends on—

**The CHAIR:** You have asked your question and I think the minister has answered it about four times.

**Mr PISONI:** No, she will not put a year on it, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Because she has explained to you that she is not able to put a year on it.

**Mr PISONI:** She can't make the promise.

**The CHAIR:** I think we will move on to the next question. The member for Kaurna.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I have a supplementary, if I may.

**The CHAIR:** If it is a supplementary.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The member for Unley in his quote used the phrase 'up to 250 students', and I would have thought that encompasses any number, including 250, and surely the minister—

*Mr Pisoni interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I haven't interrupted—

*Mr Pisoni interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, order! You will not talk over a person answering or asking a question.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Chair, I was asking the question because I thought the clarification would help the member for Unley because he was making the claim that it was 250. The point I was making is it was clearly said in the statement that was put out prior to the election that it was up to 250 which, as I understand it, minister, encompasses the notion that it will build up over time.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That is right. The member for Kaurana is exactly right.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Kaurana, do you have another question?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I do, indeed.

**The CHAIR:** I will count that one as a supplementary.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 39, line 10. What autonomy is in place to allow schools flexibility to decide on how they assist students with dyslexia?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Kaurana for his question. Dyslexia is one of a number of recognised learning difficulties which collectively in 2013 will receive something like \$12.4 million in support. As per our student-centred funding model, additional funding is allocated to schools through their resource entitlement, based on the number of students with a learning difficulty and at the level of its severity. Schools then have the autonomy to decide the best way to support these students.

Rather than focusing on addressing a single difficulty, we want our schools to be able to assist in any number of challenges that students might face, and this is why, on top of funding support, specialised training is available for staff to increase their capacity to support students with learning difficulties. We have the training course, 'Understanding dyslexia and significant difficulties in reading'; it is one of two offered to staff through the national partnership More Support for Students with Disabilities. This was first offered in May last year and provides a combination of face-to-face and online learning. It is conducted over a 10 to 12-week period and led by a trained tutor, consists of three face-to-face sessions, each approximately three hours in length. The total time for the course is at least 20 hours.

To ensure this knowledge spreads widely, once staff complete the course they may tutor their peers to make sure our schools have additional expertise in helping students with learning difficulties. As of May this year, 396 participants had undertaken this course. The Special Education Resource Unit also provides practical resources to support our teachers and parents to help students with learning difficulties.

The annual Special Education Expo offers a range of presentations for teachers and parents to further increase their capacity to support students with learning difficulties. In the coming year three additional online training courses that focus on motor planning, behaviour and communication, and language will be available for staff. I am told that students with learning difficulties, especially those with dyslexia, face challenges in these areas, and I thank those staff who devote their efforts to taking up these courses.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 26. How many students in South Australia with an autism spectrum disorder are taught within a mainstream learning environment at government schools, and what additional services are available for these students?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Colton. There are something like 1,703 students—just a little over—with autism spectrum disorder, and 76.4 per cent of these receive their education through mainstream schools. To ensure we give these students the best start in life that we can, a negotiated education plan is developed in close collaboration with their families. This helps us determine the students' strengths and needs and to identify appropriate learning goals. This is not in place just for children with autism but for all students diagnosed with a disability. Each plan outlines what additional support is needed for the students to gain access to a fulfilling education.

At the start of the year students in mainstream classes began applying for placement in our autism intervention program, based at Blackwood primary and high schools and at The Heights School. I have had the privilege of visiting the facility at The Heights School, and I was very impressed with the skill of the teachers in the classroom and the way they were able to really actively engage and involve the young people in those classes.

These programs offer a short-term program for up to four terms, with the aim of transitioning the children back into their local school on completion of their set goals. They provide

very intensive and individualised programs that focus on the key areas of challenge that these students have, for example, communication skills, understanding instructions, social skills and management of restricted patterns of behaviour, including repetitive behaviours. As with the special transport arrangements, families are also able to apply for transport assistance and will be assessed in line with the school transport policy for students with a disability to access these intervention programs. This provides assistance to the parents or caregivers to get their child to the closest available special option, as I said, which includes these intervention programs.

We know that children with autism need extra help which is why they may receive assistance from educational psychologists, speech therapy support and behaviour intervention strategies. Mentoring and strategies designed to ensure students do not disengage with the school system, such as ICANS, are also available to students with autism.

We want to ensure as many students as possible receive their SACE, and that is why students with autism spectrum disorder may apply for special provisions to complete their secondary schooling in preparation for tertiary education. For students preparing to move from school to the workplace, they can also seek a placement in the Prospect or Daws Road Transition Centre and these services offer both SACE and VET courses and help to make the transition from school to post-school options.

Beyond mainstream classes, students can receive assistance from the state's 35 disability units, 15 special schools and 115 special classes at 86 schools. The Briars Special Early Learning Centre and seven inclusive preschool programs also offer services specifically for preschool students with special needs. Early years support is also available through mainstream preschools.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question relates to vandalism and arson, and I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, line 25, school supplies and services. Will the minister update the committee on costs associated with vandalism and arson?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Reynell for her question. There is no doubt the community suffers every time we have a senseless attack on one of our schools and it takes money away from that which could be used to improve education for our young people. I am pleased, however, that the trend for both vandalism and arson in our schools is declining. Last year was the lowest figure of arson in schools in seven years and in five consecutive years the cost of vandalism has been reduced. However, all it takes is one mindless idiot to inflict a devastating attack on a school community, and we must never be complacent that we are winning the war against this sort of selfish stupidity. It is why we have a number of programs and strategies in place to reduce the chances of these attacks.

One of them is our security fencing program. More than \$7.2 million in security fencing grants has been allocated to 60 schools since 2006-07 and I look forward to announcing some more shortly. This is paying dividends with a typical fence leading to an average reduction of vandalism of about 66 per cent, with many schools experiencing a significant drop in vandalism attacks in the range of 80 to 90 per cent. Security alarms, alarm response services and targeted mobile security patrols are also used at our most vulnerable sites. Passive surveillance is also being incorporated into the design of new schools and buildings. The department works in partnership with SAPOL on a number of risk reduction strategies for high-risk sites, particularly during school holidays. These include:

- issuing sites with a security checklist for school holidays to ensure precautions are in place prior to and during site closures;
- targeting known high-risk sites to receive priority attention through patrols and in extreme cases employing the use of security guards at schools; and
- SAPOL sending letters to residents living near high-risk schools asking them to be vigilant and report observed crime to police.

**Mr PISONI:** I have a supplementary question, if I may, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr PISONI:** Minister, you mentioned school fencing in your answer. Can you confirm that the Premier, in his first budget as education minister, cut \$2 million from the forward estimates in 2010 from the school fencing budget?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised that the security fencing is \$500,000 ongoing each year and we expect to be doing about three. It is an incredibly expensive exercise. As I have

said, we have spent more than \$7 million on security fencing since 2006-07, which is quite a contribution.

**Mr PISONI:** In response to the Sustainable Budget Commission's recommendations, my understanding is that Premier Weatherill cut \$2 million in the forward estimates from the fencing budget in 2010. I am asking you whether you can confirm that.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, and we—

**Mr PISONI:** Yes—did you say he did?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I said there was a reduction in the school fencing program itself but in fact—

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** —we include security fencing in our new builds now. We are likely to see, in fact, more security fencing than we have in the past because it is part of the new construction rather than going back and doing retrofits.

**Mr PISONI:** I would like to take you now to Budget Paper 4, page 12, Objectives, the Brighter Futures restructure, which is the ninth restructure of this department since Labor came to office. I refer to a memo that was sent by the Executive Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development to all staff dated 28 May where the—

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Can you say what year?

**Mr PISONI:** In 2013. Thank you very much, member for Colton—beautiful. The memo says that the Department for Education and Childhood Development has commenced consultation with the unions, the Australian Education Union and public sector union in relation to the Brighter Futures program. It goes on to state that the meetings will provide genuine opportunities for the AEU and the PSA to influence decision-making with respect to significant workplace changes arising from Brighter Futures.

You need to go to the EBA agreement to get an understanding of what that means, minister, and the significant effects are at clause 3.22 in the EBA where it states:

...include termination of employment; major changes in the composition, operation or size of the employer's workforce.

If you go to page 8 of the document that was released in April—after you have been through the seven pages of motherhood and apple pie—there is a specific reference which states:

That the projects that are part of the Brighter Futures will deliver the efficiencies required to meet DECD state budget savings targets. Savings will be made through a system redesign and changes within back office functions.

Minister, are you able to tell the committee how many FTE equivalents will be targeted to leave the education department under this program?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Unley for his question. As I have indulged him in quite a lengthy introduction to his question I am sure he will not object when I attempt to answer the assertions that he has constructed in his lead-up to the question.

I am sure people who work very hard in this department, with a focus on ensuring that we get the best outcome that we can for children in our schools, and that we provide the best front-line services for children and their families from birth to 18, would find it objectionable to have the work they are doing described as 'motherhood and apple pie'. Let me say that the member for Unley has consistently come out and thrown around numbers, willy-nilly. What was it, nine restructures since we have been in government? In fact, as I understand it, the department has undergone two major restructures.

**Mr PISONI:** No; how many restructures in total?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Two; two major restructures.

**Mr PISONI:** How many restructures in total?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Madam Chair, I allowed the member for Unley, without interruption, to go through—

**Mr PISONI:** It doesn't mean you can verbal me.

**The CHAIR:** Order! The member for Unley will listen to the minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** There have been two major restructures. I think the member for Unley is confusing the number of leaders and deputy leaders that his party has had in the same period of time. I think they have had nine deputy leaders, one of them twice. He is picking up the wrong numbers, allocating numbers against the wrong thing. We have also had three chief executive officers since March 2002.

Brighter Futures is about transforming the services for children, young people and their families. What I can guarantee is that there will not be 1,300 job losses from the department. I think that was the number calculated by the member for Unley prior to the demise of the former leader of the opposition, comparing Victoria to South Australia; we would have stripped the department of 1,300 employees. I have yet to hear him say that is not going to happen. Of course, that was part of the 25,000 public servants to be removed from our system. Now they have shied away from telling the South Australian public what they will be doing.

There will be some reconfiguration in the regions in relation to positions and how it operates. We will have lead educators in those regions, we will have clusters of schools collaborating and sharing best practice, supporting teachers, supporting principals, and I understand we will have an increase in front-line and direct services. Our aim is to make sure that our children and our families get the services they need. In that process there will be realignment of some positions, but I can guarantee that it will not be 1,300.

**Mr PISONI:** Minister, can you confirm how many TVSPs are part of this restructure?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, I cannot confirm that because we have not gone through the whole process yet. This is something the department is working through in consultation with teaching communities, with families and—although I know he finds it objectionable—we will work with the AEU and the PSA to do that.

**Mr PISONI:** Are those TVSPs in the unspecified savings that were outlined by Mr DeGennaro in the Budget and Finance Committee?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Any TVSPs that are identified will contribute to the unspecified savings.

**Mr PISONI:** What are those unspecified savings based on? How many TVSPs?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** They are not.

**Mr PISONI:** So you have not determined how many TVSPs?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I answered that; no, we have not. We have not finished the process. As I said to you, we are working with principals, we are working with teachers, we are working with school communities, we are working with the AEU, we are working with the PSA. We have had consultations right around South Australia on what you referred to as 'motherhood and apple pie'. We have been working with people on the ground and we will continue to work with them and consult with them as this process evolves.

**Mr PISONI:** What will happen to those employed in regional offices, including the regional directors?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** As I said, we are changing the process. We are looking at how we can better support people in the classrooms and principals running the schools, making sure they get the support and leadership they need. So, that means changing the way we are doing things across regions and that has not been completed yet.

**Mr PISONI:** So, when will the regional offices close?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** There is no plan to close the regional offices as yet.

**Mr PISONI:** So, regional offices will continue next year, will they?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No; that is not what I said. I said we are working through the process.

**Mr PISONI:** Have there been discussions about closure of regional offices?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We are looking at a different way of working based on the partnerships of schools and preschools. That is what we are aiming to do. The work has not been completed.

**Mr PISONI:** So, are closures to regional offices and the redeployment of regional directors part of the plan? Will you rule them out? Will you rule out the closure of regional offices and the redeployment of regional directors?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** What I am telling you is that people may have different roles. As you have highlighted, some people may take TVSPs and there may be some positions that are no longer available, but that work has not been completed.

**Mr PISONI:** So, you have announced a restructure but you cannot answer any questions about it.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** What I am telling you is that it will not be 1,300 job losses.

**Mr PISONI:** How many will it be?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** And we will not be—

**Mr PISONI:** How many will it be then?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will not be ripping the guts—

**Mr PISONI:** How many will it be?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will not be ripping the guts—

**Mr PISONI:** How many will it be?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** —out of the education department.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** How many will it be?

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will not be ripping the guts out.

**Mr PISONI:** 1,299?

**The CHAIR:** Order! The member for Unley, the member for Colton and the minister, order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will not be ripping the guts out.

**Mr PISONI:** 1,299?

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will not be doing it.

