

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Monday, 27 July 2015****ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B****Chair:**

Mr L.K. Odenwalder

Members:

Hon. P. Caica

Ms A.F.C. Digance

Mr M.R. Goldsworthy

Dr D. McFetridge

Mr C.J. Picton

Mr M.R. Williams

*The committee met at 9:00**Estimates Vote***DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, \$1,015,896,000****ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL
INCLUSION, \$190,374,000****Minister:**

Hon. A. Piccolo, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety.

Departmental Advisers:

Ms J. Mazel, Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Dr D. Caudrey, Executive Director, Disability SA.

Ms L. Young, Executive Director, Disability and Domiciliary Care Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr N. Ashley, Acting Executive Director, Financial and Business Services, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Ms N. Rogers, Director, Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr G. Myers, Principal Coordinator, Strategic Projects and Business Affairs, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

Mr N. Lombardi, Chief of Staff.

The CHAIR: This is the first estimates committee for you for this year, I believe, minister, so I advise that this is a relatively informal procedure. As such, there is no need to stand to ask or to answer questions. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed an approximate time for the consideration of these proposed payments, which will facilitate a change of departmental advisers. The timetable we have in front of us has not changed. Is that right, as far as you are aware?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Not that I am aware of.

The CHAIR: Changes to committee membership will be notified as they occur. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be submitted to the committee secretary by no later than Friday 30 October 2015. This year, estimate committee responses will be published during the sitting week of 17 November. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions, based on about three questions per member, alternating each side. Supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule.

Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced. A member who is not part of the committee may ask a question at the discretion of the Chair. I will allow the minister and the lead speaker, who I assume is the member for Morphet, 10 minutes by way of an introduction.

We are starting with Disability. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and I refer members to portfolio statements, Volume 1. I now call on the minister to introduce his advisers and make a statement if he wishes.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I would like to first of all introduce the senior public servants with me today. Well known to people around here would be Joslene Mazel, the Chief Executive of the department. I have David Caudrey on my right, the Executive Director of Disability SA. I have Nick Ashley, Acting Executive Director of Financial and Business Services; behind me I have Greg Myers, who is our Principal Coordinator; Nancy Rogers, Director of Business Affairs; and one behind is Lynn Young, Executive Director of Disability and Domiciliary Care Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a few introductory remarks and I will try to keep them as brief as I can; I am unlikely to use my 10 minutes. In the past 12 months, Disability SA has continued to reform disability services in South Australia. Clearly, much of our focus has been on delivering increased dignity, choice and control for people living with disability and, importantly, preparing for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

South Australia's NDIS children's trial is now in its third year. From 1 July 2014, eligible children aged from birth to 13 years were able to access support through the NDIS. According to the March 2015 NDIA quarterly report, 4,538 children have been deemed eligible for the NDIS in South Australia. Of these eligible children, 3,212 have approved plans. This equates to 82 per cent of South Australia's bilateral target for this point in time. When fully operational, the NDIS will include every eligible South Australian with a disability under the age of 65 and will benefit more than 32,000 people.

The 2013-14 budget set out South Australia's full disability funding commitment over seven years in preparation for the full commencement of the NDIS in 2018-19. In 2014-15, total state disability funding was \$540 million and this is budgeted to increase to \$723 million in 2018-19. The increase will result in state funding being in line with the path required to deliver South Australia's contribution towards the full implementation of the NDIS in 2018-19. Full implementation of the NDIS will see South Australia contributing 48.6 per cent to the total cost of the scheme, with the commonwealth contributing 51.4 per cent.

I would reaffirm that South Australia remains committed to achieving full scheme implementation by 1 July 2018. As part of this preparation, we are continuing the important phase of reshaping the disability services sector. Using a staged approach, we are assisting government service providers, non-government organisations and individuals to effectively transition from existing systems to the NDIS model. This includes identifying the state-funded specialist disability services and funding that will be transitioned to the NDIS and considering the future model for government-run disability services in South Australia. That is something the member for Morphet has raised in previous meetings, and I am sure he will ask me about those matters again today.

I would also like to note some of the highlights for 2014-15. New disability services employment screening assessments commenced on 1 July 2014. This obviously provides an important safety measure for people with disability and deters inappropriate people from being engaged in disability-related work. The Disability Senior Practitioner continues to work with the disability services sector to reduce or eliminate the use of restrictive practices and improve rights protection for people with disability. The Community Visitors Scheme continues to provide an advocacy and monitoring service for people with disability living in state-funded accommodation.

Like the NDIS, individualised funding promotes choice, control, person-centred planning and personal budgets for people with disability requiring disability services. It also aligns disability support spending with that anticipated by the NDIS, using NDIS purchasing guidelines. Approximately 5,000 people now have a personal budget, including 242 people who have chosen to self-manage their services. The government continues to support the move from institutional care towards home and community living, and that is a very important policy of the government to give people more choice.

Central to this approach is the closure of large-scale residential facilities, such as the Strathmont Centre, and the diversification of housing choices for people with a disability. I would say that the rollout of the full scheme for the provision of housing is probably one of the biggest challenges facing the disability sector right across the country and we look forward to the commonwealth perhaps playing a more proactive role in this area. In the coming year, the remaining 20 residents of Strathmont will be assisted to move into community-based supported accommodation, with supports to enable them to live successfully in the community, and this will complete the Strathmont devolution process.

The state government has continued to work on a number of projects to increase housing options for people with disability. This has included the construction of 19 new specialised disability dwellings. During 2015-16, site works will commence on a new mixed-use housing apartment complex in the city that will include an 18-apartment purpose-built disability respite facility. That will also honour a commitment promise made by the government at the 2014 election. This development will reduce the current waiting list for centre-based respite, relieve pressure on existing respite facilities and provide much-needed flexible accommodation options for people with disability, their families and carers and can be tailored to meet individual requirements.

This year I have been actively engaging with people with disability, their families and carers on the important issues that impact their lives. I have hosted one roundtable discussion and three smaller focus groups on key disability topics, such as community inclusion and wellbeing and the proposed northern suburbs disability hub. We are looking to improve the capacity of the disability register in the coming year, with an aim to grow the membership to 300 people by the end of June 2016. These important initiatives continue to enable people living with disability to participate in decisions that affect their lives and living dignity. I will rest there.

The CHAIR: Member for Morphett, do you have an opening statement?

Dr McFETRIDGE: Just a brief comment, thank you, Mr Chairman. This is one of the areas where the opposition does not have a lot of opposition to what is going on, other than just trying to accelerate the number of people who are coming into the NDIS across South Australia and also making sure that the funding is being put in place so that the expectations we have all raised are able to be delivered.

The recent report last week from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on the progress report for year 2 is one of the most lightweight documents I have read, but I was delighted to see that South Australia was ahead of the pack in providing assistive technology support and that there is a statement in this progress report, on page 11, which says the full scheme costs are still expected to be within the funding envelope. Other than that, there is no real indication of the actual numbers that are being provided; whether that is in another report, I have been unable to find. I can say that we are all working closely together and I have enjoyed the relationship with the minister and his officers in this portfolio to try to make sure we do deliver.

With that, I will move straight into questions. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, Sub-program 2.2: Disability Support, the NDIS transition arrangements. I think it was last estimates, or it might have been in questions without notice in question time, when we were chasing the actual number of eligible South Australian children to come into the scheme. It was estimated at 5,000. There has been a lot of argy-bargy about the actual number and who is responsible for the number of participants. Last year the committee was told that it went from 5,000 to 8,000, from memory 8,750, I think. Is that the actual number we are dealing with now; if so, what is the progress that is being made in transitioning these kids across to the scheme?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Thank you for your question. I also would like to put on record that I have enjoyed the bipartisan way in which the member for Morphett has approached this area of policy. He has done so since I became minister in this area and we work together very closely. Like him, I would clearly like to see the rate of children moving into the scheme accelerate, so I agree with him. Also, like him, I agree that we need to make sure the funding is in place. On both those two points, I can assure you that the state government is honouring its commitment in the agreement with the commonwealth. I am not sure that the same can be said for the commonwealth at this point in time.

What I can say in terms of your question specifically is that you are quite right in relation to the figure I gave last year: we anticipated that about 5,085 children would be eligible for the scheme. That figure has been revised and we anticipate that the best estimate at the moment is about 8,500. That in part—and I think you have raised this both in questions and in last year's estimates—is that in the end the commonwealth used a slightly different definition of children who might be eligible and our figures were based on a more global development. The commonwealth went slightly differently, which it is entitled to, but certainly that explains the difference in figures.

Having said that—and there has been quite a bit written in the media lately—at this point in time we still have not met the top amount. My concern is, and this gets back to the comment you made earlier, member for Morphett, that there is no excuse at this point in time for any child not to be in the scheme because the number who have been assessed to be eligible is still below the total amount. It is not a case of the commonwealth actually spending more money than it would have budgeted for. As you said yourself, the NDIA report (the year 2 report just put out), states that the NDIA still anticipates that the scheme will fall within the funding envelope previously announced. So we—and I know I have your support on this—really do need to make sure the commonwealth makes the funding available.

The answer is that at this point in time, from 1 July 2013 to 1 March the most recent published figures we have available are: access requests, 5,171; requests determined as eligible, 4,538; eligible children with approved plans, 3,212—in other words, 88 per cent of people who have requested have actually been determined as eligible; 71 per cent have approved plans; 317 requests are in progress; 270, or 5 per cent, are deemed ineligible; and 1 per cent, or 46, have had requests withdrawn, closed or revoked.

As you may have heard today in the media, nearly half of all the participants with plans in the South Australian trial have autism and related disorders; a further 14 per cent have developmental delay, and 10 per cent have a global development or delay. Does that provide the answer you sought to the question?

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, yes. The number of kids with autism and epilepsy is a concern. I know that Dr Caudrey said to the Economic and Finance Committee, but I do not want to verbal Dr Caudrey and he can correct me if I am wrong, that people were 'morphed' from the health sector into the disability sector and that that is where people, children in this case, with psychiatric illnesses and certainly autism and epilepsy are a concern.

How many of those children are we dealing with at the moment? It was interesting that you said that there were 5,171 applications with 4,538 eligible. Those who are not eligible, why is that? Is it that they are in the health sector still or in the disability sector?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The ones who were not eligible of those who requested were 270, or 5 per cent. There would be a range of reasons, but in terms of specifics I will see if Dr Caudrey or one of the officers can give us more detail on that.

Dr CAUDREY: No, we do not have any further information. This is NDIA information, and people would be rejected for a range of reasons, but in order to meet the definition of 'disability' they have to have a permanent and ongoing disability. It is very hard to determine when it is a young child, so there are comparatively few people who get rejected. As time goes by, we anticipate that the number of people being rejected will probably shrink because people have a much better idea of what is likely to be acceptable, but we can try and find out the reasons for those 270 rejections.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What is the relationship between the department and the NDIA like? Is there constant feedback on why people are being rejected or there are delays?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will answer the first part of your question and ask Dr Caudrey to provide the second. In terms of the relationship between the NDIA and Disability SA, I have actually met with the state manager on a number of occasions. Certainly, the feedback I get from both NDIA and my own officers is that the relationship is very good. There is a lot of sharing of information, and it is a very productive and collaborative relationship, and certainly that is also reflected in what I hear on the ground from parents who deal with the system. We assist parents to transition, and the NDIA do the best they can with the funding available to do a good job, and certainly both the agencies work closely together to resolve any disputes.

In terms of the children who may not, we will probably have to go to the NDIA to get information because it is now a scheme and we need to make sure that we also give out information based on certain protocols because the information is now commonwealth information rather than ours. Certainly, we would have some information about those children who transition. As to new children, as you know, under the scheme those children in the age group who have not been in a state scheme previously can just go directly to the commonwealth scheme. We would have very little data on those new children because they were not part of our state scheme. I will ask Dr Caudrey whether he can provide any more insights.

Dr CAUDREY: Certainly, the relationship is very strong and ongoing both with the state officers of the NDIA and with Geelong, the head office, and of course we have a lot of relationships with the Department of Social Services in developing transition arrangements and so on, so that side of it is very close.

Children who are currently receiving services from the state will continue to receive services from the state until they transition. They will probably get a bigger service when they transition because they will get reassessed and they will get probably all their reasonable and necessary supports met, but we are not leaving them to no man's land if they have not transitioned. We basically continue with services until the point of transition, and we work very closely with the NDIA on that.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Just for the sake of the committee, on the disparity in numbers between the original numbers that were put up by the state and then those that were put up by the commonwealth, can the minister tell the committee perhaps what were the differences in the things that the actuary used to say, 'These kids are in and these kids are out'?

It is more than a cost overrun. In fact, it is not a cost overrun, it is a doubling of the actual base numbers, so there seems to be a fundamental difference there. If there is that sort of difference existing right from the word go, I am concerned that those differences may continue. Can you just tell the committee the sort of difference in attitude or the protocols or criteria that were used?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: My understanding of, if you like, the differences, and I will clarify it in a second and Dr Caudrey can correct me if I am wrong, is that our state scheme was actually based on global developmental delays. The commonwealth scheme actually looked at individual developmental delays in different areas, broken down.

If you take global, it means a whole series of things which actually impact on the child's ability to function rather than one thing, and I will just give you an insight. One might be a speech matter, which is an isolated thing, whereas we actually took a more global view. As a result, the commonwealth eligibility scheme, in the end, actually has more people being available to enter the scheme.

Having said that, our figure was lower. Based on the current figures we have, our scheme is not as big as the commonwealth or some media outlets are suggesting the commonwealth has said. It is about 8,500, which is higher than the 5,085, I agree, but what is very important is that the scheme recognised, early in the day, that some of these things are going to be hard to guess because it is a first-time scheme. Each state had different criteria, for example. I will quickly just quote from the bilateral agreement because this is very important:

In recognition of the uncertainty about the impact of the definition of developmental delay—

so, there was an agreement between the commonwealth and state saying that there may be some differences in the way we do this and, because of that difference—

that has been agreed as part of the eligibility for the NDIS, both Parties agree that the client numbers will be reviewed after twelve months...this review may result in a change in the client numbers for the purposes of this agreement.

The commonwealth understood that the numbers could change, so the agreement was up-front about that. It is very important. Despite what has been said at the national level, like 'shock horror', the agreement itself recognised that the numbers could change because this is a first for the commonwealth.

However, any increases to South Australia's contribution from an increase in client numbers will be limited to existing state funding for the additional client numbers.