**Mr PISONI:** Will you rule out 1,000?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will not be doing it.

**Mr PISONI:** Will you rule out 500?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am ruling out—

**Mr PISONI:** Will you rule out 500?

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, will you behave yourself. Minister, have you finished answering that question?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Morialta, did you have some omnibus questions you wanted to bring up? I am not sure how long they will take.

**Mr GARDNER:** The minister might like to take these on notice, unless you have them all at hand. I will go through them quickly:

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 in 2012-13 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister—listing the name of the consultant, contractor or service supplier, cost, work undertaken and method of appointment?

2. For each department or agency reporting to the minister in 2012-13, please provide the number of public servants that are (1) tenured and (2) on contract, and for each category provide a breakdown of the number of (1) executives and (2) non-executives?

3. In financial year 2012-13 for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2013-14?

4. Between 30 June 2012 and 30 June 2013, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of each position (with a total estimated cost of \$100,000 or more)—(a) which has been abolished; and (b) which has been created?

5. For each year of the forward estimates, provide the name and the budget of all grant programs administered by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, and for 2012-13 provide a breakdown of expenditure on all grants administered by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister—listing the name of the grant recipient, the amount of the grant and the purpose of the grants and whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instruction No. 15?

6. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, what is the budget for targeted voluntary separation packages for financial years 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17?

7. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 31 May 2013 including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices and ministerial liaison officers?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** In response to the member for Morialta, much of that cannot be answered as yet because we have not yet come to the end of the financial year, but I can give him some information around consultancies.

**Mr PISONI:** Point of order. Omnibus questions are traditionally read into the *Hansard* and answered at a later time.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am trying to be helpful. Why do you have to be so objectionable?

**Mr PISONI:** No, you're not, you're trying to stop questions being asked; that is what you are trying to do.

**Mr GARDNER:** Can the minister identify that she will take that on notice and then provide whatever other information she wants to?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have some information that I could give the member for Morialta now, and I wish the member for Unley would stop being so objectionable.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, normally we refer omnibus questions and they are answered at a later time.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am sorry that the opposition clearly does not want the information. It is just really about making—

**Mr GARDNER:** Just to confirm, I am happy to have the information, but I just want confirmation that you will take the questions on notice as well.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You will have the questions on notice. What I was saying is that at this point in time I cannot answer those questions specifically, but I do have some information around consultancies, if you would like it.

**Mr PISONI:** Point of order, Madam Chair: omnibus questions are traditionally answered at a later date.

**The CHAIR:** Order! I am listening to the minister's explanation. I am trying to hear what the minister is saying.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am told that—

**Mr PISONI:** Madam Chair, this is out of order.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am not out of order. I am giving the member for Morialta some brief information.

**The CHAIR:** We have not heard what the minister is saying yet. She may not be answering the omnibus questions. I have not been able to hear what she is saying.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** As at 31 May, for the Department for Education and Child Development, there were three consultancies used by the department. PKF accounting was engaged during 2010-11 to provide probity advisory services for the new bus service contracts, covering the methodology of proposed services, capability, experience, proposed staff, customer service and time frames.

The consultancy services continue into the 2012-13 year, and year-to-date (2012-13) expenditure is \$4,365. GK Corporation was engaged during 2012-13 to assist in the redesign and restructure of Families SA, and year-to-date expenditure is \$37,125, which is GST exclusive. FSE Consulting was engaged during 2011-12 to perform a risk management assessment for the establishment of the Office of Non-Government Schools and Services. The consultant was requested by the Office of Non-Government Schools and Services to assist in planning and skills development for the office on an as-needs basis. The consultancy services continue into 2012-13, with year-to-date expenditure being \$3,412.50.

So the total cost for consultancies for the Department of Education and Child Development was \$44,902.50. If I have any further information in relation to that question and additional funding that has been expended up to 30 June, I am happy to provide that to the member for Morialta.

**Mr GARDNER:** Thank you.

**Mr PISONI:** This is back again to Brighter Futures. What is the total estimated savings target from the Brighter Futures restructure as described on page 8 of the document?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have a whole of agency target; we do not have a Brighter Futures target.

**Mr PISONI:** What is the whole of agency target, then? What is it in dollar terms?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Didn't you already quote the savings to me in one of your earlier questions? The growth in budget savings for 2013-14 is \$30.2 million.

*[Sitting suspended from 13:00 to 14:00]*

#### **Membership:**

Mr Treloar substituted for Ms Sanderson.

**The CHAIR:** I think we are still on the same lines. Minister, do you wish to make any opening statement in this session?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Protecting South Australian children, particularly vulnerable children, is at the heart of the state government's Every Chance for Every Child priority. Funding to the child protection system has more than trebled since we came to office. In the last six months, we have taken significant steps to increase protection for children in our schools and this includes the creation of a new Office of Child Safety and appointing a deputy chief executive with clear responsibility for child protection across the department.

At the centre of the 2013-14 budget is \$27.2 million over four years to support children who, for a range of reasons, cannot live with their birth families. At the same time, we are working with mums and dads so children can remain, or return to live safely, with their birth families. Families SA has continued to increase support for its reunification initiative. This is a \$4.8 million program that involves social workers, mental health and drug and alcohol workers working with parents whose children are in care to reunite them when it is safe to do so.

We continue to support our state's foster carers who generously open their hearts and their homes to children who need alternative care. Foster and relative carers received a further increase of 2.25 per cent to payments on 1 October 2012 to help them care for their children. The Other Person Guardianship program is giving everyone involved in an alternative care system, especially children, more security and stability. It is enabling guardianship to be transferred to the carer where it is in the child's best interest.

As of March this year, 71 children and young people have been placed under the guardianship of another person instead of the minister. This gives a child much greater surety that they are truly part of their foster family: it gives the family the security their family will remain intact—all of this without permanently severing the connection with the child's birth family. Our

focus has been, and will continue to be, the wellbeing of our children. I am happy to take questions, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** The lead person for the opposition, would you like to make a statement?

**Mr PISONI:** No, I will just go straight to questions, Madam Chair. I would like to go back to the Debelle inquiry. This is a reference to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2 at page 27. The minister said that parents will be briefed. Will all parents who gave evidence be briefed or only those at the western suburbs school?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have offered briefings to those parents who are directly involved in this case. I will be briefing members of the school council and members of the previous school council who are no longer part of the school council. There are parents who have given evidence, as I understand it, to the Debelle inquiry and whose names have been held in confidence, so unless those people contact me I cannot brief them, but if they make contact and it is relevant, I am happy to brief them.

**Mr PISONI:** Will any counselling services be established for those who might need it after the briefing, and will those services be available to those who have not been approached by you but who contact you for a brief?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Services and supports will be available to all people who request them.

**Mr PISONI:** When the minister briefs parents who have been invited for a briefing and those who opt for a briefing, will she be providing a copy of the report to those parents for that briefing and will it be their report or will they simply be briefed on the report?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The report will be made publicly available as soon as all parents are briefed. I know the member for Unley is pretty keen to get his hands on the report, but it is incumbent upon me as minister responsible to give all those parents the opportunity to be briefed on the content of that report prior to its being released publicly. It will be my intention to not leave a copy of the report with anyone until such time as all people directly affected are briefed.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, Office of Child Safety. Can the minister advise how many investigations were started and completed in that department last year?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** In Families SA—I will check whether I have the numbers. There is a difference obviously, I am sure you would understand, with the number of screened-in notifications as opposed to those that actually have an investigation undertaken, and we are trying to locate that number for you if we can. With the reports to the child protection line, as I understand it, the number of calls have increased, but the number of screened-in notifications has actually decreased this year. We will try to locate that number for you.

**Mr PISONI:** The question was more investigations: how many were started and completed?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will try to get that number for you. I am trying to locate it.

**Mr PISONI:** How many of those investigations have led to a referral to police?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Again, I will have to take that question on notice and we are happy to get that for you. Obviously, there are referrals to police through a number of avenues, one would be an assessment through the CARL notification, another one would be through the internal Investigations Unit when a serious complaint is made in relation to either a worker or a foster carer. I am told there were a little over 5,000 investigations last year.

**Mr PISONI:** How many of those were complete?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am told that all of these would have an outcome recorded against them, but it is estimated that there will be substantiations of 2,115 this year. That is an estimated result.

**Mr PISONI:** Okay, and how many of those are school based—either happening at a school or an employee?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The vast majority of these would be familial investigations, so I am sorry, I do not have that number for you. If it is abuse at school it would automatically be referred to SAPOL.

**Mr PISONI:** Automatically referred to SAPOL?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, if it was a school-based incident, it would automatically be referred to SAPOL because it is extra familial.

**Mr PISONI:** So school-based incidents are not investigated—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** By Families SA.

**Mr PISONI:** What about the investigations unit in the department for education?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, the sexual abuse of a child in a school would be referred to SAPOL for investigation; that would absolutely be the first process.

**Mr PISONI:** So, there is no investigation process in the department about school-based abuse?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The issues around legal proceedings are a SAPOL matter. If there were issues around the performance of a teacher or if it was a case of misconduct there would be internal investigations around that, but the actual legal investigation and that process is always conducted by SAPOL.

**Mr PISONI:** Referred by the department?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, if the department is the first one to get the report. Often SAPOL will report to the department.

**Mr PISONI:** On page 30 you refer to the screened-in process, and you quite rightly pointed out that there has been an increase in reports but a decrease in screened-in. Could you explain what screened-in actually involved?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is having met the statutory definition in relation to child protection for Families SA involvement.

**Mr PISONI:** That is from Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, and extra familial.

**Mr PISONI:** How many of those notifications were Tier 1, how many were Tier 2 and how many were Tier 3?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised we need to take that on notice.

**Mr PISONI:** Were all Tier 1 and Tier 2 notifications investigated?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** They are assessed on what is the most appropriate response in relation to the individual circumstances. Some would have case management, some would have the involvement or engagement of another organisation—a non-government organisation for example. The most serious cases are the ones that have an investigative response.

**Mr PISONI:** And that was the figure you spoke about earlier, the 2,115 figure.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** There were 5,000 that were investigated.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, you have had about 17 questions so far. I think I will ask the member for Colton now.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Very kind of you, ma'am. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 29 at the fifth dot point. Minister, can you detail what is causing the long waiting times for the Child Abuse Report Line and what is being done to address this issue?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am pleased to advise that, as a result of a review undertaken last year, the Child Abuse Report Line is currently in the process of undergoing some changes that will result in faster answering times. The review identified a number of opportunities to improve efficiencies, along with improving services to those notifier groups. The most significant change for notifiers will be the introduction of a web-based alternative for making notifications.

Building of the new electronic notification system will be completed shortly and testing is underway. This will mean a much simpler and efficient process for teachers and nurses, for example, to detail their concerns through the new eCARL. It will be able to collect those concerns more efficiently and with less effort than is currently the case.

To oversee the implementation of the initiatives, I am advised that four FTEs have begun working at an administrative level with the social workers who answer those calls. As part of the

changes, 5,000 users will be able to self-register and submit lower-risk notifications online. This will mean that they will no longer have to wait for such extensive periods on the phone line.

The CARL telephone infrastructure will also be enhanced to include the option of an automatic call-back to notifiers. This will mean that callers can receive a call back if they call during peak times and they do not have to hang on the line.

**Mr GARDNER:** I have a supplementary, ma'am.

**The CHAIR:** It depends if it is a supplementary.

**Mr GARDNER:** It is directly related because it was a fairly similar question to one that I asked last year and received almost exactly the same information from the then minister last year, except that it had 2012 rather than 2013 as the date. It is also similar information to that provided by Mr Waterford at a briefing early last year.

My question is: is the eCARL redesign you have just described a different redesign to that which was taking place last year and, if not, why has there been such a significant delay in its implementation?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have had different stages of eCARL. In fact, I think when I was minister previously we had commenced eCARL with some police officers and some teachers.

**Mr GARDNER:** That was several hundred, was it not?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I cannot remember the exact number but we had people who were trained to use it. It is one of those things that you need to get right otherwise you just create more inefficiencies and greater delays. If people do not understand the information that is required to make an assessment the person has to phone them back and it is more time and more delay, etc. It has been evolving and we are on the cusp of a great new system.

**Mr GARDNER:** We look forward to that.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 28, Highlights 2012-13, dot point 1, which states:

Established the Office of Child Safety to develop new approaches to support the safety of children and young people.

Can the minister explain the role of the Office of Child Safety and the new approaches and work undertaken by that office? I think the minister has touched on it, but some more detail would be welcome.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** In March this year I consolidated the department's child safety responsibilities under the Deputy Chief Executive, Child Safety, Mr David Waterford, and in April the Office of Child Safety was created. Mr Waterford will be taking lead responsibility for child safety issues across all DECD sites and services. The focus of the office is to implement a system to support children and young people to remain in the care of their families wherever it is safe to do so. When it is not possible for a child to remain with the family, our out-of-home care system will provide a safe and nurturing environment to help young people grow and develop to their full potential.

The office will oversee the rollout of the introduction of solution-based casework, which has a proven track record in increasing parenting skills amongst the most high-risk families. There is no doubt that there are circumstances where we have no choice but to take children away, because of the situation in a particular household, but there is also no doubt that, essentially, children are desperate to be with their families. We have already started the first round of training several hundred staff, which will be completed by the end of this calendar year. Essentially it is about working with families to help prevent their breakdown and to reunify families where we can. The program is for welfare case workers, supervisors and treatment providers.

What is known from research on family development, clinical behaviour change, child welfare outcomes to help staff stay focuses on three key elements: that is, to provide a partnership between the agency and the family that helps them to problem solve in a language that the family understands, to focus the partnership on patterns of everyday family life, and to target solutions to reduce the risks. This has been the subject of 10 published research studies over 12 years and has been successfully applied to investigation, assessment, prevention, foster care, adoption, residential juvenile services and juvenile justice cases around the globe. In August the lead developer of this innovative program, Dr Dana Christensen, will be visiting Adelaide to assist with further training of key Families SA staff.

The prime reason for the creation of the Office of Child Safety is to develop new approaches to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. I am extremely confident of the skills of Mr Waterford in ensuring its success.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I refer to Agency Statements, Volume 2, page 13, Workforce summary, and the Department for Education and Child Development FTEs. Can the minister detail how the hiring of 360 additional FTEs will deliver better outcomes for children who require out-of-home care?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am very pleased and excited that over the next couple of years we are going to be engaging an additional 360 full-time staff to join Families SA to help care, protect and look after our most vulnerable children. Between now and 2015 we will be employing professionally qualified staff to help provide stability for children who require out-of-home care. Essentially, these are children for whom foster care has not worked or is inappropriate.

Families SA staff will work from new houses that we have built in partnership with the federal government to accommodate these young people. This means that we will be phasing out the need for very costly commercial carers. Most troubled young people will get the long-term therapeutic and consistent care they require.

It is also very cost efficient. The average cost of commercial care per child each year is over \$322,000 (nearly \$323,000), compared to \$180,500 with Families SA staff. So, what we will see is lower cost care and higher quality care. Our children deserve to have care from our state's best so they can grow into confident and well adjusted young adults. They will be nurtured by caring staff who are skilled and qualified. These positions will be three-year contracts and the recruitment will be rolled out until 2015. This is an initiative that I am incredibly pleased we have been able to bring about. This will provide real homes—real homes like we live in—for these young people to help settle them and hopefully, after a period of time, move into foster or relative care.

**Mr PISONI:** Just on the increased staffing—page 27. I note you have an estimated result of 1,635,000 FTEs. That is a lower value for the budget for 2013-14 of 1.618.9.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr PISONI:** Yet, you are saying you are going to be employing an extra 360 full-time staff. Are those full-time employees who have been identified as being surplus elsewhere in the department, and what will be their qualifications?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The FTEs were approved by cabinet after the preparation of the budget papers.

**Mr PISONI:** So, what is the total cost of the FTEs, and what level will they be?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** They are OPS levels 2, 3 and 4, but the offsetting cost is not paying commercial carers. So, we expect that it will cost less to provide for the full-time permanent employee.

**Mr PISONI:** Will they be public sector redeployees from other departments?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No; they need to be qualified staff.

**Mr PISONI:** What will be the qualifications?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** There will be a mixture of qualifications, I am advised. Some will be certificate IV youth workers, some will be social workers and some will be psychologists.

**Mr PISONI:** What is the time frame for developing the therapeutic residential care assessment and stabilisation units?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have the buildings—so that you understand that—and we will be progressively doing this up until 2015, replacing commercial care with FTEs.

**Mr PISONI:** So, do you have a budget for the 2013-14 year as to how many will be established?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We have the houses. How many people we are employing?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes; how many people will be in the role by the end of next financial year, the 2013-14 year?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** By 30 June 2014, I am told, we will have 273.5 employed.

**Mr PISONI:** Has that recruiting process started?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr PISONI:** This question relates to page 30 of the same budget paper. Just going back to notifications—and you may very well have to take this on notice, minister—are you able to report to the committee the number of calls to the Child Abuse Report Line for the 2012-13 year that had a wait time of up to one hour, a wait time of up to two hours and a wait time of up to three hours?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will have to take that on notice, but there are a couple of points I would like to make about that. First of all, it is really heartening that our community is now prepared to make those reports. I think that is excellent, and we have seen those reports increase year on year. People are much more aware of how important it is that we make reports when we are concerned about the wellbeing of our children. I think it is also heartening that we are seeing measures that have been put in place that mean there are not as many substantiations, and the rate of children being taken into care has dropped.

Children are in care longer. The cases are often incredibly complex, but I think it is very good that we have a culture now of reporting concerns so that they can be assessed. I am also really pleased that we will have a very good system in place where people will not have to wait on line any longer; there will be a call-back service so that they can ring at any point and, within a reasonable period of time, rather than sit on the phone, they will get a call back.

The average wait time, just for your interest, between July and December last year was 12½ minutes during the day (which is the busiest time obviously) and a little over five minutes after hours. School break-up time is probably the busiest time; there is often a flood of calls coming in, so that is why it is really important that we get teachers connected and trained in e-CARL.

**Mr PISONI:** I refer to page 29 of the same budget paper. Can the minister confirm whether dedicated queues for police, health and educational professionals have been implemented?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Sorry, the what?

**Mr PISONI:** The dedicated queues for the enhancements to child protection reporting. You have a line there that states, 'Implement enhancements for child protection reporting and'—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Sorry, what line are you talking about? I cannot find what you are talking about.

**Mr PISONI:** It is a dot point on page 29.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Which number?

**Mr PISONI:** Well, the dot points are not numbered. I will read it to you.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Can you count them? How far down is it?

**Mr PISONI:** It states:

Implement enhancements to child protection reporting and intake processes to achieve more timely responses to notifiers and better facilitate access to diversionary programs for children and families.

Can the minister confirm whether dedicated queues for police, health and educational professionals have been implemented and, if so, what is the average waiting time on a dedicated queue?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am told that there has been a dedicated line for teachers for many years—not a dedicated line for SAPOL—but they have an emergency line for critical situations where they can jump the queue.

**Mr PISONI:** What about health professionals?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** There is no dedicated line for health professionals but, again, these are agencies that will benefit from eCARL and being able to make notifications online. Very often, for some particular agencies, they make notifications, and they are incredibly important, but they do not meet the statutory requirements for intervention.

**Mr PISONI:** And the average wait time for the dedicated education line?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We would need to take that on notice and, again, I would stress that, at the end of the school day, you have teachers right across the state picking up the phone, making reports, and that is why we hope to streamline the process and make it much simpler,

quicker, and more effective for everyone if they can get on their computer, and make a notification online, and that is happening in the very near future.

**Mr PISONI:** While you are taking that on notice, can you also take on notice the waiting times on a dedicated line that are up to one hour, up to two hours, up to three hours; how many of those occurred in the last financial year?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We are happy to have a look at whether we can access that information, if we can access that information.

**Mr PISONI:** Well, you will need that to work out the average.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Individually I do not know. I said I am happy to provide it, if I can access it.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 27, Financial Commentary. The first dot point refers to additional resourcing for children requiring alternative care. Minister, what is the state's financial input into the future of alternative care?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** This state budget supports our strategic plan of Every Chance for Every Child, and we have again provided increased funding for child protection and to support families here in South Australia. As I said in my opening statement, I think, \$27.2 million over four years has been allocated to support children who require out-of-home care. During the Mid-Year Budget Review, a further \$62.9 million over five years was provided and, prior to that, \$17.6 million in the 2012-13 budget.

Funding to the child protection system has more than trebled since 2002 and this latest funding boost will allow the government to better support children going into foster care placements. Keeping children in a safe family environment is a priority, but sometimes, as I said, the circumstances mean that that just simply cannot happen. This will allow those children to be better supported, either through foster care, being cared for by another member of their family or in residential care. The funding will ensure the department has the resources to deal with the growth in alternative care. As I have said, taking children into care appears to have stabilised or reduced slightly but children are staying in care longer, so as they come in, we have that additional cost for longer.

Kinship care is the placement of children and young people with relatives, extended family or other carers closely connected to them by community, clan, identity or emotional attachment. When there are unfortunate circumstances where it is not safe or in the child's best interest to remain with their parent or parents, that is when kinship care is utilised both as long-term or short-term care. It also maintains culture and identity, which is very important. Families SA works to ensure that relative and kinship carers are identified early and that they are well-prepared and appropriate people for this role. They also support placing children in out-of-home care with relative or kinship carers and that has been progressively increasing the number of children in relative and kinship care.

In 2012, I am pleased that the figure overtook the number of children in foster care placements—so there were more children placed in relative care than in foster care. The number of children as of 30 June 2012 in relative and kinship care was 1,104 and the number of children in foster care was 1,087.

Foster care numbers continue to increase under our government and we are running an advertising campaign to recruit more potential foster carers to raise those kids who need support. Foster caring can be a rewarding experience and we need more of them, but I think it is also fair to say it is a very challenging role that these people take on, and I think they have amazing hearts and commitment in providing our kids with stable, loving homes so that, hopefully, they can fulfil their full potential. Our carers need financial assistance and, since July 2007, foster and relative carers have received increases in their carer payments in the vicinity of 55.5 per cent.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 28, line 1, commencement of the Family by Family program. Can the minister explain the Family by Family program?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** There is no doubt the single most important factor influencing a child's development is the quality of the parenting they receive and the quality of their home environment, and I think it is also fair to say being a parent is the toughest job any one of us undertakes and none of us is immune from stresses and frustrations in managing a family and raising children.

The vast majority of us learn from our own parents and our own childhood experiences how to cope in stressful situations or we also have family and friends close by to help support us. For some other people, though, those supports just are not available. However, we know that families do have strengths, so we are helping families, with the Family by Family program, to build on the strengths that they have, build their resilience when trouble does arrive and help them develop quality environments so that their children can thrive and become well-adjusted adults.

In the 2013-14 budget, we are providing a funding boost of \$2.8 million to the Family by Family program. This is operated by the Australian Centre for Social Innovation, which has already been able to provide assistance, I understand, to around 200 families, and this is likely to assist another 200, or more, families. So far, the program has been operating out of Elizabeth and Marion and I do not think it is overstating to say that it has changed the lives of those families who have been involved. It is a unique initiative that puts families who are under a stress of whatever sort in contact with other families so that they can share their experiences and provide advice and support. They are able to share, as I said, their valuable experiences.

They are also connected to professional support from staff from a variety of disciplines, and an evaluation report that was launched by the Premier and conducted by Dr Gill Westthorp showed results that indicated that 90 per cent of families stated that things were 'better' or 'heaps better' having been involved in the program. We wanted to provide additional resources in this program. We think it is a very sensible investment that is going to build on the strength that these families have.

I had the opportunity just a little while ago to speak with the acting CEO of the program, and she was simply bursting with pride about the successes they had achieved. I spoke with a number of the families who were at a great event in June and the members for Mitchell and Ashford, along with the Premier, were there. We spoke to a large audience of families and their children. Many of the families I spoke to were incredibly proud that they were part of the program. One family I spoke with had sought help, and I think it is fair to say that it is an incredibly courageous thing to put up your hand and say, 'I need help.' It is a very hard thing for any of us to do, but if you do not have any family support around and do not know anyone, it is a big thing to do.

I spoke with one man who did exactly that: required assistance, got himself and his family over the hump they were dealing with, and he is now supporting another family. So that great family-to-family connection I think is really turning around lives and ensuring that the stresses do not get so great that families end up in the statutory system.

**Ms THOMPSON:** This time, minister, I would like more details about what I think is a fairly new program: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 28, the 2012-13 Estimated Result/2011-12 Actual, dot point 4, 'higher expenditure in 2012-13 for the Infant and Family Support program'. Can the minister explain what is this Infant and Family Support program?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** This is another one. It is a great program. I launched it in May up at the Elizabeth Grove Community Campus. Evidence shows that the antenatal period is the optimal time to engage with women to help plan their health and the health of their babies and families. The state government has supported families with newborn children for many years through our universal contact visit program and the family home visiting program, but this new program, \$3.3 million over four years, has been established in the northern Adelaide area and targets women birthing their first baby who live in the Playford area and are experiencing high levels of stress and vulnerability, and aims to support these families who are at risk.

It is at Elizabeth Grove Community Campus. The site also has Elizabeth Grove Primary School, the children's centre, the CaFHS early child/parent services and a non-government family focused service. So it is a real community hub for parents and children. The program has improved families awareness about infants' and children's health and their developmental needs. It also serves as the information and referral support to child care and play groups, including centre-based mothers and babies groups. It also supports improved health and wellbeing for infants, children and families through the provision of health information and support, and it provides access to networks of family support services.

The highlights from the first six months of operation include positive feedback from the women involved and the continuing high levels of support from key local partners, including the Lyell McEwin Health Service, Families SA, Child and Family Health Services and non-government agencies. Over the next year we look to engage another 65 highly at-risk families in this antenatal stage to provide them with ongoing support. Again, it is one of those great initiatives where we are getting in and working with families before they hit the crisis point.