In other words, the commonwealth has said, 'We are keen to get this scheme on the ground.' The state was very keen to get this scheme on the ground. The commonwealth has said, 'We understand that. We also understand there may be a difference as a result of the way we do things across the country. As a result, the commonwealth will, if you like, warranty that any additional costs which are not anticipated will be picked up by the commonwealth during the trial period.'

Very importantly, during the transition period, those arrangements are actually reviewed, so there is a built-in mechanism to review it. What really upsets me and upsets the parents of children in this state is that the commonwealth somehow are starting to say we need to somehow fork out more money because this is unexpected—that is just a nonsense.

The agreement itself made it very clear that, because this is new territory for everybody, this may happen. In the end, the children who require support will get support. At some point in time, that will be renegotiated with the state but, for the trial period, it is very clear who is responsible for that. It is unambiguous, and for the commonwealth to somehow say this is unknown to them or unexpected is just nonsense. Dr Caudrey, would you like to add anything?

Dr CAUDREY: Only to say that when we originally came out with the 5,085, that was based on the best information we had, using the report on government services and our own activity levels, and we did it with the commonwealth officers, so we arrived at that figure as being the best figure we had available. That has proved to be a lower figure than the actual but, in a sense, we always knew that the best evidence that we had at the time may be proved wrong by facts, and that is why it was a trial.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Did other states or other jurisdictions have the same discrepancies in the numbers initially coming into the trials or was it unique to South Australia?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am not sure that unique is the right word, but it is different. We are the only state which actually has stayed with children. As Dr Caudrey said a bit earlier, when you have very young children it is very hard to predict what the long-term impact is because one of the requirements for the scheme is that the disability has to be an ongoing, long-term disability. The other states and jurisdictions have taken on intergeographical areas, right across the board, or, as in the case of Tasmania, they have taken 15 year olds to 19 year olds, from memory.

Having said that, certainly children are picked up in the New South Wales and Victorian schemes in their trials but not children alone so their portion of the population pickup will be smaller. Whether there are any trends there I am not sure at this point in time but certainly there are in South Australia.

What I can say, in terms of the ACT, where I think from memory the whole jurisdiction is under trial, is that that actually picked up 900 extra children which were not known to Disability. The only way we can compare ourselves to it would be the ACT because it is a whole jurisdiction, and they have 900 extra children. Clearly, they are going through the same process that we are going through. Why the commonwealth has targeted South Australia I am not clear—but certainly the commonwealth has. However, at the end of the day, we have put our money up and we will make sure that the children and families are supported.

Dr McFETRIDGE: If the ACT has 900 extra, how many did they have initially? Do you know?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No.

Dr McFETRIDGE: That is only a small jurisdiction so that seems—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is, yes.

Dr McFETRIDGE: There seem to be some fundamental errors, do there not, in the way kids are being assessed?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Not so much a fundamental error but perhaps a slightly different way of how people assessed, and that is what the agreement, if you like, anticipated. The agreement made it really clear because it is a national scheme now and because each jurisdiction did its own thing—you may recall that one of the criticisms of South Australia was that we spent less money on a person with a disability than the other states, when you looked at the roles, but our eligibility criteria were broader and therefore it went to more peoples and therefore the rate looked lower.

When you are trying to get X number of jurisdictions to have a common scheme, and everybody is doing it slightly differently, this is where we end up. That is why I think the agreement was appropriately worded in a way to recognise that to make sure it worked. At this end I know it is going to sound like I am buck-passing, but I am not. It is very clear from the agreement which was signed by both the commonwealth and the state that this could be anticipated, as the ACT have now found, but the commonwealth would pick up the trial.

In the transition period, and these discussions have started, we are now trying to agree on a new bilateral agreement. My concern with a bilateral agreement is how can we actually sign up for the transition, which is to get to the 32,000, when we have an overhang from the children? How do we treat those children who are not in the scheme yet? That is a real concern.

Dr McFETRIDGE: The initial agreement was 2013, that we signed—and I am saying 'we' because it was in a bipartisan way—the review of the funding that was built into that, does that have obligations for both the feds and the states?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Basically the agreement states that once we have gone through the trial we review how the scheme has gone. If the scheme is different then the commonwealth and state will renegotiate the transition arrangements. In other words, for the post-children cohort, and that was anticipated. That review and that work is being done at the moment.

We need an agreement in place to make sure that next year we can start rolling out the scheme to actually meet the deadlines. Unfortunately, the commonwealth's inability to come to grips with what we need to do with the children's scheme is that it is holding up, if you like, the renegotiation of the transitional agreement. In direct answer to your question, it was reviewed in late 2014 and that is where we gave the commonwealth the figure of 8,500 children. As I understand it, that has been agreed to now.

Dr CAUDREY: It was agreed with commonwealth officers, yes.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What sort of delays are we seeing at the moment in the under sixers?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We are running around about a year late.

Dr McFETRIDGE: A year late?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We are running a year late, and that is a concern because if that carries on, the whole scheme could potentially be a year late. The concern is twofold: one is that families are not getting the support they deserve, the children deserve; secondly, it means we are paying into a scheme and double paying. We are still paying for children who are on our state scheme who should be supported by the commonwealth.

Dr McFETRIDGE: We are putting money into the NDIA?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is right.

Dr McFETRIDGE: As an advanced payment almost, are we?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Not so much an advanced payment, but we are paying as you go. What happened is we are paying as you go, but the kids are not transferring at the same rate. There was a whole range of children expected to be transitioned, we made payments, we made budget for that, and we continue to budget for that. That is one thing I have raised with the commonwealth minister, namely, that it is an untenable situation because the state is being disadvantaged.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Just to be sure: those families, those children, are still obviously being funded by the state services?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: They are still being supported by the state but, as you can imagine, given that the scheme almost doubles the amount of funding, those families are saying, 'Hold on, why aren't we on the new scheme, why are we being held back?' Part of the problem has been that new entrants can go straight in, children who were not previously on our state scheme are now on the scheme, but children who have been in the scheme and are of the same age group are not in the scheme. Basically, new entrants to the scheme can go in at the appropriate year level, whereas we are running behind with existing clients and, therefore, you have this problem occurring and it is causing quite a bit of heartache in the community.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I am hearing a lot of not anecdotal evidence—or some anecdotal evidence—but certainly firsthand evidence from children who should be in the scheme as well as their families, particularly in the country where the delays are a serious worry for them. My concern is that the whole scheme looks like it is going to be slowed right down and not delivered by the target dates. Is that of concern for the government as well?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Very much so; it is of much concern. Last week, I met with National Disability Services at the state level and I also met with National Disability Services at the national level. The reason I met with them was that their members are the key providers; the people in the organisation are the key providers of services in the not-for-profit sector and invariably they will take a much bigger role in the post-state scheme.

In addition to the concerns I have for the state government as a provider of services now, but also as funder, they are finding it very hard to plan for growth because they are not sure when to take on new staff and train staff and it is causing quite a bit of difficulty for them. Like myself, they would like some strong indication from the commonwealth of where we are at.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I will move onto something else. I am conscious of the time and this is almost a Dorothy Dixier, but you mentioned it in your opening statement about the review of government-run disability services. Can you update the committee on what is happening there and perhaps some of the costs of reviewing the current model?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, I am happy to do that. I recall that on two previous occasions you have asked me questions about this matter.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I have.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: And quite rightly so; it is important. It would be fair to say that each jurisdiction has taken on this role quite differently. Some have decided to opt out completely from the provision of services. I have said on previous occasions that we would not do that in a unilateral way because we want to make sure that not only children initially in the trial period get support but also people get support. Our concern is given that we are a major provider of services, particularly in this children area, but also other areas, and that if we withdraw unilaterally there would be market failure. In other words, the market could not actually pick up the additional numbers required.

Also, there will be some areas where the not-for-profit sector, for whatever reason, will not be able to provide the services required by the community and, certainly, I would see the government provided services providing a very important safety net in the marketplace. But, as you and I know, it is a market-driven scheme. In other words, the consumer is at the centre of the scheme and they can take their disability dollars where they want. We need to be competitive, but I would say competitive within the prices set by the commonwealth. We are undertaking a major piece of work within the agency at the moment, a major project.

That project is looking at those areas where we can continue to provide a competitive service and where we believe we can compete in price and also in terms of not having to subsidise and, therefore, honouring the national competition rules, and also where we believe we can be cost-effective. We are looking at a range of services from respite to accommodation to direct provision, etc. Early indications are that we will not be competitive in some of the areas; partly because of the scale of the service provided, we cannot do that. We are at the moment negotiating with consumers

and their families and also talking to a number of not-for-profit services about how we might transition those people to a non-government scheme.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Just on that same topic, what financial assistance is the government giving the NGOs to help them transition across to the NDIS?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: There is, from memory, some money available through the commonwealth scheme under the sector development grants. We have provided some moneys, too, but in terms of the specifics, I will get Dr Caudrey to provide some more information on that.

Dr CAUDREY: Yes, the commonwealth has the Sector Development Fund, and they have funded us for three projects. Two years ago, we spent \$1 million on a number of projects, particularly involving national disability services in order to assist them to be more ready for the NDIS. The whole service sector knows that the market is changing dramatically, and there are already a number of mergers, takeovers and so on that have gone on in the sector, and we anticipate the interstate providers will also join the sector. We are working very closely with them ourselves, spending a lot of time with particularly some of the smaller agencies, agencies that are in unusual spaces—for example, carers support services, arts agencies, and recreation and sports agencies—to assist them through the process. So, there are quite a lot of initiatives going on to assist the sector, but it is an enormous change for them.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I noticed the multinational company Serco was mentioned in the media last week about wanting to enter this sector. Has the government had any discussions with some of these large multinationals, or approaches at all?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Certainly, I have not had any discussions. My understanding is that some companies have written to the department to be kept in the loop about our progress. To give you an indication of the magnitude, roughly, at the moment, we provide about 40 per cent of all disability service in the state, so it is a huge chunk. What is important is that in the end the consumer will take their disability dollars where they wish. Companies can certainly put their hand up to be a provider. As to where they go, it will be up to the consumer and the carers, etc., to decide. That is one of the strengths of the system. As Dr Caudrey mentioned, we certainly would help and support all we can the not-for-profit sector to be ready for that change.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I understand there has been some argy-bargy with the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion and some of the private providers of screening services, and there has been legal argument about the state government being in breach of the competitive neutrality policy. Can you assure the committee that the state disability services will not be unfairly competing with the NGOs?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Can you just clarify your question? I am not clear what the question is.

Dr McFETRIDGE: With screening services for volunteers and DCSI people, there are private providers of screening services, but at the moment the government seems to have not quite a monopoly but almost a monopoly, and there is argy-bargy about competitive neutrality.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will be very brief on this one; this is not my area of responsibility, it is minister Bettison's. However, what I can say, and what I have been advised, is that we are not comparing apples with apples. The screening provided by—

Dr McFETRIDGE: It is not so much about the screening, but more about the future for disability services. From memory, last year you told the committee—and, again, I am not verballing you—that people were free to take their docket wherever they wanted, that if they chose not to use Disability Services SA they could go to an NGO and that it was a level playing field. I think you and I disagree and that perhaps there is not a level playing field with everything from workers compensation to legal advice, but we will not go there.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: But in terms of the screening—

Dr McFETRIDGE: I am not worried about the screening at the moment. I will ask minister Bettison about that tomorrow morning, and I am sure she will be aware of that, but now I am just

concerned that the NGOs are not going to be competing with the state government and that we are comparing apples with apples.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Very much so, and what I just said a few minutes ago was that the project we are undertaking internally is to make sure that we can provide those services competitively and that those areas where we believe we cannot compete are withdrawn because we will not subsidise those services in an anticompetitive way. It will be open to the not-for-profit sector to compete amongst themselves for that. Where we believe we can compete, we will continue to compete, but it will be an open book; in other words, people will see our books and we will compete like everybody else does both on price and service.

Only a few weeks ago, I visited one of the services we provide in the children and youth services area. When families have a lot of confidence in the government in this area, even though they have been able to move already, some people are making the conscious decision to stay with the government provider. This is one area where we are competitive, and we have to do things differently to make sure we remain competitive.

I can give you that reassurance because in those areas where we cannot compete we will not subsidise. I will qualify that because in some areas there may be no alternative except the government provider, and in that case we will have to provide the service which is required at the cost required, but certainly in those places where alternatives do exist we will make sure that we comply with the national competition laws.

Dr McFETRIDGE: When did you say the review you are doing at the moment is going to be complete? I might have missed that in your answer.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is an ongoing review and I get ongoing advice, and I am required to accept certain recommendations on an ongoing basis. For example, some of our services are already under potential transition now because we believe that we cannot provide that service at the pricepoint provided by the commonwealth under the national scheme and because we are not allowed to subsidise and compete unfairly; those things will be available to take to market. We are working with those families to make that transition. It will be a challenging transition. A lot of people do not wish to leave the government service.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Will there be reductions in government staff numbers in that case?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That will be achieved initially through natural attrition. Some staff will choose to go with the service because that will be a service provider and some will go through attrition.

Dr McFETRIDGE: So there have been discussions with the NGOs about transitioning Public Service staff across to the private providers?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, certainly at officer level, but not at governmental level. As you can imagine, there are certain challenges to be addressed with the transmission of business, etc.

Dr McFETRIDGE: You mentioned a minute ago providers of last resort almost. The APY lands is a classic example. How is the NDIS rollout going in the APY lands?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I do not have specifics. I have not had any exception reports; in other words, it is not going as well as elsewhere, but the APY lands do pose some initial challenges. I do not have to tell you that, as you probably know better than I do, since you have been a regular visitor to the lands and a great supporter of the work being done there. What I can say with the reports I get is that there are no exception reports, so it is progressing, but as you have indicated yourself in the question that will pose some challenges to the not-for-profit sector.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I have one last question on behalf of the Hon. Kelly Vincent. Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 101, Sub-program 2.1: Non-government and Individualised Funding. Can the minister provide more information about stage 3 of the individualised funding program for clients in the government and non-government sectors living in group or shared accommodation?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I assume the question refers to a group housing arrangement, where there might be three or four people, and what happens if one person decides to have different arrangements from others and how you actually achieve that. Invariably, up until now the support

services have been provided by one agency. In the same group home, how will you deal with different agencies providing services to different individuals? That is being worked on.

I do not have a definitive answer for you today, but up to 2016 we will be working on how we will achieve that, because it will certainly be a challenge. The challenge will be about how you allocate notional allocations; in other words, how do you allocate a person? I do not have an answer for you, but we are working through that and we will need to work out some way of doing that.