**Mr PISONI:** I refer to page 29 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 2. In 2011-12 you had an actual percentage of children who were the subject of a substantiation during the previous year who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 12 months, 22.9 per cent. You anticipated more than a 25 per cent drop in your target for the 2012-13 year, but the estimated result is about a 10 per cent drop at 20 per cent. Can you give the reasons as to why you were expecting such a significant drop? Perhaps I will leave it at that for the minute. If you could perhaps explain why the target was so much lower than the previous year.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We are expecting that to drop because of the reunification programs that we are putting in place, so we hope to get more children back with their parents.

**Mr PISONI:** So, that did not work and that is why the estimated result for this year is 20 per cent?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, the actual result in 2011-12 was 22.9 per cent. The estimated result in 2012-13 is 20 per cent. We had a lower target, I give you that, but in fact it has dropped.

**Mr PISONI:** Yes, but what was the target based on? Obviously you do not make up numbers, so that target would have been based on some expected process. Anyone reading this would say, 'Well, look there was an ambitious target and congratulations for having an ambitious target'—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you.

**Mr PISONI:** —but that was not achieved. The question is: why was it not achieved? What did you expect to happen that did not happen?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am told there were some delays in the recruitment of staff into the reunification program. It was not as quick as we had hoped it would be but, again, I point out that the estimated result is a drop in the number of resubstantiations and I would hope to see it drop again. Part of that also has to be this work that we are doing one on one with families in their homes—getting in there, working with them, the Family by Family program, all of these programs that I have been talking about—that should deliver outcomes for children.

**Mr PISONI:** If the target was not met because of delays, why is there no attempt to meet that target for the 2013-14 year? Are there still delays?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is not an easy process, and I think you were probably right in saying that we had a very ambitious target in 2012-13. It is about having the right staff in the right locations. These figures are obviously right across South Australia so it is difficult in some areas to get the professions we need to work in these teams, but we expect to see year on year a good steady reduction in these sorts of figures.

**Mr PISONI:** I want to take you back to the budget measures paper where the DECD is expecting a saving. It was outlined in the Mid-Year Budget Review.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Sorry, I do not know which paper you are on now.

**Mr PISONI:** I am referring to FTE, so this is page 27 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, but I am also referring to the efficiency dividend that extends the 2012-13 Mid-Year Budget Review efficiency dividend of 1 per cent of an agency.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Sorry, what page are you looking at?

**Mr PISONI:** This is Budget Paper 6. This is the Budget Measures Statement.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Budget Paper 6, what page?

**Mr PISONI:** Page 37, Efficiency dividend.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Efficiency dividend, yes.

**Mr PISONI:** What is the value of the efficiency dividend in the area of care and protection?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am sorry, I do not have that; I will have to take it on notice.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you. Just getting back to Budget Paper 4, there was an FTE cut of 16.1 last year. Could the minister advise—taking out, of course, the new 360 staff who are there to replace a contract arrangement—how many staff are expected to be offered TVSPs in the year—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Sorry, are you referring to page 27, FTEs?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes, FTEs.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Did you say there was a reduction in staff?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes. The question is more focused on the coming year.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am told we have not planned the TVSP program yet.

**Mr PISONI:** You have not planned one—so there will not be one?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** TVSPs are across the agency. There has not been an allocation to this particular agency.

**Mr PISONI:** Has Mr Waterford been asked to find an allocation?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I will let Dr Bartley answer that for you.

**Dr BARTLEY:** There has been no specific allocation made. It is being dealt with by the agency as a whole and those TVSPs will be apportioned during the course of the year.

**Mr PISONI:** Will we be expecting some TVSPs, minister, from care and protection, or are you ruling them out?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** If there were to be any they would not be in front-line service delivery areas.

**Mr PISONI:** Okay, so you are not ruling them out in that area.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am ruling them out in front-line service areas. As long as you are clear on that. I am not sure whether your 1,300 included Families SA staff or not but—

**Mr PISONI:** We do not have that figure.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You did have a number.

**Mr PISONI:** We do not have that figure.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You did have a number.

**Mr PISONI:** We do not have that figure.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It was part of the 25,000 to 30,000. You did have a number because you had a specific formula—

**Mr PISONI:** You are just making it up, minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** —comparing it to Victoria.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** You are acting like you are in opposition.

**The CHAIR:** Order! Member for Unley, order; member for Colton, order!

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Sorry, ma'am. I am being provoked.

**The CHAIR:** Order! I cannot hear the minister. Minister, do you have anything further to add?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No.

**The CHAIR:** Okay. Member for Unley.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** You have about three minutes.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Budget Paper 4, page 27, Program summary. Could the minister provide a breakdown of grants that have been allocated and a list of agencies and organisations who were the recipients of the grants in the last financial year?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I think we can; I am told we can. I can give you the names of the organisations that received grant-funded services; I will take that on notice. I can give you 2011-12 figures or the total for the three years from 2007-08 to 2011-12.

**Mr PISONI:** I am happy for those to come back.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You are happy to take those on notice?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes; that is fine, minister. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** We have reached 3pm, which means it is time to go to Early Childhood Development.

**Membership:**

Mr Hamilton-Smith substituted for Mr Gardner.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Dr K. Bartley, Chief Executive, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms J. Riedstra, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Education and Child Development.

Ms P. Strachan, Head of Child Development, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr R. Ernszt, Principal Planning and Reporting Officer, Families SA.

Ms H. Leo, Project Manager National Partnership for Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Development, Department for Education and Child Development.

Mr M. Hicks, Ministerial Adviser, Education.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, do you have an opening statement or are you going straight into questions?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have a brief opening statement. Overwhelmingly, research shows the importance of the early years not only in a child's education; it also impacts on the rest of their life. In South Australia we have heeded this advice and we are already seeing results, as well as national recognition. South Australia claimed three of the four awards in the Australian Family and Early Education Awards, including the Rising Star Award for childcare workers, the Early Childhood Director of the Year, and the Early Childhood Service of the Year.

The residency of Carla Rinaldi, an internationally-renowned child development expert, was recently completed. Carla's work reinforced the importance of development between the ages of zero and three and the need for qualified educators to be working in childcare services. This government continues to support those aims.

The Education and Early Childhood Services Registration Standards Board finished its first full year of operations, including the start of quality assessments of early childhood services. These assessments are available for the public to see, and, as I said before, to quote the member for Unley, 'You can't improve what you don't measure.'

The 2012-13 year marked 10 years since the establishment of this government's Every Chance for Every Child agenda and saw significant achievements in delivering new services and supports to families with young children. In last year's budget, we committed to continuing the implementation of the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education program and set a target for 95 per cent of four-year-old children to be attending preschool with a qualified teacher by June 2013. I am pleased to advise that we recently reported to the commonwealth that we reached 96 per cent in 2012.

We set a target to have 32 children's centres operational by 30 June 2013. We have 31 operational as of today and a further six are scheduled for completion in the next financial year. The government promised to continue to integrate service delivery across DECD, the Women's and Children's Health Network, community health, hospitals and NGOs. This was achieved through more children's centres, the 100,000<sup>th</sup> universal contact visit since 2007, offering antenatal services out of hospitals, improved hearing and speech pathology services and launching the Strong Start program.

We are also committed to progress implementing the national quality standards and the national quality framework to ensure our children get the best start in life. We have continued to develop staff skills, fund and build new preschools, and engaged the SA Health and Community Services Skills Board to conduct a workforce assessment. I look forward to the questions about our achievements and the challenges of the past year.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thank you to you, minister, and your staff for the excellent work being done in this portfolio area. It is very important. I would like to start with a question about Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 18, which, under Performance indicators, talks about the number of children's centres, occasional care centres, etc., that we operate. You might need to take this question on notice, but in the interests of transparency I would like to ask if you could provide to the committee a list of the addresses of the 38 children's services listed.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The centres?

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** The centres, the children's centres, I am sorry. Also, the 363 preschool services. I am sure the department would have a readily accessible list of all of them.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** So, if we could have a list of them, and with that an indication of the budget for each centre: expenses, income and net cost of providing services for each.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Okay.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thirdly, the capital value of the land, the CV, the council value, the cost of the land for each centre, just so that we, as a committee, get a gauge of our investment in this important area.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised that we do not hold some of that information centrally; we would actually have to go to those centres themselves. So, within reasonable efforts, we are happy to get what information we can for you, without it being overly onerous.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I realise, with the land value, that some of the sites are probably co-located with schools or other, and there will be a mix-up there, but a guesstimation would be welcome.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The focus of the children's centres is to have them, in the main, co-located so they become a community hub, if you like, that enables us to work with those families that need assistance, so they are not stigmatised and they are comfortable with the school setting. You understand the focus of all of that.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Yes. It is very helpful for parents to be able to go to one location and drop off the older kids and the younger kids.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That as well.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I notice, on that same budget page, that there are 38 children's centres at present. I notice on the preceding page, page 17, there is a highlight of having established a further five centres, bringing the total to 31. I notice that figure is not the same as 38, although I suppose that adds on to the target of 2013-14 to establish an extra seven, which makes it 38.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, the target is 38. We have 31 operating currently. We think we will have six more done this financial year, and there has been a delay in the one at Goolwa. The one at Goolwa has taken additional time. There were unexpected delays in relation to that, so that is likely to be over the next financial year. In this budget we have just announced one at Blakeview, so that will take the total up to 39.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Great. Following on from my earlier question on notice about the locations of each of those 38 centres, would you be able to provide—if you do not have it now, you could provide it later—what the cost will be? I gather we are building each of those seven new additional centres? Are we building them from scratch or are we renovating existing premises?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Of the 31 existing—I know from my own electorate that there was additional construction on Keithcot Farm. Keithcot Farm was extended because it was one of the first tranche. It was co-located with the school, it ran occasional care and preschool, they were very progressive in their attitude, so that had redevelopment. However, there will be a mix of new and redeveloped. In that total, there are four which have a specific Aboriginal focus as well.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Which is great.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** They are fantastic. We officially opened the one down at Christies Beach the other day and it is a beautiful centre. The Aboriginal community was actively

involved in the design and it was just fantastic. It was lovely. The members for Reynell and Kaurna were actually at the opening. It is a spectacular facility that we can all be very proud of.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I am sure it is. It is very important for the Indigenous communities to have such facilities. Could you provide on notice the capital costs of building or redeveloping each of those seven new centres?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, we can do that. Of course that varies and it also depends on where they are located. I think we have built one in the APY lands and one in Ceduna, so their costs are different to what we would be building down at Christies Beach.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Can you clarify for the committee—because I am sure that this is an evolving thing—what the difference is between a children's centre and a preschool service? I can see what is printed on page 18, but I am wondering whether preschool services provide some of the same types of services listed under children's centres or whether children's centres might provide some similar preschool-type services as well. Can you explain the difference between the two and what they do?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Tric will correct me if I get this wrong but a preschool is a preschool. It provides preschool services. Some of them have been able to offer mothers' playgroup sessions in their preschools, but essentially it is a preschool service for four year olds before they go to school. Children's centres provide a range of things depending on the needs of the community in which they are located. They are targeted at those specific needs, so they can, for example, have preschool services, they can have occasional care services, I think some of them can have long day care services, but they also have other services that would support mothers and children. So there may be parenting programs.

I went to the Gawler and District College in the first week of school and there were mums with babies who had rocked up. They were overwhelmed by how magnificent it was. There were facilities to run cooking classes, for example. The school is able to identify people who need a bit of support and get them involved in a non-threatening environment and engage with them. Also, there are allied health services, child and family health, going to the children's centre, making sure we have the facilities there that they can—again, mum can go to one place, she knows the staff, and she is comfortable.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I know this goes back to the 1990s, so it predates the current government, but I know a program was underway in the late 1990s to lift the preschool infrastructure up to childcare centre regulation standard. I think there was a policy underway to make sure that the fences and the gates, and all the physical buildings complied with childcare centre regulations. I assume that has continued. Could you confirm for me whether all our preschools and all our children's centres, in terms of their buildings and infrastructure, comply with childcare standard regulations—so, the fences, the gates, the doors, the toilet arrangement, the number of toilets per child, all of that, is it compliant?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised that all of our new and redeveloped centres are compliant and we are in the process of assessing the older centres for compliance.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** So, the 38 children's services would probably be compliant. Would that be right?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes; I am told, yes.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** And the 363 preschools, would some of them be compliant and are others being assessed?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised that the majority should be, but we are going through a process of assessing them.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Okay, that is good. Are the 38 children's centres and the 363 preschool services required to comply with childcare regulations by law, or do they not fit the definition, or are they not required to comply? Are they, for example, licensed and subject to assessment as to compliance?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Are you asking me about the national quality standard or are you asking me about childcare licensing standards?

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** No, I am asking about the state childcare regulations, which I think are now connected with a bill that was recently passed to the quality standards—the state requirements, the state regulations.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You are talking about if we provide childcare services, are we required to comply with the same regulations as a private childcare centre or a community childcare centre.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** If a mum takes her child to a children's service—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised, yes, we are.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** They are, so they are compliant. Do they have to be licensed then? Do they have a licence as a childcare centre or a childcare children's service that they must display?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, they have to have approval.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** What about the 363 preschools? Do they have to comply as well? Are they licensed?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** For child care?