It has been indicated that, because of the complexity involved, there is some delay in an anticipated completion date for stage 3. This is due to the level of change currently occurring for non-government organisations and people with disability, with the rollout of the NDIS. At the moment, both for us as a provider and for the NGOs it is posing a bit of a challenge, but we will get there.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you minister.

The CHAIR: Thank you minister, thank you member for Morphett. I declare that the examination of the proposed payments for the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion in part and Administered Items for the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion be adjourned until tomorrow. I thank the minister and his advisers.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$757,567,000

ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE, \$177,000

Membership:

Mr Wingard substituted for Mr Goldsworthy.

Mr Gardner substituted for Mr McFetridge.

Minister:

Hon. A. Piccolo, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr G. Stevens, Commissioner of Police, South Australia Police.

Mr D. Patriarca, Director, Business Services, South Australia Police.

Mr I. Hartmann, Manager, Financial Management, South Australia Police.

Mr F. Principe, Assistant Business Service Manager, South Australia Police.

Mr N. Lombardi, Chief of Staff.

The CHAIR: Welcome to the Minister for Police and his advisers. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to the portfolio statements, Volume 3. I now call on the Minister for Police to make a statement, if he wishes, and to introduce his advisers.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would like to welcome the Commissioner of Police, Grant Stevens. If I remember correctly, Mr Stevens was actually here next to me last year, as then commissioner Burns got sick that day, I think. I congratulate Commissioner Stevens on his appointment to the commissioner position. I also congratulate Linda Williams on her appointment as Deputy Commissioner of Police, our first female deputy commissioner.

On my immediate left is Denis Patriarca, the Director, Business Services, SAPOL, or chief bean counter as he is referred to, and actually the Commissioner refers to him as the person who actually makes SAPOL run, and he is also the bearer of bad news most times to me, but anyway

that is another story. Also, we have the Manager, Financial Management, SAPOL, Ian Hartmann, and behind me we have Fabio Principe, Acting Business Service Manager, SAPOL.

The CHAIR: Do you have an opening statement, minister?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will make a brief opening statement, Mr Chairman. In the past year the government has continued to support SAPOL to ensure that we have a modern police force with the tools it needs to keep our community safe. In a technological age, we must ensure that our police have the most up-to-date equipment and resources they need to fight crime. That is why, in this year's budget, the government has committed an extra funding to SAPOL to roll out body-worn cameras, portable data terminals and an upgrade of SAPOL's human resources system. This builds on this government's previous commitments such as facial recognition, fingerprint scanners and the upgrade of the Henley Beach Police Station, to name a few. I think my colleague on the bench to my left will be happy about that.

The overall budget for SAPOL continues to grow to ensure that we continue to provide one of the best police services in Australia. I also note that our police service has the highest confidence rating in the community, and it continues to do so. We have every cause to have confidence in our police force. South Australia already has more police per person than any other state, with the exception of the Northern Territory—I should say 'jurisdiction' because the Northern Territory is not a state yet, even though it would like to be one—and we continue to be one of the safest places to live.

This year, we also undertook a search for a new commissioner to continue the great work of former commissioner Burns. Commissioner Grant Stevens is now the new leader but he has certainly been mentored in the previous three years as deputy commissioner. It is a testament to our police service that a clear, unrivalled candidate was able to be selected from within its own ranks (this, of course, being Commissioner Grant Stevens). We also welcome new Deputy Commissioner Linda Williams who, like Commissioner Stevens, is held in high regard by her peers and the South Australian community. I think, collectively, they have over 70 years' service. The new leadership will continue to have a comprehensive overview of SAPOL to ensure that we have a modern, contemporary service capable of meeting community expectations.

I would like to go on the record and acknowledge my thanks to the member for Morialta for the very bipartisan way we approached the transition in the police leadership. It has made a very smooth transition and we can be very proud that we have moved to a new leadership team without any concerns. That cannot be said of every jurisdiction in the country. We have been able to go to a brand-new team much quicker than some have been able to get one person in place. That is, in part, because we have a great pool of talent within the police service to draw on.

The CHAIR: Member for Morialta, do you have an opening statement?

Mr GARDNER: Just very briefly I add my congratulations again to the new commissioner, Mr Stevens, and the new deputy commissioner. Going to questions, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 113, 'Workforce summary': by what date will the government reach its 'recruit 300' promise?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We will achieve the date, and I will qualify that a little bit, because it recently changed. The government will honour the commitment it has made. The only qualification to that is that, as you would be aware, we now have moved to a 12-month training program. As a result—and I will confirm that—my understanding is that people will be in the system, but they will not all be going through the training program because they actually have now moved from nine months to 12 months. If you give me a second, I will give you some exact details. At this stage, in 2017-18 we will bring in the last 47, which will give us a total of 313. At this point in time, 2014-15, we are at 199. In 2015-16 we anticipate 20, in 2016-17 another 47, and in 2017-18 another 47.

Mr GARDNER: Those last 47 recruits are coming in in that 2017-18 year, but will they have completed their training and actually, if they conclude their training successfully, become probationary constables, at which point you might actually be able to consider them police officers? So, when will they be finished?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: In relation to your question, the remaining recruitment of an additional 114 FTE police cadets is 20 FTE in 2015-16, 47 FTE in 2016-17, and 47 FTE in 2017-18. The 47 cadets recruited in 2017-18 will graduate in 2018-19.

Mr GARDNER: They will graduate in 2018-19. At that point, when they are graduated in 2018-19, what is the projected number of sworn officers and community constables in SAPOL? If it is easier, you are welcome to provide it for each of the coming years, because that will be a later question.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am not sure we have 2018-19, but we have 2017-18 for you. As you are probably aware, 2018-19 is a different parliamentary period.

Mr GARDNER: This promise has crossed three parliamentary periods now, sir.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We are committed to it.

Mr GARDNER: Continually.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, that is right. What I can tell you is that, in 2017-18, at this point in time it will be 4,706.1 sworn, including cadets and community constables, as you indicated. We anticipate an unsworn component of 1,175.1, which will give us 5,881.2.

Mr GARDNER: That is 4,706.1 FTEs. What is the number for 2016-17 and 2015-16?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We only have the end of the period, unfortunately; we will have to get those figures for you.

Mr GARDNER: How many sworn officer positions are proposed to be civilianised and/or privatised over the period between now and that date?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will ask the commissioner. I am not sure I would use the same language you would use—clearly, that is designed to give media effect—but what I would point out—

Mr GARDNER: I am actually quoting the commissioner's language from his Press Club speech last week, sir.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I think what the commissioner was saying—and I would expect him to say that, as minister—was that he would run his organisation to the best of his ability, and that may mean that some tasks which are currently performed by sworn officers—sworn officers are best used for those key policing tasks. Some things which can be done by non-sworn people will be performed by non-sworn people, and that would be good practice. But, I will let the commissioner provide some additional details.

Cmmr STEVENS: Thanks, minister. What the minister says is correct: we do examine opportunities for civilianisation. There is no intention, at this point in time, to outsource or privatise any of the police functions in our current review program. We do not have any agenda for privatisation. In terms of civilianisation, we are currently examining the opportunity to civilianise our custody management services, taking police officers out of cell guard duties and putting them back into the front line. We are looking at approximately 42 FTEs from that particular function back into frontline policing.

Mr GARDNER: Are there any other categories you are looking at civilianisation? The previous commissioner had talked about solicitors.

Cmmr STEVENS: We are currently running a trial. I do not have the exact number of solicitors—I believe it is four civilian solicitors—working in our prosecution function. That is in what we would describe as a trial phase. So, subject to the outcome of that trial would dictate as to whether or not we continue to recruit civilian solicitors in that function.

Mr GARDNER: Can I clarify, then; we are definitely looking at custody management and we have a trial on civilian solicitors. Are you ruling out there being any other aspects of the force which are to be civilianised, or is it just that they have not yet been scoped? If you do have an idea of what they might be, can you identify for us the other categories of service, and what duties or roles are sought to be civilianised?

Cmmr STEVENS: We do not have any particular plans to civilianise any other functions within SAPOL. We have examined, in a cursory sense, the communications functions, although we have no determination in relation to that particular service. In a broad sense, as we are doing our structural review which is underway at the moment, we are examining the services we provide with a view to assessing that those services necessarily require sworn trained police officers to fulfil that function. If that analysis indicates that there is an opportunity to push police officers from the back office onto the front line then we will explore that and scope it further.

Mr GARDNER: The 42 FTEs in custody management and the four civilian solicitors, are they counted as sworn officers in the budget papers now?

Cmmr STEVENS: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: They are. And so, in that figure that the minister provided earlier of 4,706.1 into 2017-18, can you confirm that those 42 FTEs in custody management and the four civilian solicitors would therefore also be included in that, as would any other roles that are to be civilianised?

Cmmr STEVENS: The 42 FTEs from prisoner management—custody management—are already factored in. Given that the civilian solicitor model is still at a trial phase, that is not factored in.

Mr GARDNER: There are currently 46 FTEs we are looking at that, in this year's budget figures, according to your earlier answer, are counted as sworn officers although they are not, but in the future projection, they are not counted as sworn officers?

Cmmr STEVENS: If I understand your question correctly, that is correct; but, I must point out that the four solicitors are simply in trial at this point in time. There is no commitment at this point in time to commit fully to a fully civilianised model for our prosecution function.

Mr GARDNER: I am not trying to be difficult, I am just trying to clarify that we have a budget paper that identifies a certain number of sworn officers. But, as far as I can gather, it appears that at least 46 of those that are counted as sworn officers are not in fact sworn officers. Their roles may used to have been performed by sworn officers but they are not currently.

Cmmr STEVENS: That's correct, but at this point it is only 42 FTEs that we have committed to.

Mr GARDNER: The 42 FTEs in custody management, when are those roles going to become civilianised?

Cmmr STEVENS: We are aiming to achieve that within the next 18 months to two years.

Mr GARDNER: Some time in the next 18 months.

Cmmr STEVENS: To two years.

Mr GARDNER: Eighteen months to two years, certainly. Can you please provide to the committee a full list of the timing and the expected or desired numbers for all recruitment intakes, including commencement dates and completion dates, for the next three years? I am happy to take it on notice, if you like.

Cmmr STEVENS: We will take that on notice, thank you.

Mr GARDNER: How much attrition took place in relation to sworn officers in each category in 2014-15?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The actual attrition for 2014-15 was 132 FTEs.

Mr GARDNER: And what is the anticipated attrition rate for 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We have a figure here for 2015-16. We in effect use an averaging figure based on trends. From this point on we are using around 140, but that will be reviewed each year as the trend becomes clearer.

Mr GARDNER: Can I just return to the questions in relation to custody management? What process is anticipated for moving those 42 roles? Currently they are sworn officers. At some stage in the future you believe there are improvements to be made as a result of not having those roles as sworn officers. I can understand that you want sworn officers to be doing something else, but who do you anticipate performing that role?

Cmmr STEVENS: What you describe is correct. We want our trained police officers performing operational policing duties where possible. So our expectation, upon reviewing the business processes for custody management and identifying where we are able to civilianise, is that we would replace police officers with protective security officers who are also SAPOL employees.

Mr GARDNER: How many protective security officers are currently in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 years for SAPOL?

Cmmr STEVENS: Currently, for the last financial year, we have a total strength of 124 protective security officers.

Mr GARDNER: So you would be looking to increase that from 124 to 166, or thereabouts, sometime in the next 18 months?

Cmmr STEVENS: Approximately, yes.

Mr GARDNER: Where are these protective security officers going to be stationed, or where are those sworn officers currently stationed? Are we talking about the watch house, Holden Hill?

Cmmr STEVENS: Watch house, Holden Hill. The Holden Hill custody facility is going to cease to be used by police, so it will be Elizabeth and the City Watchhouse and also South Coast and Port Adelaide.

Mr GARDNER: What is the budget saving for police of transferring those 42 from sworn officers to protective security officers to perform the same role?

Cmmr STEVENS: The forecast is \$1.1 million.

Mr GARDNER: And some time in the next 18 to 24 months?

Cmmr STEVENS: That's correct.

Mr GARDNER: If that \$1.1 million is to be an anticipated saving for police, those 42 sworn officers who are currently performing that role, they will not be made redundant?

Cmmr STEVENS: No, they will not. They will be moved to the front line.

Mr GARDNER: But you are looking to increase the number of protective security officers in that time.

Cmmr STEVENS: That is correct.

Mr GARDNER: So can you explain where the saving is to be made there, if we are actually just looking to increase the numbers of staff overall?

The CHAIR: I just remind you, member for Morialta, I know that it is cumbersome but your questions need to be through the minister.

Mr GARDNER: Sorry, sir. Perhaps I was expecting him to answer them all.

The CHAIR: It is a cumbersome process, I understand that, and it is up to the minister to pass it on, obviously.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: This is going to be a clumsy way of explaining it, but I will do my best. The police force is like all agencies; it is required to deliver budget savings, as required of other agencies. Equally, we provide new funding for additional changes in various new areas of policing—technology, etc. So you have these two things moving at the same time and the net effect is that we will be changing the mix of the police force itself.

On the one hand they will be delivering savings in one area, but part of that savings is also to help fund new initiatives, to make sure they occur. So what we expect the police to do is, like every

agency, look at ways to do their business much more effectively and efficiently, and they do a good job. That is part of it. Secondly, those savings are then redirected as, if you like, elements of a contribution.

I know, as I said, that is a cumbersome way; but say we had another agency, it would deliver the savings—full stop. With police we are, obviously, keen to make sure that we maintain the levels of activity in police, and so what we do is redirect those savings partly as new ventures or new areas of police activity.

Mr GARDNER: Minister, it sounds to me as if there is \$1.1 million being saved by moving custodial management from sworn officers to PSOs, and those 42 police that are doing that role at the moment currently do not have another role to go to. However, you are saying that they might at some stage in the future, as new programs come on track.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Can you say that again?

Mr GARDNER: We have identified that there is a \$1.1 million saving by having sworn officers no longer doing this role and it moving to PSOs; so the civilianisation of that workforce creates a \$1.1 million saving. We have not identified where those 42 officers are going. Am I correct in characterising your previous explanation as being that there may be new projects, new programs, new things coming on line that might be activity for them to do? I am just unclear about whether these guys have any security.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: They certainly have security; that we can guarantee, assure them of. Part of that is also attrition, as we have attrition some of those numbers go behind that. It is not a static thing. You have a whole range of different processes.

As I said, from memory this year it was 132 people who have left the force. This is spread over a number of years, so those people will go into the roles where people are still required. It is a case of some people leaving, and we will reallocate people from one task to another task where those people have left and we can see that that task needs to be maintained, that it is important. Some will go into new initiatives. In fact, if you look at those 42, we actually still have to recruit more people, because we lose 130 and 42 have been reallocated.

Mr GARDNER: In the commissioner's previous answer, he identified that Holden Hill will cease operating as a police custodial facility. When will that take place?

Cmmr STEVENS: We do not have a specific date in mind. It is still under review in terms of the time frames to achieve that.

Mr GARDNER: So is Holden Hill under this anticipated change going to be available for Corrections to continue using it for overflow from the prisons?

Cmmr STEVENS: That is correct, yes.

Mr GARDNER: What will the facility become if not police holding cells?

Cmmr STEVENS: It will be under the management of the South Australia Police, but utilised by Corrections. We have an arrangement. We have an MOU that we are currently working through with Corrections in relation to the use of police custody facilities for their surge capacity and that will continue.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am sure you asked me some questions in the other portfolio about that.

Mr GARDNER: We might ask you some here. Can the commissioner confirm that the proposed memorandum of administrative arrangements at this stage has not been signed by Corrections?

Cmmr STEVENS: I can confirm that has not been signed.

Mr GARDNER: Given that the original memorandum of administrative arrangements I think was during last year—I stand to be corrected—signed by former commissioner Burns, do we have to start this process again with a new signature from the commissioner, or have there been any changes to the one that has been made publicly available?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will answer the first part of the question. It would be a memorandum of understanding between the two agencies, irrespective of whose signatures appear and the fact that we have had a change in leadership does not change that agreement. If it is to be changed, it would be because there had just been new arrangements put in place, which the new commissioner would then sign on behalf of the police and David Brown would sign on behalf of Corrections. Having said that, I can reassure people that the arrangements are working in a practical sense and we make sure that any person whom the courts send to us to be looked after, or the police refuse bail to, is in cells. In the end, that is the ultimate test. If either the courts or the police say they should be in cells, they are. I will allow the commissioner to provide the additional details you have asked for.

Cmmr STEVENS: Thanks, minister. Our bottom line position in relation to Corrections using police facilities is that it does not impinge on police operational matters. We have had occasions where we have had to limit access to our facilities because of an identified policing need. In the absence of a signed memorandum of understanding, we are continuing to manage that process.

Mr GARDNER: Can the minister confirm that during the last financial year the use of the Sturt police cells by Corrections was withdrawn by police?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, I can confirm that.

Mr GARDNER: On what date was Sturt last used to hold remand prisoners—or indeed sentenced prisoners, but I would be more surprised by that?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: You know the rules about sentenced prisoners. I will give you a date in a second. What I can confirm is that DCS has not utilised the 10 beds at Sturt since 4 February 2015.

Mr GARDNER: The bottom line for police identified by the commissioner a moment ago was that they wished there to be no operational impact on police; I think that is a fair characterisation of what the commissioner has just said. Can you identify what pressures and challenges the police cells' use by Corrections can create for police, has created over the last year?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: If they have. Your question supposed—

Mr GARDNER: The commissioner identified that there had been occasions.

Cmmr STEVENS: The circumstances that would fit within what you are describing are particularly around long weekends and public holidays, and also during peak season such as Mad March, as it is well known by in South Australia, where we have actually limited access to police custody facilities by DCS because of an anticipated need. There have been occasions, particularly with the Sturt cells, where over time costs were incurred by police and DCS reimbursed SAPOL for those costs associated with us having to transport prisoners to alternative locations.

The CHAIR: Member for Morialta, I am just going to go to the member for Colton who has been waiting very patiently for a question.

Mr GARDNER: I have one more supplementary question.

The CHAIR: There are no supplementaries in the estimates process.

The Hon. P. CAICA: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Minister, I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 114. I do not want to trick you, but how is the government continuing to support police infrastructure in the western suburbs?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I thank the honourable member for his question, and I can say for the record that he has asked me this question and asked me for comments about how the western suburbs are going on a number of occasions, and you can rest assured that he is certainly looking after the western suburbs.

In March last year, the government announced that if it were re-elected a new police station would be built at Henley Beach to replace the current station on Military Road. Having visited the current 50-year-old station, it is obvious why an upgrade was desperately needed. The existing police station and associated buildings will be demolished and a brand-new facility constructed on the same

site, with construction due to begin next month. It is expected that that will take roughly 12 months to complete.

SAPOL will continue to provide policing services to the community during construction. The new design provides a secure and safe operational facility for SAPOL and visitors. The design provides maximum current flexibility for SAPOL operations and accommodates all SAPOL functions in a single building, all accessed internally, unlike the current arrangement which has multiple buildings, and therefore it will improve efficiency and also security.

The project will provide Henley Beach and the western suburbs with a modern police facility designed to provide improved functionality to meet current policy needs and modernising policing services. The new police station is designed to accommodate SAPOL's requirement for delivering police services, and it will include a public reception, with adjoining private interview facilities.

It has been designed to provide a significantly improved working environment and operational efficiency, with better layout of meeting spaces, patrol bag storage areas, operational equipment room and access to patrol cars for a quick response. Having visited the site, I can attest that it is very inefficient at the moment. Clearly, it has been modified over the years and, like most modified buildings, it is not quite built for purpose.

The concept developmental phase has been completed and the documentation for Development Assessment Commission approval was lodged in March 2015, and a Public Works Committee hearing was held on 14 May. With a 12-month build period, it is expected that the new building will be completed and occupied by the end of September 2016, when I hope to join the local member there for an official opening, and I would be more than happy to invite the opposition spokesperson to join us as well on that occasion.

Mr GARDNER: Sorry, sir, can you just clarify the date you just identified for its completion?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It should be completed, at this stage, by September 2016.

Mr GARDNER: September 2016. Can I ask why it appears in the budget paper on page 114 as June 2017?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That covers the defect period and therefore any liabilities as well for them and payments. The building itself will be occupied.

Mr GARDNER: Why was there a delay of one year from last year's budget paper, on page 36 of the capital statement, to this year's Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 114, which had identified it as a June 2016 completion including that, and it is now June 2017?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I can explain that. When we announced this new station, there were discussions held between SAPOL and the local council. The local council was keen to see whether it could actually be incorporated into another site, and we were obviously keen to work with local government, which is representing the community.

Given the processes involved in local government, and that local government, in my understanding, did not have a definitive date when they could actually deliver an alternative site or definitive location, those two factors meant that it would prevent the government from meeting its commitment, and therefore in the end we decided to stay where we are, demolish the site and rebuild, and therefore we are doing that.

Mr GARDNER: So the delay was the negotiation with the local council related to site issues and their preferences?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: Can I ask when SAPOL first requested an upgrade or replacement for the Henley Beach Police Station?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That was before my time. In the end, the buck stops with the government: we made a commitment, and that we honoured.

Mr GARDNER: Indeed, but was any scoping work done by SAPOL prior to its announcement by the government or prior to its inclusion in last year's budget and, if so, when did that work start?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It was an election commitment, so it would have been before last year's budget. We committed ourselves at the last election to build one there and obviously the work would have started then. What I can confirm is that in March 2014 the government announced that, if re-elected, a new police station would be built at Henley Beach to replace the current one.

Mr GARDNER: Certainly, but you have clarified in your initial answer to the member for Colton's question your own personal view that the station is in significant need of refurbishment, and I am not doubting that. Are there any other stations that SAPOL has identified as needing significant refurbishment or improvement as well?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: First of all, that was my personal view as a layperson. I am not an officer, so my perception might be different. Having said that, it is an operational matter and I would seek advice from the commissioner.

Cmmr STEVENS: We do not have any planned major changes to our police station facilities. We have reasonably good facilities across the state at this point in time.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The one at Gawler is really good.

Mr GARDNER: Certainly. There was one in Newton until recently that I quite enjoyed as well.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is not a police station.

Mr GARDNER: It used to be. It was described as a police station in the government's materials on many occasions. The Henley Beach Police Station, having been identified by the government as one in significant need or urgent refurbishment and an election promise given, had it previously been identified by SAPOL to government as a project in need of priority?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I can advise that we get requests from all members on a whole range of things. SAPOL were asked for feasibility, and they provided that advice; as a result of that advice, we committed ourselves to rebuild it.

Mr GARDNER: When was that advice provided to government?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Given that we made a commitment in March 2014, it was prior to that date; I do not know the exact date, but it was prior to that date. We undertook that commitment understanding what would be involved.

Mr GARDNER: Were there any other projects, infrastructure or requests from SAPOL identified at the same time as that advice was provided?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: SAPOL did not provide us with any other advice on any other station to be done at that time, no.

Mr GARDNER: What about any other projects, infrastructure, IT equipment or other expenditure requirements, what might be described if it were a cabinet process in relation to the budget as a 'budget bid', but it was not that because it was clearly before the election?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The commissioner has just advised me that there have been a number of IT improvements which SAPOL have recommended to government as possible commitments; some of them were obviously announced in 2014. These things change on an ongoing basis as police operations review their situation. For example, the satellite stations was not a matter brought to the government's attention prior to the election and, therefore, it is a post-election operational matter dealt with by police.

Mr GARDNER: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 114, why has the facial recognition technology identified in last year's budget for completion during 2015 been delayed to June 2016 and will it be delivered on time now?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I need to be careful what I say publicly, because we are in a tender phase for these items, so I do not wish to say anything that will unduly create influence or create problems with the tender. What I can say is that the process is taking longer than anticipated, and that we are in a tender process. I cannot really add much at this point publicly.

Mr GARDNER: Perhaps on the same page, why has the domestic violence legislation support system, identified in last year's budget for completion by June 2015, been delayed to June 2016 in this year's budget, and will it be delivered on time?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will take it on notice and get back to you on that one.

Mr GARDNER: Why has the hi-tech crime fighting equipment, identified in last year's budget for completion by June 2015, been delayed to 2016 in this year's budget, and will all of it be delivered on time?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The high-tech crime equipment involves a range of projects, including the portable fingerprint scanners, portable data terminals and the mobile automatic numberplate recognition. Some of those things have been implemented—not all have. In one area we need some changes to legislation to enable them to be implemented as well.

Mr GARDNER: Which area is that?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The portable fingerprint scanners. At the moment I understand it is a voluntary thing. This is to enable us to use it where people do not volunteer. The advantage of this equipment is that on the spot you can actually rule people in and out and can confirm the identities, which is obviously very important as police need to know who they are dealing with. At the moment it has been a voluntary scheme, but we need to fully roll it out and make it 100 per cent useful, and we need changes where police can insist upon it. Legislation drafted and issued for public comment will, if passed, compel a person of interest to submit their fingerprint. The fingerprint solution won the inaugural Premier's award and was the runner-up in the 2000 national awards too, so it is a good scheme.

Mr GARDNER: It has won an award, but it cannot yet be used?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, it is used: you are verballing me now, member for Morialta.

Mr GARDNER: How often it is refused then as a percentage of how often it is attempted to be used?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, we do not know the figures, sorry.

Mr GARDNER: But enough to require the legislative change?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Cmmr STEVENS: If I can just provide some comment on that, we do not have the specific numbers on how many times it is refused, but we can say that, whilst in a voluntary capacity, it is assisting operational police in identifying people who happily submit to that process, and it eliminates the need for some people to be apprehended on the basis of unable to confirm their identity, and it also eliminates people from being unnecessarily arrested for warrants and other matters like that if we are able to clarify their identification in the first instance.

Mr GARDNER: Last question on this line, page 114 still: the 2014 budget identified \$4.6 million for asset maintenance. The estimated result was \$8.8 million. Perhaps take on notice if you like what the exact final figure was there, but why was there a \$4 million blowout in asset maintenance?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Could you just give us the reference again, please?

Mr GARDNER: Page 114, Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, near the bottom: 'Annual programs—asset maintenance'. If you read from the right, for the 2014-15 budget it was \$4.657 million and now it is \$8.8 million, as what was spent.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We do not have the actual breakdown for you, so we will get that breakdown for you. What I have been told is it is a mixed change between capital and operating investment, but I have been reassured it is not a blowout. We will get those figures for you.

Mr GARDNER: Sorry, sir, you have said it is not a blowout, but it was budgeted at \$4.7 million and it has been spent as \$8.8 million, and we have also budgeted \$7.3 million for it this year, which is \$2½ million more than it was supposed to cost last year. So, something on this budget line means it is costing 50 per cent more than it was supposed to last year. The costs nearly doubled what it was supposed to cost last year. I appreciate you will take the detail on notice, but can you give us any explanation as to why we are spending \$4 million more on this budget line than we were expecting to?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Unfortunately we do not have that detail. We will have to get it for you.

Mr GARDNER: I look forward to it.

Mr WINGARD: My first question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 137, line 13: 'Fees, fines and penalties—Infringement Notice Scheme—expiated fee'. There is an extra \$9 million budgeted to be collected in 2015-16, with a total of \$88.256 million to be collected. How much of that revenue will be going to SAPOL and how much of that revenue will be going back to the general government coffers?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am advised that it all goes to the Community Road Safety Fund.

Mr WINGARD: Is there a concern then that, with the collection of an extra \$9 million, police working on the ground will be perceived as revenue raisers for government funds?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: You have made that comment once before recently, and it is not right. If you actually look at the trend figures, there are some timing issues there. I think, from memory, one of the issues was some of the equipment did not come online. So, if you look at the estimates last year, it is actually below last year's estimates, so it is not a \$9 million increase at all; it is actually a timing issue. I will get the figures for you.

The Hon. P. CAICA: You can't be booked for doing nothing.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Well, partly you can't be booked for doing nothing, but also the actual assertion that it is a \$9 million increase is not correct. You have taken one isolated figure and, when you look at the trend figures, that is not the case, because in fact last year's figures actually were below, which you have not spoken about.

Mr WINGARD: I am happy to speak about it. Last year's figure was below, but you have budgeted for a \$9 million increase this year.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It can be explained mainly in relation to the delays in point-to-point cameras coming on scheme. Some were due to come into operation in the last financial year, which they did not, so those figures would have projected that income. They have not, so they will come on in the next financial year. If you say it is a \$9 million increase, you are actually double counting the figures, because they have actually gone down. I think it is a net figure of around \$3.6 million—that rings a bell.

Mr WINGARD: Just to clarify; the figures were down last year because the point-to-points did not come online?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is right; and, I understand that we were actually criticised for not having them in place, so it is interesting.