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** For child care; are they licensed?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** If they provide child care they would but, if they do not provide child care, they would not.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** When you and I went to kindy, minister, not that long ago—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I didn't go. I had that disadvantage.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** It was different times, and it was great, too. Generally it was sessional. You would get dropped off at 10 till 12 or 2 till 4, that sort of thing. I know for a long time now we have provided other services at our preschools. We might cover the lunch gap so the child can do a morning and afternoon. Some of our centres, I understand, will do before and after kindy care just as schools do with before and after school care. If they provide care over the lunch break, between sessions, or if they provide before or after kindy care, like a school, does that trigger a requirement to comply with the childcare regulations? In other words, how do you determine whether a preschool or a kindy is providing extended services or simply providing sessional care? What is the trigger to require that they comply with the childcare regulations, if there is one?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will take that on notice because it is very detailed in relation to what they might require. Our centres are part of the national quality agenda and we are required to work towards that, so we are working towards child educator ratios and managing educator breaks. Even when the educator, as I understand it, has a break, they are required to maintain the child educator ratio on the floor.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Why I am asking is: let's say for one reason or another mum needs respite, as well as the child, or mum is working two days a week, for example, and she has a choice of going to a childcare centre or a preschool. If she goes to the childcare centre, that is a licensed and regulated childcare centre and it must comply: she knows that her child will be cared for in accordance with strict regulations. If she goes to the kindergarten and let's say the kindergarten or the preschool does before and after kindy care and covers the lunch gap, should anything go wrong, is that centre, and the mother, protected? What regulations or laws kick in?

Let's say something happens to the child at 7am because the preschool is doing pre-kindy care, and the parent wants to sue the centre or a staff member finds that they are being sued on the basis that they have breached the childcare regulations, if you like, but they are not registered as a childcare centre. I am wondering how we deal with that potential issue of a parent complaint or a staff member or a preschool being attacked through the courts on the basis that they were not compliant with the regulation and they were providing extended services. What happens there?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have been told that the national quality standards are now the standards and regulations that we need to comply with, so departmental preschools and children's centres meet the same requirements as long day care. The centres are now registered, not approved. Preschools and children's centres are all considered centre-based services, so there is no longer a distinction between child care and preschool. I think that probably answers a swag of your questions.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** So, for the purposes of the law—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** They are all considered the same.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** —if mum takes her child to a preschool it is considered to be a childcare centre?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** They are required to meet the same quality standards.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** That would apply for meals and safety, and all of it?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thank you for clarifying that. Do any of our children's centres access the childcare benefit or childcare assistance, or the federal childcare benefit which is paid to parents? I know it is paid to the parent, but in a childcare centre it is paid through the centre. If they are licensed they should be able to offer to their parents, I would have thought, access to the childcare benefit—not the childcare rebate but the childcare benefit. Can they claim like a childcare centre can and get that benefit for their parents?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am told that preschools do not qualify for the childcare benefit. You have to be providing long day care. It only applies if you operate for long day care hours.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** That deals with the preschools. The children's centres, though, some of them would be operating over long day care hours I imagine and would therefore be eligible?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** For the childcare centres that operate long day care, parents can claim that.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** The children's centres, yes?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The children's centres.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** And most of them, I would imagine, probably do provide long day care—would that be right? How many of the 38?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Some do and some do not. Some provide only occasional care.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Would you be able to give the committee any indication, of the 38 that are either built or proposed, how many might be providing long day care?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will take that on notice but it is too difficult to locate that now.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Would there be any of the 363 preschools (and I am thinking particularly of those that might be in remote locations and even some of those that might be providing Aboriginal care) that would be open for long day care hours, from six until six or whatever it is?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am advised that Rural Care can provide long day care. It is a system set up where there are not enough children to run a preschool program and child care, and there are 13 of those operating in rural communities. I understand that there is one preschool in the eastern suburbs that has set itself up as an incorporated body that is offering long day care.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Where would that be?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The Grove in the eastern suburbs. Do you know the Grove?

**Mr PISONI:** Eastwood.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Are we missing an opportunity there for parents because, if those preschools you mentioned—the 13 plus one—are open for longer hours, it sounds to me, technically, that they could possibly apply for eligibility for the childcare benefit and extend that benefit to the parents.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The fees for kindergarten are considerably lower than for child care.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I know. I suppose the area I am cutting to is that for those centres, if they were registered for the childcare benefit, we could get the commonwealth to pay, through the childcare benefit, for the parents at those 14 centres, and then the state government could reduce its contribution accordingly. Arguably, by not claiming the childcare benefit for those 14 centres—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, it is 13 centres. They do—they get it for long day care in the rural.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Oh, they do get the childcare benefit? I cut to the other 363 centres—if they all extended the services they provide, or some of them or selectively or where there was a need, could we covert some of them into childcare centres? If they are set up to childcare centre regulations—if they have kitchens and they comply—and the only requirement is whether they are open for long day care hours, could any of them be converted to childcare centres and thereby access on behalf of their parents the childcare benefit, thus saving the state taxpayer some money and getting more out of the commonwealth?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I guess it depends on the need of the community and whether there are sufficient childcare places already in an area. Often you will find there are obviously community-based childcare centres scattered around, but we have situations where we have private childcare providers co-located on some schools. There are some in my electorate that are co-located on a school site. They are close to public and private schools. I do not think there would be a need—I can talk with authority around my area—to convert the kindergartens into childcare centres because there are private providers providing that service.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thanks, minister. On the top of page 19 the budget paper provides us with a government expenditure per child for particular services, but it does not seem to include the cost per child for children's centres. I think all the others are mentioned, but not children's centres. I wonder if it would be possible to provide that information?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It would be really difficult for children's centres because they could provide a range of those services. The cost per child in preschool we have not been able to do because it is a one-off thing because of the first day—

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thanks for explaining that. You have done it by type of service, rather than by facility.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Okay, that makes sense. I notice in 2011-12 and 2012-13 we provided a figure on the cost per type of service for occasional care and family day care, but for 2012-13 we have not really provided an estimated result. Is that because we have not had the data come in yet or will we get a result? Again, on the top of page 19, where it says n/a, n/a, n/a. In 2013-14 there are three n/as as well. Would you be able to provide that?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Part of that is being impacted, as I was saying, because of the first day enrolment policy. I think the figures are skewed because the numbers of children in some centres are dropping down until we come back to the new year. I am happy to take that on notice but, in the main, certainly for preschool services, it is that first day policy, but we will see if we can get an estimated result for you.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thanks, minister.

**Mr TRELOAR:** My question is from Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 17, under Highlights. It relates to dot point 4: the increased number of children enrolled in preschool. My question is in regard to the move next year, as I understand it, by the department to a single intake for reception and preschoolers. Could the minister explain the impact of these changes, particularly regarding that cohort that will be caught in the first year of this?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Let's hope I can answer your questions. The first same-day policy means that children beginning school or preschool in any given year will start on the same day and they will get a full year of both preschool and reception. This changes the historic arrangements where children would start term by term. Children who turn four before 30 April will be able to start preschool in that year; those born after the date will wait until the following year.

There are special provisions in place for Aboriginal children and those under guardianship, and others with some additional needs. They will be able to start preschool after they turn three. It is about identifying cohorts of children who have significant disadvantages and getting them in to preschool and engaging with them early. Other states and territories also have a single start date for school and preschool. They have chosen birthdates ranging from January to June; ours is pretty much in the middle range.

This is part of a package of reforms to improve experiences and outcomes for kids. In the preschool area we are improving the qualifications of staff—in childcare services and preschools—making sure that preschools include 15 hours per week of quality education in the year before the child starts school.

We are funding the construction of new and upgraded preschools through children's centres and school co-locations, and we are providing funding through the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education to dozens of childcare services and non-government preschools around the state. We are requiring long day care services to have a tertiary qualified educator from the beginning of 2014 so that children get a better education before they even start school. We want children who are advanced learners to have the flexibility to be able to extend their learning. As I have explained here, the reduction in preschool numbers in the budget papers is essentially a one-off event.

**Mr TRELOAR:** I have a further question on preschoolers. It is the same budget line—and I am going to go back to country school buses. Minister, could you explain the department's policy with regard to transporting preschool children to a campus and whether seats are available for those children?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** My understanding of the policy—and Julieann will correct me if I am wrong—is that if there are seats available on a bus that goes to a centre or past a centre, and the child's maturity is such that it can cope with travelling on the bus, they are able to access that bus to go to preschool.

**Mr PISONI:** I have a question on that same line. In 2010 the announcement of the single entry was announced as a budget saving by the then education minister, the Premier. I think the figure at that time was about \$8.5 million. Are you able to confirm what the actual saving is now that we are three years down the track?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** My advice is that it is \$8.246 million over two years.

**Mr PISONI:** Is there an extra saving in the first year of implementation?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Is there a what?

**Mr PISONI:** An extra saving. Is there any saving beyond the first two implementation years?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No. The preschool intake commenced this year, and the school intake is next year. I am advised that the saving over the two years is \$8.246 million.

**Mr PISONI:** How was the 30 April cut-off date arrived at?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I guess much the same way as other states arrived at their first day cut off; some were in June, some were much earlier in the year. In Tasmania the cut-off date is 1 January; in the Australian Capital Territory it is 30 April; we are 30 April; the Northern Territory is 30 June; Queensland is 30 June; Western Australia is 30 June; New South Wales is 31 July; and your very favourite, Victoria, is 30 April, just like us.

**Mr PISONI:** Could you explain why you did not choose the 30 June option?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am guessing here—and I am happy to take advice—but I would imagine that the department looked at what other states were doing. States like Western Australia, Victoria, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory have all settled on that mid-range of 30 April, and we went with it. I do not know if there were other considerations, but I am happy to be advised if there were. Victoria is often held up, as you well know, as an icon in areas like this, so—

**Mr PISONI:** Was cost a consideration? Was that a directive or a consideration for the 30 April start for the \$8.2 million in savings?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No—

**Mr PISONI:** So there was no direction or consideration of cost?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, it was simply a management issue.

**Mr PISONI:** You have not clarified how you came—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I did clarify it—

**Mr PISONI:** —other than suggesting it was the vibe—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I said that I thought the department looked at—

**Mr PISONI:** What is the science behind it? What is the rationale?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The 30 April cut-off date means that the age of the children starting at the beginning of the year is generally one term different to what it was under the previous enrolment policy rather than two terms different, had it been later in the year. That is what I am advised.

**Mr PISONI:** That doesn't help.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It doesn't? Sorry about that; you asked what was considered and that was it.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Minister, could I ask you a question about management, and seek your advice on whether the government has considered whether the 38 children's centres would be better run by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion? I ask that question because, as you have mentioned, they provide a raft of services that are not just education related, and it is my experience that childcare services and children's centres provide a valuable role in supporting families and doing things that are often the first port of call for compulsory notification, etc. I am just wondering if we are going down the right track, having the department of education doing this. Could the children's services be better run by DCSI?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That goes to the nub of the decision of bringing Families SA into the Department for Education and Child Development. The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion now has responsibility for disability, for housing, for those things, but for over 12 months now, since 1 January 2012, Families SA has been in the Department for Education and Child Development, and the focus of the department is now on children from birth through to 18. It was brought in so that we could have better synergies for children's health, children's wellbeing and children's education. I think you would agree that they are perfectly placed.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thank you for explaining that; better go one way or the other. If there is time for one more—

**The CHAIR:** Yes; one more.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Just on the way that we manage regulation, because as you know regulatory issues are very significant in this area and controversial. At the moment, I gather, an arm of the department reporting to the Minister for Education is responsible for checking on licences and regulatory compliance. Is that correct? I might have it wrong. Is it an arm of the department reporting to the Minister for Education, or is it another arm of government perhaps reporting to the Attorney or some other minister?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is an independent process, the regulation.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Could you explain how that works?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes. It is the Education and Early Childhood Services Regulations and Standards Board that was established and I think that has been operating now for its first full year. So, it does the assessments around the establishment of new services and schools and preschools.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** When you say that is independent, is that part of DECD? Which minister does that entity report to?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** To me.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** So, it is funded by and included within your budget and reports to you as minister. I am just wondering if it is truly independent because I think in some other states those functions are performed by officers reporting to another minister so as to ensure competitive neutrality; that is to say—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I think they are fiercely independent and they are legislated for.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Are they?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** You have to whip them into line, or they have to—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** They are legislated for.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thank you for that. I appreciate it.

**The CHAIR:** It is time to move onto administered items.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Mr P. Kilvert, Chief Executive, SACE Board of South Australia.

Ms J. Andrews, Chief Executive, Office of Non-Government Schools and Services.

Ms S. Lohmeyer, Executive Coordinator, SACE Board of South Australia.

Ms C. Parker, Business Manager, Office of Non-Government Schools and Services.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Ensuring as many South Australian young people as possible successfully finish their school education with a world-class qualification continues to drive the efforts of our SACE Board, with support from the state government.

In 2012, a record number of students completed their SACE. I will get to this achievement and other highlights in just a moment, but I will take this opportunity to acknowledge that Dr Paul Kilvert is finishing his tenure as chief executive officer of the SACE Board and I want to thank him for his enormous contribution. Dr Kilvert has led the Office of the SACE Board for the past six years, overseeing some of the most significant reforms ever undertaken to the South Australian Certificate of Education, and, of course, Dr Kilvert's leadership has been instrumental in ensuring students' SACE results are delivered smoothly each year. An announcement about Dr Kilvert's replacement will be made soon.

I referred earlier to the record achievements in 2012. They include: almost 86 per cent of those who gained their SACE received an Australian tertiary admission rank; a record number of subject merits were gained, and I was delighted to be part of the ceremony to congratulate these students at Government House earlier this year; the number of Aboriginal and Indigenous students completing their SACE in 2012 was more than double the number in 2001; and I am also pleased to report boys' performance in the SACE improved, with an 11.4 per cent increase in those gaining their SACE between 2011 and 2012. The SACE Board continues to be a trusted and respected independent office.

In 2012-13, the Office of Non-Government Schools and Services administered approximately \$176.1 million in state government grants to 345 non-government schools and organisations. Helping the most vulnerable young people in our community has been a key part of the office's work.

Members may recall the fire which destroyed the Druze community hall in July last year. The hall was also home to the Druze Arabic School. The office has worked closely with the Druze community school to establish new premises and buy new equipment so that students can continue their studies. Families of children newly diagnosed with a hearing disability have also been supported by the office, providing early intervention advisory services. That is just a very brief snapshot of the operations of those two organisations. I am happy to take questions from committee members.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 12, dot point 4 under Ministerial responsibilities, where the Office of Non-Government Schools and Services is listed. Are you able to advise the committee what the budget for the Office of Non-Government Schools and Services is?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The employee budget for the office is \$1.632 million, but of course on top of that are the funds that they administer to our non-government schools that I have already outlined.

**Mr PISONI:** Is there a cost to the department for books, for office space and other expenses—of the total cost, not just the employee cost?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am happy to take that on notice but I expect that it is part of the overall accommodation costs for the department as a whole.

**Mr PISONI:** How many staff?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** How many staff in the office?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** There are 13.1 staff.

**Mr PISONI:** There are 13.1; how many directors?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** One director and one chief executive.

**Mr PISONI:** And the remuneration for the director?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I will have to take the director's pay on notice.

**Mr PISONI:** Well, she is sitting right next to you.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, that is the chief executive officer.

**Mr PISONI:** Of the Office of Non-Government Schools?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr PISONI:** Is that included in the 13 staff?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes.

**Mr PISONI:** Perhaps I can have the chief executive officer's salary.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You do not want the director's salary, you want the chief executive officer's salary?

**Mr PISONI:** I will have the director's salary as well.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You understand the difference between a director and a chief executive, don't you?

**Mr PISONI:** Can you provide that?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, we can.

**Mr PISONI:** Well, she is right there.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I do not have the director's pay scale so we will take that on notice and provide you with the information.

**Mr PISONI:** So, the director does not know.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The director is not here.

**Mr PISONI:** Sorry, the CE does not know.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I do not imagine the CE—

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Point of order, Madam Chair. The member for Unley is asking a question, I think, in an harassing way—which is not my point of order—about the pay of an individual within the department. Convention is, I think, that pay scales are listed in the budget papers in bands and that individuals are not identified by their pay. I would be very surprised if we were to do that, and I would ask the minister to consider the conventions that apply before she undertakes to give a direct answer.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Kaurana, I will take your advice. I think we will move on to the next question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you.

**Mr PISONI:** This refers to Grants and Subsidies on page 41.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** On the same budget paper?

**Mr PISONI:** Same budget paper, under Grants and Subsidies, the line for non-government schools—per capita is \$870,570,000, and is clearly inclusive of federal funds. This line shows an increase from the 2012-13 estimated result of approximately \$33.5 million. It is not possible to distinguish the state and the federal component in this increase. Can you separate the state and federal component from that increase?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I outlined for you in my opening statement the state contribution for non-government schools; it is \$170.3 million for 2012-13.

**Mr PISONI:** I have asked for what the—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** 2013-14?

**Mr PISONI:** No, what is the state contribution to that \$33.5 million increase for the 2012-13 year?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am telling you, we provided \$170.3 million and the rest is provided by the commonwealth—take it away.

**Mr PISONI:** I am specifically asking about the increase from the previous year from the estimated result.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I could get my calculator out and do a calculation if you give me the time, I will sit here and do it for you. Is that what you would like?

**Mr PISONI:** No, you can bring it back, that is fine.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Okay, fine, it is an easy sum to do.

**Mr PISONI:** Considering the budget was handed down before the signing of the new funding agreement with the federal budget, will there be any adjustment to the \$870,570,000 budgeted figure for non-government schools?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** My understanding of the agreement that we have signed is that non-government schools will be receiving additional money next year and that is currently being calculated.

**Mr PISONI:** So the budget will need to be adjusted. Is that what you are saying?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Well, the figures will change.

**Mr PISONI:** Will the special schools national equity program for schools remain under the new funding agreement in the forward estimates, or will that be adjusted next year because of the new funding model?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Many of the national partnership agreements that we had with the commonwealth are encompassed in Gonski. I do not have the list of those here but I am happy to bring back an answer to you in relation to that specific line.

**Mr PISONI:** I would actually like them for all of the national programs. I would like to know which ones will be continuing in the forward estimates.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Which ones are in Gonski and which ones are not. Is that what you are asking for?

**Mr PISONI:** Which ones have been rolled into Gonski and which ones will no longer be funded?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Which ones will be in Gonski, as opposed to allocated separately. That's what you are asking?

**Mr PISONI:** I am asking whether they continue as part of the Gonski announcement.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, are they part of Gonski?

**Mr PISONI:** Not, not are they part. Do they continue on top of the Gonski announcement? That is the question I am asking.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** As I said to you, many of them will not because they will be part of Gonski. As you know, there is a level of base funding for each child, whether they are in primary school or secondary school and, on top of that, there is a range of additional payments that will be made—additional payments for disability or aboriginality. There will be five or six different levels of funding that will be allocated per child based on the child's need. What they will do is take into account the sorts of individual funding programs: those levies that are being paid take into account many of the national programs that we had operating with the commonwealth. It comes into one overarching program which is this new agreement funding model that we have signed with the commonwealth.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, you have had a fair run since lunchtime. I think there is a question from the government. Member for Reynell.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20, school education objectives and the achievement of the SACE certificate. Can the minister update the house about the progress of the research project element of SACE?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** An independent panel, which reported in July last year, was set up to evaluate the first year of the new SACE and found that there were benefits to students undertaking the research project. Some schools reported that it had a positive influence on teaching and learning, and the SACE Board decided to continue with the research project following consultation with school principals and school sectors. In 2012, over 96 per cent of students completed the research project successfully, showing it is catering for most students.

At the SACE merit ceremony on 12 February, I heard about some of the great research projects that students undertook in 2012. One student investigated the big bang theory, forging links with the university academics with whom he will be studying during the course of his university career. Another student explored the correlation between a reduction in speed limits and car accidents. These are just two really great examples of research projects students are embarking on.

One student used his research project to investigate the necessary preparation, training and equipment requirements to climb Mount Everest. His research enabled him to turn this project into reality, and in late 2012 the student made a solo ascent to camp 1 on Mount Everest.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** A lofty ambition.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** That is pretty good, isn't it—that is pretty cool, I reckon. Another student used his research project to move closer to realising his ambition to become an officer in the Australian Defence Force. As part of his research this student interviewed three ADF members to hear about their experiences, and through this gained valuable insight into the officer role. He was one of just three South Australian high school students selected for officer training in 2013, and began studying for a Bachelor of Science at the ADF Academy in Canberra this year.

Further work is being done during 2013 on the research project so that it better meets the learning needs of boys, Aboriginal students, new arrivals to Australia and students wishing to pursue a pathway to further training and employment. On 8 April the chief executive of the SACE Board sent a letter to all principals outlining current action and flagging further work, including consultation and work on the project. He also wrote to each of the SACE Board stakeholder groups, drawing their attention to the availability of the draft subject outlines and inviting their comment and feedback.

The consultation closed on 10 May this year; 90 responses were received from organisations, school leaders and stakeholders. I am advised that the feedback provided overall support for the directions taken in the revised research projects A and B, and there was strong support for the integration of the Australian curriculum capabilities into the subjects. There was also strong support for a greater distinction being drawn between the requirements for research project A (usually practically-based projects) and those for research project B (usually issues-based projects). The consultation strongly supported the changes to the external assessment requirements for research project A and research project B. Teaching of the revised subjects will begin in 2014.

**Mr PISONI:** Is the minister able to advise the committee how many year 12 students failed to receive their SACE certificate because they failed to submit their research project last year?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No. I can tell you that 96 per cent of students completed their project successfully, so 4 per cent of students potentially failed or failed to lodge their project, but 96 per cent completed it successfully—a great outcome, thank you.

**Ms THOMPSON:** Again, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 20. I am interested in developments with the TER. I understand there has been a drop-off in the number of students getting a tertiary entrance rank in 2012 compared with the baseline set 10 years ago. Can the minister explain the rationale behind that?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The results received by SACE students in 2012 were outstanding: 92.2 per cent of students attempting to complete the SACE did so. More students achieved the SACE: 13,453 completed their SACE certificate—that is 1,086 more than in 2011, and more students qualified for university entry. In 2012, 11,544 students gained an ATAR for university entrance, up from 10,624 in 2011. In 2012 the highest number of Aboriginal students ever achieved their SACE; 185 completed their studies and the majority of completers received an ATAR score—57 per cent, in fact. All students who achieved the SACE have met benchmark literacy and numeracy standards. All of these students should be very proud of their results. They worked hard, they worked diligently and they are on their way to the next phase of their lives. The

last thing they needed was the member for Unley talking down their achievements. In the member for Unley's budget reply he said:

That annual report tells us there has been a 16 per cent drop-off in the number of students getting a pass mark or equivalent for their ATAR—that is the year 12 score they need to get into university—in 2012 compared to the baseline set 10 years ago, in 2003.

That is simply wrong. There was not a reduction in students receiving an ATAR. More students qualified for an ATAR this year. Once again the member for Unley added up one and one and came up with three.

*Mr Pisoni interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You need to do it.

**Mr PISONI:** You just make it up.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You just make it up. You made that up. You cannot be relied upon.

**The CHAIR:** Order! Member for Unley, the minister is still speaking.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You cannot be relied on. You are certainly underqualified to be shadow minister for education.

**Mr PISONI:** Tell us your qualifications.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You need to be able to add up.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 41, under Grants and subsidies. Will you please advise the house how the PIE grants are supporting parents to be more involved with their school and, indeed, their preschool community?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The Parent Initiative in Education grants to parent groups in schools and preschools are designed to encourage increased participation of parents in schools and preschool communities. The grants are targeted to increase participation of parents who are often not well represented in school decision-making, for example, parents of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, students from multicultural backgrounds and students with disabilities. It is important because parents, carers and families are the first and most important influence in a child's life. They instil the attitudes and values that support each child to take part in learning and contributing to our community. The success in education depends on strong partnerships between professional educators, parents, families and our communities.

In 2012-13, \$60,000 worth of PIE grants were funded across more than 40 public preschools and schools. Approved funding ranged from \$250 to \$2,500, with 32 schools or preschools receiving funding of more than \$1,000. Projects submitted for the 2013 year ranged from building partnerships between families caring for children with additional needs, projects to assist with ensuring its reception students and their parents make a smooth transition from kindergarten to school, and promoting increasing parent understanding of literacy and numeracy development.

Also in 2012-13, \$20,000 worth of PIE grants were funded in Catholic schools, representing 16 projects. Catholic schools use this funding for projects that encourage positive parenting to build parent engagement in schools through environmentally sustainable gardens, to help parents and grandparents showcase diverse nationalities and promote multiculturalism, and a Dad's Day—an event dedicated to encouraging fathers to get more involved in their child's learning.

Success in education depends on strong partnerships between teachers, parents and students. These grants foster these connections to give South Australia's young people the best chance to gain confidence and reach their goals and be happy in the education process.

**Mr PISONI:** Are you able to advise the committee how many students completed five SACE stage 2 subjects as year 12 students last year?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We will take that on notice if you are asking who completed five subjects in the one year. As you know, students can break their SACE across two years, or longer I am told, if they wish. If you want to know specifically the number that did five in one year we will take that on notice.

**Mr PISONI:** Could I have a breakdown between government and non-government schools, please?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am told yes.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** The time agreed was quarter past 4. There being no further questions I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the Department for Education and Childhood Development and the administered items for the Department for Education and Childhood Development completed.

**DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, \$1,040,343,000**  
**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, \$179,118,000**

**Membership:**

Mr Gardner substituted for Mr Treloar.

Mr Whetstone substituted for Mr Hamilton-Smith.