Mr WINGARD: I am just still wanting to clarify; I think you are trying to double-dip, with the greatest of respect. You are saying because you did not get them online last year, you have brought in less revenue than what you budgeted for. But, next year, you want to catch that up, and there is a \$9 million—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, it is not a catch-up; they will be in place so that the income which we will forgo one year just goes into next year. But, if you use last year's figure, which is lower,

to next year's figure, it is going to be higher. If they had actually been in place, next year's figure would not have increased as much.

Mr WINGARD: So, simplistically, you did not get what you budgeted for last year because point-to-points did not come online. Had they come online, do you think you would have reached your target?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes; and also other cameras. I would also remind members that I get a number of requests from all members of parliament from both sides of the house to put additional cameras in. Also, there were some additional—I will give you the whole thing: the 2015-16 budget for expiation revenue, excluding the victims of crime levy, is 88.3. The estimated result relates to road safety initiatives, including enforcements through additional red-light, speed and point-to-point cameras. That is what we are going to do. It is not just point-to-point, but other ones as well.

Mr WINGARD: Since the point-to-point cameras you talk about have come online, what percentage of people who have been detected as going over the speed limit have actually been expiated and paid their fine?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: For example, the 2014-15 budget, we actually anticipated around 18,500 expiations. We had 3,100 expiations estimated.

Mr WINGARD: 3,100?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr WINGARD: That is expiations issued, but how many of those have been paid?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: If they are expiated, it means they are paid.

Mr WINGARD: So they have all been paid. How many were issued and not paid then?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, I do not know that figure, sorry; I only have the expiated figures. We will get that for you.

Mr WINGARD: Thank you. So, 18,500 is what you budgeted for, but you only got the 3,100. Is that because they were not turned on in time? Is that what you were saying before?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes. Just to put it in context, in the 2014-15 budget, we expected a total of 242,900 expiation notices to be issued. In the end, we only received 233,800, which is lower. That just shows we do not just go out there willy-nilly issuing expiation notices.

Mr WINGARD: Do you have a figure for how many people were photographed by point-to-point cameras breaking the law and doing the wrong thing, and then how many people were expiated? So, the differential?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No. You have asked that question partly differently just a moment ago. No, we do not have the number issued—the number paid or expiated. We will have to get those figures for you.

Mr WINGARD: I just know there were some issues—and it was in the media at the time—of people crossing the road, for example, to try to avoid the cameras and that sort of stuff. So, photos were taken of people, but they were not actually able to be followed up. I just want to know what percentage of people were not followed up.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We do keep that data, so we will get that to you.

Mr WINGARD: Thank you, I appreciate that.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: If you are talking about people who try to avoid the cameras—

Mr WINGARD: Two parts: one is people who were photographed and their numberplate might have been blurry, they might have had mud on their numberplate, or whatever it might be; and people who were photographed and identified as breaking the law, but for some reason you could not send them an expiation notice. I am just after how many were photographed and then not sent a fine for some reason.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: So for some reason they were reviewed and not issued with an expiation in the end.

Mr WINGARD: Yes, thank you. In Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 117, line 4, you mention 'Continued to improve security on metropolitan trains, trams and interchanges.' On AFL match days and special events, how often are transit police taken off the role and transferred to crowd control leaving no transit police on the public transport network?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Given that it is an operational matter, I will get the commissioner to answer it.

Cmmr STEVENS: There is no occasion where we do not have transit police working on various transit routes. On significant events in and around the Adelaide precinct, around the train station and between that and the Adelaide Oval, there is a responsibility for transit policing services to provide a policing response in that environment as well, but we do not ever take all transit police away from the transit system.

Mr WINGARD: What is the number of transit police officers as FTEs, so the FTEs for all police there? Do you have a number for the transit police?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We do not have the exact figure, but what I can say is that I have been advised by SAPOL that during the year there was obviously an ongoing review of how we operate. One of the things that was decided by SAPOL was to make greater use of local service area police, because they were finding that having only transit police deal with transit matters actually delayed some of the follow-up work. Some additional responsibilities were given to local service areas to complement the transit police. I remember getting a briefing some time ago. If you have a transit officer, some of the support stuff and follow-up stuff is actually done by the local service areas. I will get the figure for you.

Cmmr STEVENS: We do not have the figure in terms of the exact number of transit police officers. Just to elaborate on what the minister is referring to, the responsibility for attending grade 1, grade 2 taskings that relate to a transit-related precinct, such as a train station, or if there is a call for assistance by a transit train driver, that will be responded to in the first instance by a local service area patrol, unless there is actually a transit patrol team in the near vicinity. All of our transit police are deployed on transit-related activities.

Mr WINGARD: Thank you for that. Just on that, if I could get the FTEs and then the budgeted FTEs as far as the estimates go forward, whether the numbers are going up or down. Thank you. In Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 127, line 3, the number of detections for drug driving is up 17.7 per cent from 2013-14 to 2014-15. I think the figure is 4,146 up to 4,880. I am just wondering whether the minister is alarmed by this 17.7 per cent rise.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: In terms of drug detections?

Mr WINGARD: Yes.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Any drug-related or drink-driving offence would be alarming to anybody because those people obviously pose a serious risk to people on the roads. What I can say is that some of the increase can be explained by different techniques the police are using. They are using a much more strategic, intelligence-based approach, therefore they are getting better results for each transaction, but I will get some details for you.

In terms of the actual figures, the police have a target of conducting 47,000 driver screenings per year. That is our target as a deterrent. At the commencement of roadside driver drug testing, SAPOL utilised a small group of 13 specially-trained officers to undertake the task. In 2008 this task was decentralised and the program was expanded across all traffic enforcement officers, and in South Australia we therefore actually had more resources.

South Australia now aims to conduct 47,000 screenings of drivers per year for proscribed drugs. More recently, I understand that officers on Kangaroo Island have now begun the training required to undertake activities there on site. So you will probably find there may be more responses in terms of more reports of drug driving, unfortunately.

Mr WINGARD: I hate to think what you are suggesting there. The 47,000 screening number, how does that compare to previous years? Is there a budgeted increase in years going forward?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We have set a target of 47,000 and preliminary results indicate we have actually exceeded that this year.

Mr WINGARD: Is it budgeted to increase?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No; it is just at 47,000.

Mr WINGARD: That is the flat rate. How does that compare to other states as far as per capita testing is concerned?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We have to be a bit careful, and I will demonstrate that by using drink driving as an example. You might recall that in the old days of drink driving police used to stand in a place and literally do thousands of people. The detection rate has actually gone up, partly because we do it differently now; it is much more intelligence-based and we have a smaller group of people who we tackle, but it is a higher rate of detection.

I think one of the dangers of using flat figures is that you can do things and get a lower result. What our results are showing—and you have indicted the increases—is that our approach is yielding results. That is what you are after: results, rather than just what you put into it.

Mr WINGARD: Is there not a deterrent role in actually having breathalyser units on the side of the road? Is that not perhaps a message and a deterrent phase as well?

Cmmr STEVENS: We have a combination of deterrent and targeted testing. We still do the bulk testing locations, and they are staggered, because it does deliver a good road safety message to people that we are out there. We actually change the mix in terms of the number of tests we set for target testing as well, using mobile patrols as random alcohol testing.

In terms of the drug-testing regime in South Australia, we do not have the exact numbers in terms of a comparison with other jurisdictions, but we do know that South Australia is a leader, not just in Australia but also worldwide, in terms of its random drug-testing initiative.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: In terms of detection rates, during 2013-14 the detection rate was 8.19 per cent of drivers stopped and in 2014-15 it has gone up a bit to about 9 per cent.

Mr WINGARD: Can I get a breakdown of the changing of percentage as far as bulk testing to targeted testing goes, over the past few years? You mentioned the change of attention—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes; but we will need to take that on notice.

Mr GARDNER: I go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 113, and the workforce summary. Why is South Australia Police now charging potential applicants \$175 to attend a TAFE pre-application test before they are allowed to try to get into the police force? Can you also clarify the cost of that? I think on TAFE's website it says it is about \$145 but in correspondence I have received \$175 is identified as the cost.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: What was the last bit you said about—

Mr GARDNER: There is a very simple question: what is the actual cost of the pre-application test? The TAFE website identifies, I think, \$145 but I have heard a different figure of \$175 as well.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is just the GST on it.

Mr GARDNER: So, it is \$145 plus GST—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is \$135 plus GST.

Mr GARDNER: So it is about \$150 to take the test.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It's \$148.50.

Mr GARDNER: Excellent. Let me restate the question: why are we charging people who want to serve the community \$150 just for the privilege of being able to apply to get into SAPOL?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The benefits of this change include gaining process efficiencies and reducing the testing of unsuitable applicants who do not meet the basic literacy, language and numeracy requirements. This might also enable those applicants who fail the TAFE South Australia testing to be diverted into appropriate developmental courses if they so desire. The testing helps us identify people who may not be suitable, and also those people who may be suitable but who may require some additional support.

There are key benefits for both SAPOL and the applicant in adopting a testing system, and additional benefits in utilising TAFE SA include: an ability to streamline other elements of the recruitment process with an enhanced pre-entry requirement; reduction in cost to SAPOL to administer this test; a reduction in workload to process an application to the test stage; and TAFE has the capacity to offer the testing to a high volume of applicants at any given location, both country and metropolitan. It also aims to reduce the number of unsuitable applicants submitting applications to SAPOL, thus eliminating a lot of work in processing those applications. There are additional efficiencies to be gained by the introduction of a system which reduces cost and resourcing price by not continually testing unsuitable people.

As you can imagine, SAPOL is an employer which most people would like to be an employee of, and therefore it attracts a lot of candidates who may not be suitable. This system enables us, from SAPOL's point of view, to have a much more efficient system, but it also has benefits to the applicant. The TAFE model will facilitate retesting on a quarterly basis, whereas under the current model applicants can only sit once per year. This is due to psychometric testing restrictions. The system also enables TAFE to provide comprehensive feedback, and when an applicant fails the aptitude test, TAFE has developed a system to divert them into other developmental courses to improve their skills for any type of employment that requires a basic aptitude. This is particularly beneficial for use in culturally and linguistically diverse applicants.

Mr GARDNER: I appreciate that you have said that it will reduce the number of unsuitable applicants going into SAPOL. I am concerned about the number of suitable applicants who might not happen to have \$150 handy when they want to go and take the pre-application test, which is now mandatory to be able to go forward. You identified that there was a saving to SAPOL as part of your last answer. What is the saving to SAPOL as part of this test? In addition to that, the funds that go to TAFE—that \$150—is that cost recovery, or is that providing an income stream for TAFE as well?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I think your concern would be that people who do not have the financial resources otherwise might be suitable candidates. Is that it?

Mr GARDNER: Yes.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: What I can advise is that TAFE advises concession pricing is available to people who show that they cannot afford it.

Mr GARDNER: What is the concession?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I do not have that figure with me, but I can get that figure for you. We need to get it for you. We will take it on notice, that one.

Mr GARDNER: The \$150 fees that go to TAFE: is that a revenue stream for TAFE, or does that come back to SAPOL?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: My understanding is that it goes to TAFE, because they actually provide the service.

Mr GARDNER: Certainly. In the negotiation of this service, was any discussion entered into between SAPOL and TAFE as to whether this was going to be done on a cost-recovery basis, or is it just anticipated that TAFE offered to do this service and the expectation is that it will be an income stream for them?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I really would not be in a position to comment. All I can say is that we do not make money from it, and it was actually done for very good reasons, very practical reasons for both SAPOL and the applicant. As to the policy TAFE adopted, you will need to ask the head of TAFE.

Mr GARDNER: What does the TAFE test measure?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Literacy. I think I mentioned that already

Mr GARDNER: You mentioned some of the things, including numeracy. Maybe if I can clarify, I understand a range of issues are measured. Some of them are done by TAFE and then some people, having done the pre-application test, then have the opportunity to go to SAPOL. For example, the fitness test, the obstacle course, all those sorts of things, are still under SAPOL. I am not sure where the psychological testing is done. Literacy is clearly done at the pre-application test.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: And numeracy.

Mr GARDNER: I just want some clarity about what the other things are that the pre-application test does, so that we then know that everything else is done by SAPOL.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The information I have before me, and I will have to confirm this for you, would suggest that it is literacy, language and numeracy undertaken by TAFE.

Mr GARDNER: Given that the applicant starts with coming in to do that test at TAFE, and I understand that they are offered every two weeks and that it is a three-hour morning program according to the TAFE website, how long would a potential recruit from the country have to be in Adelaide to go through all the other tests police would then require of them? Is it on the same afternoon, the following day, or does it require a separate trip once somebody has passed their TAFE test?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am advised that, after this initial round, we anticipate that TAFE will be able to provide this pre-entry testing in country locations.

Mr GARDNER: When will that be offered?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I need to take that on notice and get back to you on that one.

Mr GARDNER: How many people have passed and how many people have failed this test since it was introduced in, I think, April?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will get that information for you.

Mr GARDNER: Can the minister in doing so identify for the first part of the financial year and the last financial year—both for 2013-14 and for 2014-15 until this test took over—how many applicants there were for the internal police process, how many passed and how many failed that pre-entry process into the Police Academy under the old system.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We will get that figure for you.

Mr GARDNER: Is a criminal history check undertaken prior to someone being allowed to sit the pre-application test?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No.

Mr GARDNER: If somebody has a criminal history that might preclude them from being allowed to serve with SAPOL, there is nothing that is going to flag for them, 'Oh this is a waste of \$150 me even applying'?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, because our website makes it very clear that, if you are planning to apply, it goes through the whole process. It does tell applicants that if you pass that you will then be subject to a criminal activity test; you should know whether or not you have been reported for a serious offence. That would actually guide people as to whether they apply or not because the system will pick people up.

Mr GARDNER: What level of criminal history would preclude an applicant being considered for entry into the academy?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Clearly, any serious offence would deny a person entry to the police force. In terms of any perhaps what you might call a misdemeanour or minor matter, it would depend on the volume of the offence or reoffending, and also on the circumstances around that offending.

Mr GARDNER: If there is some flexibility, at what level is that judgement call made?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is made by SAPOL.

Mr GARDNER: Sure, but what level within SAPOL, sir?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is done by the HR department within SAPOL.

Mr GARDNER: Can I go to budget line, page 129, the expenses, the intragovernment transfers, about 10 lines down. It seems to have increased from \$39,000, in last year's budget papers, to an actual result of about \$761,000 for 2014-15. Can you identify what that increase is all about, and is it, indeed, intergovernment transfers to TAFE or is that all done separately?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It appears we do not have that level of detail. We can get that for you.