**Witness:**

Hon. J.M. Rankine, Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

**Departmental Advisers:**

Ms J. Mazel, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr A. Thompson, Executive Director, Financial Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms S. Wallace, Executive Director, Policy and Community Development, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms N. Rogers, Director, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr R. Lean, Manager, Multicultural SA.

**The CHAIR:** I declare the proposed payments reopened for examination and refer ministers to the Agency Statements, Volume 1. Minister, do you wish to make a statement?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, thank you. I will make an opening statement. Multiculturalism is, I think, one of our great successes here in South Australia. Our diverse community and the richness it brings to South Australia is deeply valued by this state government. During 2012-13 the state government provided approximately \$1.2 million in grants and other contributions to ethnic community organisations.

Since coming to office we have substantially increased multicultural grants that support community groups to promote and share their culture. They were \$75,000 a year when we came to office; they were \$600,000 last year. Land tax relief grants for eligible multicultural organisations are among the state government's initiatives specifically supporting not-for-profit multicultural organisations and some for-profit organisations that experience financial hardship or have some different establishment mechanisms. From Monday 1 July the process to access these land tax grants will be made much easier for those eligible organisations. Organisations which apply every year for a grant from the state government towards their land tax will make an initial application with RevenueSA and, if eligible, will then have automatic, ongoing exemption each year instead of being required to apply year upon year.

I am pleased to note that this scheme has been endorsed by the member for Morialta, and I thank him for acknowledging this on his website. We appreciate that, and I am sure that multicultural organisations in his electorate will appreciate the fact that he has done so. According to the 2012 South Australian Government Household Survey, 86 per cent of South Australians

believe that cultural diversity is a positive influence in our community, and I am sure all members would welcome this result. On that note, I invite questions.

**Mr PISONI:** My question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 91, Program summary, and full-time equivalents as of 31 June. Minister, did you or your office have any influence on the appointment of Vicki Antoniou to her current position as a public servant based in your office?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you for your question about Ms Antoniou's appointment. I note, for the record, that you have pursued her with some vigour over some time. When Multicultural Affairs was transferred to DCSI—that occurred in October 2011; I think that was the time that I became Minister for Multicultural Affairs—there was no-one in my office who had expertise or knowledge in multicultural matters. It was important that we had a position in my office that could provide the necessary support I needed.

I am very uncomfortable in a situation like this, having to speak about a public servant. However, this person had incredible experience, had worked for nine years, I think, in Multicultural Affairs SA as a senior ministerial liaison officer, and had worked for a previous minister for multicultural affairs for eight years. At the time I think she was a redeployee. So it was a very obvious selection to have Ms Antoniou come into my office and help me with that portfolio. However, again I place on record my concern about your constant pursuit of a public servant who has incredible expertise in this particular area. Quite frankly, it defies logic.

**Mr PISONI:** Can you confirm that, following your appointment to the portfolio of multicultural affairs on 21 October 2011, all appropriate departmental recruitment processes were completed by 27 October 2011, and Vicki Antoniou emailed your chief of staff, saying:

thank you...for the opportunity to work with you and [the] Minister...Would you like me to liaise with Lyn regarding my contract...Start date for Monday is still a go

The email chain continues. On 14 November there is an email from Angela Dobie instructing a Denise Brine to prepare Vicki Antoniou's contract for 12 months, ASO-7.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, I am not sure if you have a question on this.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes; what is the question?

**Mr PISONI:** I am explaining the question.

**The CHAIR:** Estimates is not time to make statements.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** What is the question?

**Mr PISONI:** I am explaining the question.

**The CHAIR:** I also wonder which budget line you are referring to.

**Mr PISONI:** I have already opened my questions with the budget line, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Then I would ask you to get to the question very quickly.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I think the question was: were appropriate procedures undertaken in the employment process? I am sure Ms Mazel would be happy to answer that.

**Ms MAZEL:** Vicki Antoniou's appointment was handled by the HR division and determined in line with provisions under the Public Sector Act. A role description was developed for that position and classified at an ASO7 level because it was a senior role. So, all procedures in line with the Public Sector Act were followed.

**Mr PISONI:** Was the job description developed before or after Vicki Antoniou was advised that she would be employed as an ASO7?

**Ms MAZEL:** I would have to take that on notice.

**Mr PISONI:** I can probably give you some information that would help you.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Quite frankly, that is beside the point. The point is, we had a role that needed to be filled. There was a process, I understand, of determining what that role would encompass—a perfectly proper process—but you have spent months pursuing an individual public servant for no good reason. We have been inundated with FOI after FOI in relation to this. In fact, in the last financial year, and I will correct something that I said earlier, I said it was around \$50,000, it was not, it was \$46,327 worth of FOIs from you to either my office or the agency. What a disgrace. All in pursuit—you have pursued a single individual.

**Mr PISONI:** I am not going to be berated by you, minister. I have some serious questions.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You have pursued a single individual—

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** —in the most disgraceful way.

**Mr PISONI:** I have some serious questions about your processes.

**The CHAIR:** Order, the member for Unley! Order!

**Mr PISONI:** Some serious questions about your processes.

**The CHAIR:** Order, the member for Unley, or you will be asked to leave.

**Mr PISONI:** This is not about a public servant.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is about a public servant.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You know it. It is a disgrace.

**Mr PISONI:** This is about you and the way you operate your office.

**The CHAIR:** Order! The member for Colton.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, the same page that the member for Unley was using, but mine will actually be associated with the lines. Minister, can you please advise the details of the realignment of Multicultural SA with the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion and further advise if this realignment has realised any additional funding to South Australia's multicultural communities.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, I can; thank you. As part of the machinery of government changes in 2011, Multicultural SA, as I have said, became part of the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. Last month, I was pleased to announce that Multicultural SA would become part of the policy and community development division of DCSI. This move will align Multicultural SA with the Office for Youth, the Office for Volunteers and the Office for Carers, areas which share a primary focus on community engagement, grant funding and community and sector development.

Importantly, these changes result in efficiencies that will make available an extra \$50,000 for multicultural grants. Last year, the grants available were \$600,000. This coming year there will be \$650,000 available for community grants. Multicultural SA, however, will continue to retain a distinct presence within the department and the wider community, including a specific website. The government has an impressive track record when it comes to grants for our many multicultural communities. As I said a little while ago, I think it was \$75,000 in 2002 and it will now be something like \$650,000 in specific grants to community organisations. That is without taking into account their land tax rebates.

**Ms THOMPSON:** My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 91. Can the minister advise how changes to the reimbursement of land tax will cut red tape for Multicultural SA and ethnic community groups?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Reynell for her question and also give her some advice in relation to the recurrent figures and how they are reflected in the budget. We recognise the really important role that multicultural organisations play in our community. They have really enriched the fabric of our community. There are many clubs and associations, we are getting more and more new arrivals looking to set up facilities, and we have many wonderful long-established community organisations here, so the land tax relief grants to these eligible organisations has been one that has been incredibly welcomed.

Additional funding of \$85,000 was provided in 2012-13 to meet the cost pressures related to the provision of land tax in the MSA budget. As I have said, as from 1 July the Land Tax Relief Grant Scheme for not-for-profit community organisations administered by MSA will cease. Instead, the land tax exemption for eligible land owned by not-for-profit organisations will now be administered through RevenueSA and it will significantly cut red tape for these community organisations so that they can really get on and do the important work they need to do. Once they

get approved they will no longer get a bill. They will not have to apply: they just automatically have that exemption.

Recurrent funding of \$272,000 from 2013-14 onwards has been removed from Multicultural SA's budget to reflect this change. So if you were curious about why there was a drop, that is because of those grants. An amount of \$41,000 has been left in MSA's recurrent budget to fund tax relief claims from the for-profit organisations that may claim that relief. There are organisations that may operate on a for-profit basis, but if they hit some financial difficulties they, too, can apply for land tax relief.

We are really proud of the work these organisations do in South Australia. This really important reform, as I said, promotes a real sense of welcome respect and inclusion. I go to many of these clubs and organisations on a regular basis. I will be out at the Croatian Club tonight, and I know that they very much appreciate the support the state government has given them in relation to these land tax relief grants.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Colton.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Referring to the same page, can you advise about any changes to the processing of multicultural grants and, in doing so, how is it that these changes will ensure those grants are provided in a timely manner?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** The grants for Multicultural SA are now being administered in the department, so the officers who undertake the work directly with our organisations will no longer be burdened with that process. They are actually going to be managed through the policy and community development division, so the people who have expertise in managing grants will be doing that. Once the process has gone through, they will then be passed on to the committee of the commission. The commission has a grants panel that then makes recommendations to the minister. We will be relieving those people who have direct interaction with multicultural groups to free them up to do that work while the grants are processed in another area.

**Mr PISONI:** Vicki Antoniou effectively received a promotion from ASO6 to ASO7 when she was appointed to this role in your office. How was Vicki Antoniou's ASO7 classification determined when the document used to determine the classification—the role description—was still being written on 9 November, 10 days after she started in the role? Is it standard practice for DCSI employees to help develop their own role descriptions after they have already started in the job at that higher salary? I refer to an email from Vicki Antoniou to Angela Dobie—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Got the name right this time?

**Mr PISONI:** This is the job description that Vicki Antoniou has written to add into her ASO7 application:

Organise overseas travel arrangements for the Minister and her delegation relating to the multicultural portfolio including flights, travel, accommodation. Arrange appointments as part of the appointments itinerary. Draft speeches, briefings relevant to the Minister's travel appointments overseas...

Angela Dobie then writes to your Chief of Staff, Mr Blair Boyer:

Please see Vicki's amendments to the RD—Role Summary. Happy for me to finalise with HR?

Blair has replied back:

Yup ok.

**The CHAIR:** Was there a question in all of that?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes, there was. I started with a question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Oh, well, why did we get the rest? Another headline, no doubt?

**Mr PISONI:** This is very serious stuff, minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, \$46,327 worth of seriousness.

**Mr PISONI:** I am spending it much better than you are.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** \$46,000 worth of seriousness, and the best you can do is pursue an individual public servant.

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

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, I am. The best you can do is pursue an individual public servant. Ms Antoniou fulfilled this role for eight years with the former minister for multicultural affairs and I understand that it was an ASO7 position at that time as well.

**Mr PISONI:** Why did your office get involved in determining the step or increment of ASO7 that Vicki Antoniou was paid when she started in her current role in 2011?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** If I recall correctly, this was worked through based on the roles and responsibilities of that position which reflected a position that was held in the former minister for multicultural affairs office. It was an ASO7 position for eight years and Ms Antoniou is on a contract until February next year to undertake specific roles. We determined what requirements we needed in our office to provide the support I needed as minister. There is nothing untoward about that.

**Mr PISONI:** Why was your office involved in determining the step or increment of the ASO7?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, we may have received advice. We were involved in determining what were the requirements of the role, which is perfectly appropriate.

**Mr PISONI:** Angela Dobie wrote to your Chief of Staff, Blair Boyer:

Will try to catch up with you about this tomorrow—now the SAPol check has come through, HR can set up a 12 month contract for Vicki but I need to confirm with you at what step?

To which he replies back to Angela Dobie:

Ok. I will need to speak to the boss about what step.

So, what role did you have in determining the step or increment of ASO7—

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, I—

**Mr PISONI:** —that Vicki Antoniou was to be paid?

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have no knowledge of the requirements of different levels of the Public Service. I have a clear understanding of what requirements I have of people who support me in my office.

**Mr PISONI:** Can you explain why a public servant was asking your chief of staff what another public servant should be paid?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, I have no idea what is in the mind of other people.

**Mr PISONI:** And why he had to refer to you to get that answer?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I have no idea what is in the mind of other people.

**Mr PISONI:** Did you instruct anybody in the department, at what level, to pay out Ms Antoniou?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I was clear about the responsibilities I required the person to undertake. I would expect that determining the level is something that the Public Service would do.

**Mr PISONI:** Why was Vicki Antoniou's job description written partially by her after she was already appointed as an ASO7?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We had somebody put in our office and start work because I needed someone to help me with that portfolio. Ms Antoniou has close to 20 years' experience, I think, working in multicultural and ethnic affairs. She has far greater experience than I, and certainly far greater experience than you would ever hope to have.

In saying that, I want to pay tribute to Jing Lee, who so ably represents you at many functions that you are never able to get to. She does a fantastic job. She works every weekend. Whatever function I am at, Jing Lee is at. She does a great job and I am sure she could give you some great advice about ethnic communities here in South Australia.

**Mr PISONI:** Have you finished berating now?

**The CHAIR:** Order! The minister will finish her answer.

**Mr PISONI:** Have you finished berating?

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I am saying she could give you great advice. She is very hardworking. She is very well received by ethnic communities out there. All those communities—

**Mr PISONI:** Minister, you are avoiding answering questions—

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** —about processes in your office.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, you are speaking over me and you are speaking over the minister. You will allow the minister to finish her answer.

**Mr PISONI:** Was Vicki Antoniou appointed—

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, you will allow the minister to finish her answer.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** We had Vicki come into our office to fill a vacancy to provide support that I needed in my office. The procedures were then worked through to prepare a contract.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Reynell.

**Mr PISONI:** So the procedures were worked through—

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** —after she was appointed. Is that what you are saying?

**The CHAIR:** Order! Member for Unley, you have finished your questions. Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, I am saying she came in to work in my office because we had no-one there fulfilling that role and I needed support.

**Mr PISONI:** Was her position funded?

*The Hon. P. Caica interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order! The member for Reynell. Did you have a question?

**Ms THOMPSON:** Thank you. I am somewhat flabbergasted by the behaviour opposite. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 91. Can the minister advise how many multicultural events she has gone to in the last financial year and how many of South Australia's many multicultural groups she visited?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Reynell for that.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** Not as many as Jing Lee.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Well, I think I just might but, anyway, at least Jing Lee does go. I think that—

*The Hon. P. Caica interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** The member for Colton will stop answering the questions for the minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** She does a great job representing the member for Unley at so many of these organisations. I am sure he is very busy but it is a shame that he can't get to—

**Mr GARDNER:** We've all been to functions where other people are represented.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Sorry?

**Mr GARDNER:** We've all been to functions where other people are represented. We have been to functions where you are represented by people.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes. I am not suggesting for a minute that we do not do that, but what I am saying is I think she does a great job, day in and day out, doing those things. Whenever we go to these multicultural events, I have to say that I have always been made to feel really welcomed. We have an incredibly diverse community here in South Australia and we encourage them to showcase their culture—through festivals, exhibitions, religious occasions, national days or simply just wanting to show South Australia who they are and involve the community.

I was appointed Minister for Multicultural Affairs in October 2011 and, within days, the first multicultural event I attended was the St Demetrios feast on 26 October—a feast that I had been to many times, obviously, as the local member, but it was lovely to join the St Demetrios community as their minister. My level of commitment has not wavered and I certainly would not want it to. Being able to meet with so many different communities really does open you up to a whole new and wonderful world, and I have greatly appreciated the experience.

I suppose when you hear about multicultural events you often think about the fantastic food and the merriment, but it goes much deeper than that. It is about our migrants wanting to preserve a piece of their homeland in their new home; it is about not forgetting; and, it is about passing down the folklore, the stories, the customs and traditions from one generation to another so that nothing will be lost.

I know there are many older communities here that were concerned that the next generation was not as interested in their culture as they would have liked, but it is heartening to see the third generation coming back, many young ones wanting to learn the dance and the language. Professor John Nieuwenhuysen said it best, I think, in stating that 'multiculturalism meant the ability for people who have arrived from overseas to take pride without being ashamed in their origins and in our own cultures and to not feel obliged to accept assimilation so that everyone becomes exactly the same'.

From June last year I had the privilege of attending, meeting and speaking at many events—well over 130 events, I think. The events and meetings were as diverse as our ethnic communities:

- I opened the second national settlement conference.
- I rang the bell to welcome the new year at the Zhu-Lin Buddhist temple.
- I launched the Spanish Speaking Communities Network.
- I recorded a radio message for the Bangladeshi community.
- I attended the launch of SA Refugee Week Youth Poster Awards and Exhibition.
- I hosted and co-hosted receptions for Eid al-Fitr, 50 years of Schutzenfest and the Sikh community.
- I welcomed delegations from Shandong and Cyprus, ambassadors and consuls.
- I met with the Druze community to discuss their fears and concerns after the burning down of their community hall and place of worship.
- I helped the Calabrian community make calzone in their tent at the Carnevale (frowned at considerably—apparently my calzone balls were not up to mark, but was left to fill them).
- I attended the funerals of respected community leaders like Elke Pfau and Borhan Saaid.
- I attended religious services of Coptics, Maronites, Orthodox, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Antiochians and other multifaith services.
- I met over 2,000 participants from 41 ethnic groups in the Australia Day parade, and what a fantastic parade that is. I urge anyone to take the time on Australia Day to see how proud and thankful these are communities that they can now call this state, this country, their home.

There were festivals, anniversaries, consultations, national days and religious days, some overlapping, and I endeavoured to get to all of them as I understand what representation from the state government means to these communities. I have been privileged to attend these events, whether they have been large or small, and I have been able to shake the hand of volunteers and acknowledge their hard work. I really appreciate the hard work, but also the great hospitality that I receive.

Last night, having left the office at about a quarter to 11, I called into a Sikh function to which I had been invited. It was still going loud and strong, lots of Bollywood dancing, and I was made to feel like royalty when I arrived. Tonight, as I said, I am going off to a Croatian club for dinner this evening. Most weekends are full of multicultural events, but I would not have missed this experience for anything being Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

**Mr PISONI:** Regarding Vicki Antoniou's business class travel to Europe and Singapore in September and October 2012, why were proper departmental processes for approval not followed, and I quote Belinda Trimboli, manager of Strategy and Governance in DCSI, who confirmed in an email on 24 December 2012 that the departmental processes were not followed for this trip?

**The CHAIR:** I hope you have a budget line for that, member for Unley?

**Mr PISONI:** The same as the previous budget line for expenses.

**The CHAIR:** What was that?

**Mr PISONI:** Page 91.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Ms Mazel was responsible for authorising the travel arrangements, so I will allow her to answer your question.

**Ms MAZEL:** I can confirm that I did approve the business travel fare for Ms Antoniou and for all intents and purposes the policy requirements were satisfied. I did provide approval and I was cognisant of the approximate cost of the trip. I turned my mind to the benefits of that trip, and in my mind the benefits outweighed any disadvantages. Ms Antoniou was accompanying the minister. There was no CE accompanying the minister. Normally a CE would accompany the minister on a trip like that.

Ms Antoniou had the requisite expertise and knowledge that the minister needed to support her and I did believe that this was a matter of more benefits accruing to the state than not in terms of people coming back and delegations coming back to South Australia, making links with those communities. It is very important for South Australian communities to know that the minister has made those trips and connected with their communities overseas in terms of potential tourism and migration. I weighed all of that up and in my mind I felt comfortable in approving the business class travel.

**Mr PISONI:** Did the minister have a ministerial staff member travelling with her in business class?

**Ms MAZEL:** That is not my area of authority.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Yes, I did, but it is normal practice when you are travelling on a trip like this to have a ministerial staffer and the vast majority of times the chief executive would also travel with you. Ms Mazel, in fact, came with me on my trip to China. Ms Antoniou did not come on that trip.

**Mr PISONI:** Why did she travel business class? You told the *Sunday Mail* that it was because it was cheaper than paying excess luggage because of the extra luggage that business class enables you to have. Is that no longer the case?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I can tell you that she came business class because it was a very long flight. She was required to work with me during that flight. I went to Rome to lobby in relation to the consul here in South Australia. We landed, dropped our bags, went to high mass at the Vatican that evening—the first function—and from 9 o'clock the next morning we had a full day of meetings and flew out that afternoon.

**Mr PISONI:** But there were media reports back in January that the reason that Vicki Antoniou travelled business class was because of all the gifts that you would be taking overseas and what you would be returning with. The facts are that your combined business class luggage at that time with Qantas and the combined business class luggage of your ministerial staffer was 222 kilograms. That was your allowance on an international flight.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** If only I had known.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, could you point out to me the budget line that talks about excess luggage?

**Mr PISONI:** This is about expenses, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** This has nothing to do with the budget; this is a witch-hunt. However, I will allow the minister to answer the question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Mr PISONI:** This is the budget; spending money is the budget.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It is a witch-hunt. We have been receiving, on average, 1.5 FOIs every day. In relation to pursuing Ms Antoniou, I think the cost of the FOIs would halve the cost of her airfare—you have added to the cost of the trip simply through pursuing one public servant.

**Mr PISONI:** I am looking at the processes and procedures under your management in your office, minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No; you are pursuing—

**Mr PISONI:** And that is my duty.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You are pursuing and persecuting—

**Mr PISONI:** To ensure that you are not wasting—

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** —taxpayers' money and doing personal favours.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You are wasting taxpayers' money.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** That is what I am doing.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Personal favours! She is a public servant and she worked day and night while we were away—and your actions are a disgrace.

**Mr PISONI:** And on what basis did you determine what her pay rate was and under what authority?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I did not determine her level. Again, you are making things up.

**Mr PISONI:** That is what the FOI say.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** The FOIs are very clear that advice was taken from the minister's office.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Let me go to your FOIs. FOI on asbestos, for example: six schools named by the member for Unley—

**Mr PISONI:** Point of order. No, you will have to withdraw that. I did not name those schools.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr PISONI:** I did not name those schools; you will have to withdraw it.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** No, I won't.

**The CHAIR:** Order! There will be no more questions on this subject. The member for Colton, you have the call.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** You named Littlehampton and you went out there—

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Order! I am going to call this session to a halt. Do you have some omnibus questions for this section of the budget?

**Mr GARDNER:** The omnibus questions have been asked, ma'am.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** No, not for this line they haven't, know-it-all.

**Mr GARDNER:** The questions were asked of the minister and this department will receive questions on a different day.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Okay, let it go; don't read them out, ma'am.

**The CHAIR:** So you have no omnibus questions on this. Member for Colton, do you have a question.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Yes, I do have as a matter of fact, Madam Chair. I refer, minister, to page 91, of course. It refers to Multicultural SA providing advice to government. It also talks about conducting community consultation sessions to ensure government has an understanding of the issues currently facing ethnic communities. I want to get a bit of an understanding about those community consultation sessions and how they are conducted and how that might relate across government to other areas. Early in my background there was some work done in multicultural areas in my role as minister for volunteers and further education training. How does this consultation go across government and what advice goes back?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I thank the member for Colton for his question. It is an important question. The South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission is keen to ensure that the government is aware of the issues and views of the really diverse community that we have across all of South Australia.

SAMEAC promotes CALD community engagement in all aspects of Australian life and provides these communities with a range of opportunities in regional areas. To assist SAMEAC fulfil its role, advisory committees have been established. SAMEAC has regional advisory committees in the northern, South-East and Riverland areas of South Australia, a women's advisory committee and a youth advisory committee. As Minister for Multicultural Affairs I personally value the role of the commission and these committees, and I am also aware of the value that the whole of the South Australian government places on the advice of the commission.

In 2012-13 a number of community consultations were undertaken. One example is the joint initiative between SAMEAC and the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission to build closer links between culturally and linguistically diverse communities and emergency services.

On 8 November last year SAMEAC and SAFECOM held a community consultation in Berri. This meeting reached out to CALD communities with a view to helping them to understand the role of emergency services and how to become involved with the Country Fire Service. Attending the meetings was a cross-section of the Riverland community, including members of the Italian, Greek, Sikh, Afghan, Croatian and Turkish communities. SAMEAC has also worked closely with St John's Ambulance to promote volunteering, which in turn increases peoples opportunity for study and work.

I think that the Chair of SAMEAC very much recognises that people being involved in a voluntary capacity within those mainstream organisations not only helps to develop an understanding of the wider community but is also a sign that people have truly settled in South Australia and are an active part of the overall community. So that volunteering aspect is very important.

In January this year a community information session and consultation was held at the Playford Civic Centre for new and emerging communities living in the northern suburbs, including the Congolese, the Sikh and Afghani. Many attendees expressed an interest in working with St John's to organise information sessions and training for their specific community groups, so really wanting to understand more about St John's and get a greater understanding of first-aid training.

Following the South-East Regional Advisory Committee meeting on 25 and 26 June 2011, at which the community youth consultation was held, the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology's Skills Recognition Service began holding workshops and consultations in regional areas to streamline the skills assessment, recognition and training program to improve employment outcomes.

On 13 March this year the first of these workshops was held in Murray Bridge, and attracted people from the Indian, Afghani, Chinese and Filipino communities. Further workshops are being held across regional South Australia.

Also during 2013, SAMEAC is holding two wider community consultations with local authorities, multicultural community leaders, government representatives and representatives of service providers. The first of these consultations was held on 22 May at the Marche Club. I am sure the member for Colton would enjoy this: it was a little bit like going along to view a community cabinet, except that the public servants were at the head table and people from the multicultural groups and organisations got to ask the questions.

I was really pleased to speak briefly at this consultation. There were about 120 community members there, and they had the opportunity to talk with senior state, commonwealth and local

government representatives. The commonwealth Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Senator Kate Lundy, was also there. Committee members were able to speak personally to the officials after the formal question-and-answer session.

There will be a second consultation like this in September, which will target CALD communities in the north-western and northern suburbs. They are great opportunities to increase SAMEAC's awareness of issues and views of CALD communities, newly arrived communities, so that they can provide timely and informed advice to government. They also help to make that connection between SAMEAC and the local communities, help them learn about the services that are available, and share their news about their recent activities.

A similar consultation was successfully hosted in the northern suburbs in Elizabeth in 2012, and I look forward to the next one that is occurring in September. They are, I think, very valuable for state and commonwealth organisations in particular, but also very important for community leaders and members to have the opportunity to come and ask all sorts of questions about things that are impacting on them, their community and their life.

**The CHAIR:** In view of the time, there being no further questions I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion and administered items for the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion adjourned.

At 17:04 the committee adjourned until Monday 1 July 2013 at 10:30.