Mr GARDNER: We might just go back to the workforce summary. The commissioner made a Press Club speech last week, and I congratulate him for making himself available to the community on his first day on the job, although I suspect that might not have been the intention when he accepted the speech request. He identified that the six current LSAs will be reduced to three. Can you provide a time frame under which that will take place and how many metropolitan and how many country LSAs does it look as if we will have?

Cmmr STEVENS: We are still working through the process of developing the model that is going to be implemented; however, we have a plan to commence implementation of this new model before the end of this calendar year. I have articulated quite clearly that it is my intention to do that. There will be no change to our regional local service area model at this point in time. We are currently working on the metropolitan concept. As you have indicated, it is our intention, after a period of consultation, to reduce from six local service areas to three.

Mr GARDNER: When will an announcement be made available about that level of detail?

Cmmr STEVENS: We have already provided a concept paper for consultation and further information to our workforce and other interested stakeholders. We currently have a project team now working on the mechanics of actually implementing that change. Once that is completed, we will be putting it out for consultation and, after a reasonable period of consultation, we will commence implementation.

Mr GARDNER: Are any other stations being considered for closure apart from the eight that were closed in May?

Cmmr STEVENS: No.

Mr GARDNER: Do we have any sense about what stations will serve as LSA headquarters?

Cmmr STEVENS: At this stage, we have not locked down which of those will be the headquarter stations, but we are looking at joining together local service areas which share a common border. It is too early to give any indication which of those stations will be the headquarter stations.

Mr GARDNER: What do you intend to do with the others, the ones that are no longer going to be LSA headquarters?

Cmmr STEVENS: They will still continue to operate as patrol bases and they will house various SAPOL operational front-line functions, such as CIB, family violence, patrols, community policing teams. They will still exist and operate under their current use.

Mr GARDNER: Can I go to another line.

The CHAIR: Before you do, member for Morialta, the member for Elder has a question.

Ms DIGANCE: Can the minister inform the committee about the advances in the use of social media? This is Budget Paper 5, pages 49 to 50.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I thank the member for her question. I confirm that one of the things the police do extremely well is communicate with the community; one of the techniques they use is obviously social media. SAPOL continues to use social media as a great tool to get information out to the South Australian community. SAPOL has over 40,000 Twitter followers (a few more than I

have), and this has doubled in the last 12 months. Its Facebook page has the largest following of any police jurisdiction in Australia, with nearly 280,000 followers.

Mr PICTON: As of now, 297,000.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Obviously, the estimates committee has increased attention. It must be a good performance, commissioner. As members of the community share police information to their networks, SAPOL routinely reaches more than a million people each week. SAPOL's social media strategies can contribute to reducing crime and protecting the community from harm by:

- informing and warning the public during times of emergency;
- assisting in investigations;
- maintaining community confidence and trust;
- acting to reassure the community;
- protecting SAPOL's reputation; and
- reaching a wide range of stakeholders.

SAPOL's social media have continued to demonstrate enormous reach. During the Sampson Flat bushfires, SAPOL's Facebook traffic peaked at over two million, compared with weekly traffic of 1.6 million.

SAPOL was able to amplify key agency messages, provide details of road closures and warnings—which is extremely important—but, more importantly, during any major incident often a lot of inaccurate information is out there that people often act upon. SAPOL's social media are able to myth-bust in an evolving situation that is of vital interest to the community. This event highlighted the power and importance of social media.

If I remember correctly some discussions I had with SAPOL recently, they are looking to see how we can better support the Neighbourhood Watch program with the greater use of social media. We are trying to use a different platform because, as you can imagine, people are relying more on social media than on face contact in terms of meetings, so we are investigating how we can strengthen our Neighbourhood Watch program with the more effective use of social media.

Mr WINGARD: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 127, line 7, number of detections as a percentage of the number of vehicles passing mobile speed cameras. Why has there been an increase of 22 per cent in the past 12 months from .78 to 1 per cent of vehicles passing mobile speed cameras that were picked up and fined?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Are you talking total or mobile or fixed?

Mr WINGARD: Number of detections as a percentage of the number of vehicles passing mobile speed cameras.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We will have to take it on notice as I do not have the answer here. It is like most things, if you do it differently and better you get just get better results.

Mr WINGARD: It was budgeted to be 1 per cent in 2013-14, but it only returned .78 per cent, and then it was budgeted to return 1 per cent in 2014-15 and it met that return. So, are you saying it is an efficiency issue?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, I did not say it was efficiency. I do not know the answer for you. It is one of the issues that went below budget last year, but increased this year. It may be a case where we are anticipating more. This is part of the answer, but I will get the full answer on notice. Part of it is that an upgrade in camera technology has improved quality and detection rates, in other words the gap between issuing is higher.

Mr WINGARD: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 127, line 4, the number of speed detection hours—mobile cameras, mobile radars and lasers. There is a budgeted 25 per cent increase in detections hours from what was achieved this year, which was 99,836, and the number of hours next year is 125,000. Given that increase in efficiency is your point, too, for mobile speed cameras, and if those extra hours are done, how much extra revenue will that bring in?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Hopefully none, because hopefully people will do the right thing.

Mr WINGARD: How much is budgeted to be brought in, given, as you say, extra efficiency and the extra hours?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: A better use of the language would be better reliable information, which leads to greater detection rates rather than greater efficiency. We will need to get that information for you. What I can say is that I can explain why the detection hours actually went down for 2014-15. That is because, essentially, we have made greater use of deployments in country areas. That is where obviously the highest road safety issues are. As a result, it takes a longer time out in the country to set them up.

Mr WINGARD: So, the 125,000 hours is very much achievable in the next financial year, what you have budgeted for?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That was the target last year, and then for next year as well, so we have not increased it. We achieved less than last year because we deployed more in country areas.

Mr WINGARD: But you expect to meet your target this year, for sure. My last question on this line is Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 128, 'Activity indicators', line 2: 'No. of traffic cautions issued as recorded on expiation notices'. Why were there 2,672 fewer cautions given by SAPOL in the past 12 months?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Can you just clarify, because the figures here—

Mr WINGARD: Yes, 'No. of traffic cautions issues as recorded on expiation notices'—there were 2,672 fewer cautions given out by SAPOL in the past 12 months.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Are you talking financial year?

Mr WINGARD: Yes, in the last financial year.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Our records show that in 2013-14 police issued 44,096 cautions.

Mr WINGARD: For 2013-14 I have 47,067.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The information before me—

Mr WINGARD: Page 128 of the budget papers?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, I am saying we will need to reconcile that figure, but what I can say is that the 2014-15 figure is 52,986, which is a marked increase in cautions issued.

Mr WINGARD: If we can check that out, again, if you want to check the budget papers just to make sure that I am on the right page there, what the budget papers say for mine is, on page 128 of the activity indicators, the second line there, 'No. of traffic cautions issued as recorded on expiation notices', the actual in 2013-14 was 47,067, and the estimated result for 2014-15 is 44,395.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The figure in the budget on page 128, you have the 2013-14 actuals, then if you look at it, it is the estimated result for 2014-15, not the actual result. I can tell you the actual result was 52,986, which shows a marked increase in cautions.

Mr WINGARD: So, since the budget papers were written, that number has changed, so there has been—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, and that is why it says 'estimate', and this is an actual.

Mr WINGARD: That is an 8,000 variation in the last month. That is a lot, given the budget papers would have been put together a month ago.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, the budget papers were put together before a month ago. They were put together in March.

Mr GARDNER: They usually estimate quite well, though.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: If you are going to criticise police for actually issuing more cautions than you were saying—

Mr WINGARD: No, I am questioning the budget figures, and I was not privy to that information but, going off that information there, it was quite a substantial difference. I will follow up those official figures from you.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I can assure you that police obviously have targets in terms of transactions, but certainly they also have targets to make sure they actually change behaviour, and cautioning is an important part of changing behaviour. They are certainly encouraged to do so based on their discretion.

Mr WINGARD: If I can get a copy of those updated figures, that would be great.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am happy to do that.

Mr GARDNER: I go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 122, cannabis expiation offences, of which there were lots (8,800 or thereabouts). My understanding is that cannabis expiation notices are given to people who are in possession of a quantity of cannabis below the trafficable quantity. Is that correct?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, that is correct.

Mr GARDNER: Why did the government change the trafficable quantity through regulation, as per last week's *Government Gazette*, from 100 grams to 250 grams?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I would have to take that on notice and get an answer to you.

Mr GARDNER: How much is the street value of 250 grams of cannabis? To be clear, the definition is:

Cannabis plant material, including flowering and fruiting tops, leaves, seeds or stalks, but not including oil or resin.

Up to 250 grams of that attracts an expiation notice.

The CHAIR: I do not know the street price of cannabis is technically part of the appropriations.

Mr GARDNER: It is strictly, sir, because it is—

The CHAIR: Strictly?

Mr GARDNER: There is an actual budget line identifying. I am trying to work out how many people are going to be captured by those expiation notices next year because they are caught with between 100 and 250 grams of cannabis, whereas previously they would have been charged with—

The CHAIR: I understand that point, but where does the street value of cannabis affect either of those? How does the street value matter? I am asking to be convinced.

Mr GARDNER: The street value matters, sir, because—

The CHAIR: I know it matters in a general sense, but why does it matter to your question?

Mr GARDNER: It matters specifically because it will enable us to assist in finding out how many people are going to be getting these expiation notices. We know how many people are caught with trafficable quantities of cannabis identified by street value. That is in the media, that is in the court papers—

The CHAIR: The trafficable quantity is not based on street value, it is based on weight.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will clarify the issue—

Mr GARDNER: If the minister does not want to answer, I will answer him again on Wednesday; that is fine.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: You can ask me again on Wednesday. I am not in the market for drugs so I do not know what the street value is, and I never have been—

Mr GARDNER: The police commissioner might have some insight, as he has some expertise in this area.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: —but I am happy if you ask me. In terms of the question, if the number of people who may or may not get the offence between 100 and 250 grams, I understand that question. The street value is an entirely different matter, and I am not sure—if it is 250 grams, irrespective of its street value, you are infringing the law, as simple as that. I think that is the point the Chair is trying to make.

The CHAIR: That is exactly right. Feel free to answer the question if you wish, but it is not particularly appropriate to any budget line.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: In relation to the substantive question, I am happy to find that answer for you.

Mr GARDNER: Perhaps I can ask the question in a different way, because we are identifying a significant amount of police resources in the drugs sector. It is one of the objectives of Sub-program 2.1: Crime and Illegal Drugs. The cannabis expiation notices we are talking about carry with them a \$300 fine from 25 grams to 100 grams of cannabis, as it was last week, or 25 grams to 250 grams of cannabis as it is since last Thursday. So, for that \$300 fine to be a deterrent, if we are talking about a value of cannabis that is in the thousands of dollars, one has to question that. Therefore, we are directly going into the budget line here as to the effective use of the funds, given the government's decision to increase that trafficable quantity.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I think part of the answer—and I will get the full answer for you, as I have indicated—is that, at some point in time we have to make a judgement in terms of how many people are put in the criminal justice system. By going to 250 grams, it gives police a bit more discretionary powers in how they actually deal with that particular issue. Police, quite rightly, would say they need to make a judgement as to where they allocated the resources in terms of harm to the community, but I will give you the specific answer. In terms of the question about why it would be done, it would be done just to impart, to make sure that we are using our police for those more serious matters and those things which are a danger to the community, but I will get a full explanation. I will be happy for you to ask me again on Wednesday or Thursday.

Mr GARDNER: I will go to a different budget line: Budget Paper 4, Volume 3 page 121. There are various ways of saying it, but basically the objective is prevention and innovation in volume crime and serious crime trends. In the commissioner's speech to the Press Club last week, one of the things he drew attention to was the rising concern caused by electronic crime, or e-crime. He stressed that many of the people in SAPOL needed to do work in this area and that it might not be the same skill set as one learns at the academy to become a regular constable. Can the minister, or through him the commissioner, if he prefers, identify what extra resources have been devoted to e-crime in the last few years? Has resourcing been increasing? How hard is it to find the skill set for those roles to serve with SAPOL?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will let the commissioner deal with that.

Cmmr STEVENS: Just in relation to the comments I made at the Press Club, the reality is that technology is featuring in our response to investigating crime, but it is also a feature in terms of the evidence we have to collect from almost all crime scenes now with the prevalence of tablets, smart phones and computers. In response to that, in 2011-12 we put an additional seven FTEs into our e-crime investigations capacity, and in 2013-14 we put in another two people. We are currently reviewing that again to ensure that we have the right sort of resource mix in that particular location.

We have varying levels of expertise that is required to deal with electronic evidence in our e-crime investigations area and we are able to use operational police who work on the front line in local service areas to assist and support investigators in processing electronic evidence. We also employ people and train them in various aspects of electronic crime so that they can provide the services we require. There is a blend of technical capability and evidentiary analysis capability that is required in a lot of these areas, so it is a role that we see being most relevant for police officers.

Mr GARDNER: I apologise if I missed a specific number in your last answer, but are you able to identify how many staff are working in this area at present?

Cmmr STEVENS: I do not have the exact number of staff working in the e-crime area, but we can provide that number.

Mr GARDNER: Is that a mix of sworn and unsworn officers at present?

Cmmr STEVENS: Yes, it is.

Mr GARDNER: In providing the answer are you able to identify the levels of each?

Cmmr STEVENS: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: What new staff and new skill set do you see as being required for the roles ahead?

Cmmr STEVENS: We are currently doing that sort of analysis to determine what capabilities we require within our e-crime environment. We are currently well served by the police officers who work there supported by our non-sworn staff. I am not aware of any gaps at this point in time in terms of expertise, so I would be working on a business as usual position at this point in time.

Mr GARDNER: In the police commissioner's speech, he talked about the need to deal with what was described as the 'dark net'. What is the government's understanding of the threat and the necessary skill set required to tackle that dark net?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is not so much the skill set required, it is more a case of the ease with which people can access that functionality (for want of a better word) on the internet that is a concern. Obviously that is an area in which people trade in all sorts of illicit activity, often in areas of child abuse and child pornography. So it is a concern more about how people can access it. Certainly our staff would have the ability to monitor that.

Mr GARDNER: The police commissioner identified opportunities for police as well as for the criminal underworld as a result of the improved technology. What work is the government doing to investigate or trial predictive policing technology, which is now in operation in a number of jurisdictions overseas?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I actually attended a briefing on predictive policing some time ago. It is certainly something that SAPOL is doing further investigation on. On one level it is a quite exciting area of potential policing, but I am not sure if I have completely got my head around it, how you can actually predict where a crime may be committed. In essence, it is a tool to help resource 'just in time' policing, in effect. In other words, you make some predictions, based on historical data, about who is where and data is collected about which people fit in with this, which events. Through a whole range of formulas you work out where things can be done. I liken it to that TV show that was, I think, called *Numbers*, if anyone saw that—although I have been told it is a bit more sophisticated than that.

This will very much be a break with traditional policing in the sense that you are moving from reaction to a crime not actually having been committed but waiting for that crime to be committed, and you are there in the right place. We anticipate that predictive policing will actually have a greater deterrent effect on crime because, in effect, we are saying that we know when they are going to commit the crime and we will be there waiting for them.

Mr GARDNER: Is there any specific project being undertaken? If so is there a time after which we will have an understanding of when we might go forward with predictive policing?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Do you want me to make a prediction? I will get the commissioner to provide more detail.

Cmmr STEVENS: As part of our current reform program we are looking at predictive policing technology and, whilst we do not have a particular time frame, we are currently looking at the layers of information that we would want to incorporate into that sort of capacity. As part of this reform we are looking at introducing a centralised command structure and, as part of that, we are looking at predictive analysis technology being built into that. That means we can ensure our patrols are deployed in the right areas, based on that analysis, so that we have the greatest potential to prevent crime. Given the time frames for our reform program, and as an estimation only, we would be looking to perhaps progress this initiative some time during the next 18 months.

Mr GARDNER: I go to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 117, and the activity indicators and the number of, I assume, police incident reports (PIRs) taken by the call centre as a percentage of

all reports recorded by police. The actual figure for 2013-14 is 29.4 per cent. Having gone back to previous budget papers, for the previous year it was roughly the same, about 29 per cent of police incidents reports were taken by the call centre. This year, 2014-15, the estimated result is 39.4 per cent, which is a massive increase—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: And your question is, 'Why?'

Mr GARDNER: We will start with the why and I will make my point afterwards if you like; you have pre-empted me, sir, and I invite you to continue.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Do you want to make your point while we are looking for that answer for you? It might give you more question time.

Mr GARDNER: Sure. One of the recommendations made by the Coroner in the Abrahamzadeh case was that sworn police officers handled calls relating to domestic violence in the call centre. I note the government did not agree to that recommendation, which is the government's prerogative, but given the significant increase in the number of PIRs taken by the call centre as a percentage of all PIRs, I note that if somebody presents at the police station to report a domestic violence incident then they are given the opportunity immediately, one hopes—and I think in practice it is mostly the case—to make a statement directly to a sworn officer. It is different at the call centre. Let's start with why there has been such a massive increase in the number of PIRs taken by the call centre, and we will go from there.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We anticipate, given that the figure was an estimate, that it is unlikely that that estimate will be realised. As of 30 April 2015, the call centre has taken 26,424 police incident reports, which represents 25.1 per cent of all reported crime in South Australia. As a result, we expect the final figure to be rounded down.

Mr GARDNER: Rounded down from 39.4 per cent of the budget to possibly about—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: To about 30.

Mr GARDNER: About 30?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: Okay; that is an issue for the budget papers then. How many sworn and unsworn officers are taking those calls? Or rather, how many sworn and unsworn officers are in the call centre? I understand the sworn officers are mainly supervisors.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Sworn officers are 14.6 FTEs and unsworn 53.92 FTEs. Sworn are generally supervising staff. There is a chief inspector, sergeants, senior sergeants and senior constables. You may recall that when this came up in parliament, we indicated that the call centre would always be supervised by a senior officer, a sworn officer. That is the case, and obviously if anything needed to be escalated or dealt with differently, there would be a senior officer who would be able to do that.

Mr GARDNER: I understand that, sir. It does remain a divergence from the Coroner's recommendation, but that is your entitlement.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: But we were open about that.

Mr GARDNER: Yes. The performance indicator above, the percentage of call centre calls answered within 20 seconds—and I almost hesitate to ask, in case the estimated result is wildly off again—shows a fairly significant drop off in the percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds, from 91 per cent to 83 per cent. Can we have the actual result for 2014-15, if you have it? If it is, as it appears to be, a significant drop, then why has that drop in immediate call centre calls answered happened?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will ask the commissioner to provide an answer.

Cmmr STEVENS: Thank you. The target for our call centre was adjusted from 90 per cent of calls within 10 seconds to 80 per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds, and the reason for doing that was to ensure a quality approach to eliciting information from callers and processing and managing the report-taking function more accurately. As a result of that, as of 30 April 2015, we were

sitting at 84.06 per cent of calls being answered within the 20 second target, which is above our benchmark.

Mr GARDNER: Going to page 122, there are a number of figures in relation to offences recorded against the person. Now, public statements, I think, by the commissioner, by the minister, by the corrections CEO, have suggested that there are higher levels of reporting, higher levels of charging certainly in relation to domestic violence incidents, so my suspicion is that that is probably the basis for a lot of that.

One of the other recommendations of the Abrahamzideh coronial inquest was that all police stations have the facility for a one-on-one interview to take place with an interview room available for victims. Obviously some of the stations where that might have been a problem have been shut down in the last couple of months, where there have been two-person stations with only one room, for example, but there is still a range of small one, two and three-person stations around the state, particularly in country areas. Can you advise if all stations now have that facility for one-to-one interviews in privacy?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I think you have asked this question once or twice before but I am happy to answer it again.

Mr GARDNER: I asked it just after the coronial inquest, I asked it last year in estimates and you said you were looking at ways to do it, but you were going to do it.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, that is not quite right. The answer I gave then was that the absence of a room itself did not detract from a person being able to deal with it on a one-to-one basis and, if there is not a separate interview room—while that is desirable and I accept that—it does not mean a person cannot get that attention they require, and police will on the spot exercise their judgement as to how that is best dealt with. Given that that is an operational matter, I will ask the commissioner to provide more detail on how they do it on the ground.

Cmmr STEVENS: Thank you. There has been no change to our facilities to increase the number of interview rooms. It is being dealt with through general orders in terms of ensuring people are provided the respect and privacy that they are entitled to when making reports of this type of crime. We are of the view that we are accommodating that respect and privacy through our current practices.

Mr GARDNER: In all of this, one of the major police responses has been the MAPS program. Given that the trial that is taking place at the moment has, I think, 16 police including all of the back office staff, six from education, three from housing, three from corrections, yada, yada, yada, and so forth, Police paying for all of its staff and other agencies paying for their staff but the program is being led by Police, where is it anticipated the funds to pay for these staff will come from moving forward?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: There are two things there. The pilot or trial program, I think from memory finishes at the end of September, and that will be reviewed. In terms of the ongoing staffing and what staffing model we will adopt, it will be based on what we have learnt from the trial, and I am pretty sure that is the end of September, from memory. That is correct.

Anything I would say would be based on just some observations, rather than a full evaluation of the trial at this stage. If additional resources were to be put in, then that is something which the agencies would approach the government about if necessary, and at this point in time, no decision has been made on the future models, but I am happy for the commissioner to add anything he thinks is appropriate.

Cmmr STEVENS: No.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No he does not have anything.

Mr GARDNER: Just very quickly I would just like to raise one more issue in the minute I have left. Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 113, Workforce Summary. How many police Aboriginal liaison officer positions and traditional community constables are there on the APY Lands and how many of those positions are currently filled? If the answer is three, then are they the same three people who have been the only ones in those roles for the last several years?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Was your question more like, 'Are they the same people?' or was the question, 'Are there any changes?' or was that tongue-in-cheek?

Mr GARDNER: Last year it turned out that there were still three, and they were still the same three people and no-one new who had been able to be identified and, given the time I was offering you, yes, is an answer if that was the case.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I do not think that has changed.

Mr GARDNER: Are there any night patrols being undertaken on the APY lands?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will have to follow that up for you.

Mr GARDNER: In relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 124, the number of escapes from police holding facilities—there is one there. Can you please explain the circumstances of the escape: the date, facility and outcome—what happened?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We will have to get that information for you.

The CHAIR: Member for Morialta, I think the time has expired. According to the agreed timetable, I declare the examination of the proposed payments to South Australia Police and administered items, South Australia Police, completed. Thank you, minister; thank you to the Commissioner and your staff. In accordance with the agreed timetable the committee stands suspended until 12pm.

Sitting suspended from 11:45 to 12:00.

DEPARTMENT FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, \$280,964,000

Membership:

Mr Bell substituted for Mr Wingard.

Mr Pederick substituted for Mr Williams.

Minister:

Hon. A. Piccolo, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr D. Brown, Chief Executive, Department for Correctional Services.

Mr C. Sexton, Executive Director, Business and Information Services, Department for Correctional Services.

Ms K. Flannery, Acting Manager, Executive Services, Department for Correctional Services.

Ms G. McInerney, Acting Executive Services Officer, Department for Correctional Services.

Mr N. Lombardi, Chief of Staff.

Mr J. Agness, Ministerial Adviser.

The CHAIR: Welcome to the Minister for Correctional Services and his advisers. I declare the proposed payment open for examination. I refer measures to portfolio statement, Volume 1. I call on the minister to make a statement if he wishes and to introduce his advisers.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I see that my cheat notes are wrong again: according to my cheat notes Mr Brown is sitting on the wrong side of me. I have with me David Brown, the Chief Executive Officer, and on my left is Chris Sexton, the Executive Director of Business Information Services.

Behind me is Katrina Flannery, Acting Manager, Executive Services, and Gemma McInerney, Acting Executive Services Officer. There are some other staff in the galleries and my adviser, James, is behind me.

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

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, I do. During 2014-15, the Department of Correctional Services continued to achieve its objective of effectively managing the prisons system and community corrections while contributing to the public safety and reducing reoffending in this state. In saying that, given the nature of this dynamic portfolio, it has not been without its challenges.

As members are aware, there has been a continued growth of the state's prisoner population, and the department has faced constraints in relation to available capacity, which the member for Morialta has pointed out a few times in parliament. First, I want to ensure that the department continues to manage capacity and service demand pressures by progressing options for future expansion across the system, and this remains our top priority.

In 2014-15, I can advise that the department commissioned 183 additional prisoner beds across eight institutions. Furthermore, there will be 20 beds to come online at the Adelaide Women's Prison in August 2015 (next month) and 26 beds in the high dependency unit at Yatala Labour Prison to come online in November 2015. The high dependency unit will provide inpatient mental health assessment and treatment services for prisoners presenting with multiple and complex needs and a separate unit will cater for aged and infirm prisoners with high-care needs.

Port Augusta Prison will also have another 12 beds come online in late 2015. There are also two new projects which will significantly contribute to easing the service demand pressures. These are 112 beds at Port Augusta Prison, with an estimated completion date of June 2017, and 112 beds at Mount Gambier Prison, with an estimated completion date of 2018, which I think was part of our announcement from the Mid-Year Budget Review, from recollection.

Not only is the department looking at options within the prison system to manage the increasing prisoner numbers, it is also considering other alternatives. This is aligned with the work being undertaken by the Criminal Justice Sector Reform Council, of which I am a member, and requires the cooperation and commitment of all criminal justice sector agencies. Whilst there is a focus on diverting first-time offenders from entering custody and reducing reoffending through treatment and rehabilitation, any strategies that might also alleviate the pressure on prison capacity are being given active consideration by the council.

In regard to diversion, we are mostly looking at offenders who pose a low risk of causing further harm to the South Australian community, but the need to impose a suitably intensive penalty remains. The Minister for Criminal Justice Sector Reform recently released a discussion paper on better sentencing options. The paper looks at a range of appropriate sentencing options for offenders who commit crimes, while emphasising that community protection must remain the primary objective. This shows the government's commitment to consultation, and I urge all members to read the paper.

The department is also continuing its commitment to bring greater attention to the needs of women and mothers within South Australian prisons. The department continues to improve its service delivery to female prisoners and ultimately aims to reduce the reoffending rate of this offender cohort. Research has shown that female prisoners who offend have multiple, complex and inter-related needs. Therefore, an understanding of female criminogenic needs is required to develop appropriate and effective responses to women who offend.

In 2015-16, targets for the department in relation to female prisoners at the Adelaide Women's Prison include the ongoing delivery of a parenting program, structured activities during visit sessions that are age appropriate for visiting children, a birth to 5 years old Learning Together playgroup, and the delivery of a parenting program. The department has also doubled the number of women released to home detention from 26 in 2013-14 to 50 in 2014-15 and has also opened 24 pre-release beds for women to assist with their reintegration back into the community. This will further enhance mother-child contact for prisoners in the community setting.

I would now like to take this opportunity to highlight efforts being made in regard to Community Corrections. The department has targeted resources towards those offenders who

present the highest threat to public safety, most significantly with the increasing number of offenders on electronic monitoring. Transition to the new GPS-capable electronic monitoring equipment commenced in late August 2014 and was completed in early January 2015. The department currently leases 610 electronic monitoring units and subleases 25 of these units to the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion to monitor juvenile offenders.

This equipment allows for higher intensity supervision of offenders, particularly those at high risk, and is proving to be a valuable tool in the protection of the community. I can advise that, since its implementation, the Intensive Compliance Unit and case management staff have breached a number of offenders for not complying with scheduled passes, leaving their approved inclusion zone and/or being dishonest about their movements.

The department has also had the opportunity to give back to the community in response to the devastating Sampson Flat fires that occurred in January. The Cadell Country Fire Service is staffed with custodial employees, members of the public, and prisoners who have maintained their training and level 1 and level 2 qualifications.

I can advise that Cadell CFS assisted at Sampson Flat on 3, 4 and 6 January. Tasks included protecting structures and conducting fire suppression operations to prevent fires from jumping over containment lines. I am very pleased to say that prisoners displayed commitment and effort, and I commend them on their professionalism and outstanding efforts during this difficult time.

The department recently participated in NAIDOC Week. It was held between 5 and 12 July, and is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements. It is also an opportunity to recognise the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country.

It is well recognised that prisoners who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are over-represented within the correctional system, and I am pleased to say that all institutions participated in NAIDOC in some way, including the Adelaide Remand Centre, which also involved the Aboriginal Sobriety Group and the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement coming in to talk to the prisoners. With the Adelaide Remand Centre set to be smoke-free from March 2016, Nunkuwarrin Yunti took the opportunity to explore giving up smoking with prisoners. The Aboriginal Sobriety Group discussed ways to help prisoners with drug and alcohol-related issues when released from prison.

It has been a busy year for the department, and I would like to acknowledge that it could not respond to its current challenges without the dedication of management and staff alike. This commitment was demonstrated on the weekend, when the department Operations Security Unit worked with police in a joint operation, Dedicate, at Mount Gambier Prison. The Operations Security Unit dogs (otherwise known as the Dog Squad) were used to assist handlers to conduct a sweep of the prison. While no contraband was found inside the prison, SAPOL turned away 15 visitors, banning four for 12 months and arresting one for allegedly attempting to take drugs into the facility. This dedication keeps our prisons safe from criminal activity.

I would like to thank Corrections staff, who continue to demonstrate their professionalism when managing prisoners in custody, deploying additional capacity, and managing a significant increase in some community-based orders such as home detention and intensive bail supervision. The hard work and professional behaviour of staff are further commended—

Mr Gardner: Time.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: —given the complexities of the environment in which they work.

The CHAIR: I think that was bang on time, member for Morialta. Do you have an opening statement at all?

Mr GARDNER: No.

The CHAIR: Straight to questions.

Mr GARDNER: I am going to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 151—

Mr Bell interjecting:

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Member for Mount Gambier, that is so unkind.

Mr GARDNER: —at activity indicators. All of the performance and activity indicators identify an estimated result for the end of the 2013-14 financial year. As we are now past 30 June, can you please provide us with the figures for 30 June for those eight indicators, and if you take it on notice then I will not blame you.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Okay, I will take it on notice then. Alternatively, I could do it now and just take up the time, could I not?

Mr GARDNER: I think more highly of you than that, sir.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Okay, I will take it on notice then.

Mr GARDNER: Thank you. What is the highest number of prisoners that Corrections had to manage during the 2014-15 financial year, and on what date was that?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: You want the peak figure, don't you?

Mr GARDNER: That is the question, sir. Page 151—it is the activity indicator to do with prisoner population.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The peak figure for 2014-15 actually occurred on 30 June 2015—it is good to see that our prisoners are financially literate—and there were 2,737.

Mr GARDNER: Is 2,737 the highest number of prisoners that have ever been in our system?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes. In that year to date, do you mean? What is your question?

Mr GARDNER: From 1836 until 30 June 2015, is 2,737 the record?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is correct.

Mr GARDNER: Perhaps I could ask a different way: what is the highest number of prisoners Corrections has had to manage so far in this financial year?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: On 17 July, we had to manage 2,772 prisoners.

Mr GARDNER: 2,772?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: Thus creating a new record.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That would be correct.

Mr GARDNER: What is the approved capacity of our prisons as at now?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is—

Mr GARDNER: Actually, if you have the 17 July figure, that would be even better, but I suspect it is the same number.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is, yes. The approved capacity at 27 July 2015 is 2,715.

Mr GARDNER: So we had 2,772 in the system and a capacity of 2,715, which by my back-of-my-brain calculations suggest about 57 in surge capacity. That would suggest to me that the City Watch House was full, Holden Hill was probably full and I am guessing there were also prisoners in the infirmary at Port Augusta and a few in cars. Is that a correct description of the situation?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: A few in what did you say?

Mr GARDNER: A few in the back of G4S cars being transported from place to place?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, I am advised that that is not the case.

Mr GARDNER: Perhaps a simple question: if we had 2,772 in the system and there is approved capacity of 2,715, where were the rest?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I can let you know exactly. In the Adelaide City Watch House we have 38 beds available for surge, at Holden Hill we currently have 17 beds for surge, in Mount Gambier we have eight beds for surge, in Port Lincoln we now have 24 beds for surge (as of March

this year), and in Port Augusta we have six beds. So, as you can see, the surge capacity does cater for that number.

Mr GARDNER: Can you identify where at Mount Gambier, Port Lincoln and Port Augusta those surge facilities are?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will ask the CE to give that detail.

Mr BROWN: The surge beds of eight referred to in Mount Gambier are in the Waawor Unit, and they are located in the four-bed dormitory cells, or shared cells. There are four of those units in total and there are an extra two prisoners per each of those units.

Mr GARDNER: Can I just clarify that part? There are four rooms in that unit that are usually occupied by two prisoners, but when you go into surge they go up to four prisoners per cell?

Mr BROWN: No, they are designed to accommodate four prisoners and they go up to six, I believe.

Mr GARDNER: So they are four-bed cells that become six, and there are four of those?

Mr BROWN: That's correct. That's Mount Gambier. At Port Lincoln we had an additional 12 beds in the Bluefin Unit, which is a low security unit at that facility, and that involved an extra prisoner being placed into the 12 single cells in that unit, meaning that there were two people sharing each of those rooms. The six beds in Greenbush are six beds going into single cells to create shared accommodation in those locations. I think that was the list you asked for.

Mr GARDNER: The six at Greenbush, that is Port Augusta, is it not?

Mr BROWN: It is.

Mr GARDNER: So that is six single cells that get doubled up, which creates your surge capacity. At Port Lincoln you identified 12 rooms in the Bluefin Unit that can be doubled up to create 12 beds, but the minister identified 24 beds, so where are the 12 others?

Mr BROWN: Sorry, yes; the other 12 beds are in a facility used for association in Bluefin. So those beds were used for a short period in June-July of this calendar year.

Mr GARDNER: So the facility used for association—I am just trying to think of the layout at the Port Lincoln Prison. I do not know if that is an area I visited myself, but does 'association' effectively mean where families might meet inmates and they transform to beds? Can you give us a bit more detail about what room is used for those 12 extra?

Mr BROWN: Certainly. No, it is not a visits area. Family do not access that area. It is an association area in the accommodation unit itself.

Mr GARDNER: So a common room?

Mr BROWN: A common room is another way to refer to it, yes.

Mr GARDNER: So one large room with 12 beds placed in it as extra space during that surge period?

Mr BROWN: That's correct.

Mr GARDNER: So that total of 93—38 at the City Watch House, 17 at Holden Hill, eight at Mount Gambier, 24 at Port Lincoln and six at Port Augusta—is the total surge capacity in the system right now, which means that in addition to the approved capacity of 2,715, we are looking at 2,808 as the most that Corrections is capable of dealing with at the moment under present arrangements?

Mr BROWN: There are 106 surge beds available in the system. We went through some of those in the areas you requested—

Mr GARDNER: So there are 13 more beds that have not been listed today.

Mr BROWN: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: Just to be clear, I think the earlier answer identified 38 at the Watch House—

Mr BROWN: That's correct.

Mr GARDNER: —17 at Holden Hill, eight at Mount Gambier, 24 at Port Lincoln, and six at Port Augusta, which I count as 93. You are saying that there are 106 surge beds, so where are the other 13?

Mr BROWN: As at the end of the financial year, we reverted back to 12 surge beds at Port Lincoln rather than 24. At Mount Gambier there were 23 surge beds, so we have not listed all of those. Similar to Port Lincoln, we have accommodated surge prisoners in a common area at Mount Gambier in the Waawor Unit—

Mr GARDNER: That would be 15?

Mr BROWN: There were 12 in that area at Mount Gambier. At Holden Hill we referred to 17; we can actually accommodate 19 at Holden Hill.

Mr GARDNER: So with the surge capacity of 106—I want to be clear so that I do not misquote you—38 at the City Watch House is correct, 19 is the maximum at Holden Hill but you try to make it only 17. That brings us to 57. Mount Gambier is actually 23, which is the four 4-bedroom dorm cells which can go to six, so that is eight of them, and there are 12 that can be in the common unit, which comes to 20. Then there are three other beds somewhere at Mount Gambier.

Mr BROWN: I think, from recollection, it was 15 in the common area and not 12 to make up that number.

Mr GARDNER: Okay, so 15 in the common area at Mount Gambier. That brings us to 80. There are just 12 at Port Lincoln now—

Mr BROWN: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: That is 92, and then there are six at Port Augusta, which is 98. You have told us that there is a surge capacity of 106; we have just come to 98, so is there—

Mr BROWN: I have not listed the eight at Yatala.

Mr GARDNER: Okay. Where are they?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: In Yatala Labour Prison—

Mr GARDNER: Yatala Labour Prison is a large place, sir.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Grand Junction Road.

Mr GARDNER: We visited together, sir. Where in Yatala are they?

Mr BROWN: I believe we are referring to beds in the infirmary at Yatala.

Mr GARDNER: So the Yatala infirmary. Thank you; that is comprehensive now. Can I ask for the projected daily average prisoner population for the 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 years?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: You can. Did you say 2016-17—

Mr GARDNER: The next three after this one, 2016-17 being the first. Just to clarify it, the 2016-17 figure is identified as 2,771 in the budget papers. Is that still correct?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is actually 2,772.

Mr GARDNER: So it is up to 2,772—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: For 2016-17, based on current trends, we anticipate 2,853. Again, based on current trends in 2017-18 we anticipate 2,937 and in 2018-19, based on current trends, we anticipate 3,024. These figures do not take into account any reductions which may result from the reforms in development at the moment.

Mr GARDNER: Sure, because that is largely going to be reliant on legislation which has not happened yet.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes; but hopefully it will happen this year.

Mr GARDNER: That is up to you, sir.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Actually it is the Attorney-General's legislation.

Mr GARDNER: I believe the cabinet speaks with one voice. The figure of 2,772 daily average prisoner population for this year represents a component of the approved capacity, which has been identified as 2,715. The approved capacity in the budget papers is 2,381 secure, 392 open. Can you possibly provide for us the breakdown between secure and open in that approved capacity at present of 2,715?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The CEO is not quite clear on your question. Can you just rephrase the question?

Mr GARDNER: Earlier we learnt that approved capacity at the moment is 2,715. How many of those are secure and how many of those are open? This is again the activity indicator on page 151, which breaks up all of that secure approved capacity by those two meters.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The CEO will provide that information.

Mr BROWN: I think I am correct in saying that the number that is shown in the agency statement in terms of capacity in 2015-16 at 392 is the number that we would have had at the end of this financial year, and so the remaining beds—I am not as quick at calculating in my head—are secure beds.

Mr GARDNER: So we are 2,715 at the moment and 319 of those are open, and the secure is the rest?

Mr BROWN: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: Can you please provide the projected approved capacity in both categories, secure and open, for the 2016-17, the 2017-18 and the 2018-19 years?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will take that on notice. The two builds which I mentioned a little earlier are only secure beds, so the increase in secure beds, I don't anticipate any change.

Mr BROWN: There is nothing approved at this stage to increase the beds.

Mr GARDNER: So there are no more open beds coming along?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Planned; no.

Mr GARDNER: That's fine. Can I ask a straightforward question then, which you are welcome to take on notice as well if the answer is not present. Are you able to provide the projected approved capacity for those three years without the break-up?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I can do that. The projected figures, based on our current build program and what has been approved by cabinet—because cabinet speaks with one voice, as you indicated—2015-16 is 2,773, 2016-17 is 2,885, and 2017-18 is 2,997.

Mr GARDNER: And 2018-19?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: At this stage, it is 2,997, because the current announced build program is what we have on the program at this point in time.

Mr GARDNER: So until and unless there are legislative issues that will be likely to bring down the number of prisoners, or alternatively cabinet approves extra infrastructure—or both—in that 2018-19 year we are going to be confronted with a daily average prisoner population of 3,024 and approved capacity at 2,997. Is that correct to say so?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is correct. In the absence of any legislative reforms or in the absence of any new build or expansion, yes, that is correct.

Mr GARDNER: Just in relation to the daily average prisoner population, the estimated result for 2014-15 was 2,693. I think you have already taken on notice what the actual will be, but the increase from 2,693 last year to 2,772 this year is about 3 per cent. Last year, the prison population increased 11 per cent, and the year before it increased about the same. Why has corrections forecast such a small increase this financial year than has been the case over the last two years?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We will need to take that one on notice.

The CHAIR: The member for Kaurua, I believe, has a question.

Mr PICTON: Thank you very much, Chair. I would like to ask the minister in relation to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 150 and 151, can the minister inform the committee about the electronic monitoring of offenders?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: A very good question member for Kaurua and one which I clearly was not prepared for. The use of electronic monitoring for offenders in the community has proven to be an effective tool which directly contributes to public safety. Electronic monitoring is about keeping an eye on high-risk offenders. It provides an extra layer of supervision with offenders being subject to greater scrutiny. I should say 'higher risk' rather than 'high risk'; it is a relative terminology.

Some of you may have seen the bracelets that are fitted to offenders' ankles. I certainly did when I went to the doctor's surgery one day. I saw this piece of jewellery on this person's ankle and I thought, 'Oh, he must be a client of mine.'

Transition to new GPS capable-electronic monitoring equipment commenced in late August 2014 and was completed in early January 2015. The Department for Correctional Services uses electronic monitoring to aid the supervision of offenders on intensive bail supervision and home detention as well as some parolees.

I am pleased to report that as part of the 2014 state election commitments, the government committed to funding an additional 200 GPS units at a cost of \$2.258 million to monitor offenders in the community. This commitment complemented amendments to legislation to electronically monitor high-risk offenders, mainly around sex offenders. I can also advise that the department has commenced monitoring offenders considered and approved by the Commissioner for Police, pursuant to section 66N of the Child Sex Offenders Registration Act 2006.

The department recognised that with these legislative amendments there would be an increase in the number of offenders requiring monitoring and supervision. In addition, higher-intensity supervision would be expected for the high-risk offenders targeted for GPS monitoring. The department currently leases 610 electronic monitoring units and subleases 25 of these units to the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion to monitor juvenile offenders.

The technology has enabled the department to set exclusion and inclusion zones for each offender, to ensure the offender is where they are supposed to be. Additionally, if the department is aware that a victim lives in, for example, the suburb of Mile End, that suburb can be set as an exclusion zone for that particular offender. Hopefully this increased protection will enable some victims to sleep more soundly at night.

GPS technology also provides immediate access to real-time data. This means swifter responses by corrections or SAPOL if an offender does breach a condition or enter an exclusion zone. The new system also has the ability to detect offenders who are tampering with their ankle bracelet or device. This enables the intensive compliance staff to immediately respond to the offender's last known location.

The previous system was unable to identify an offender's last known location once they had left their primary residence. This type of monitoring can significantly assist offenders to comply with the conditions of their order and further support them to live offence-free lifestyles. It also balances the needs of the public in regards to contributing to community safety through providing a high level of monitoring and supervision. This government is committed to ensuring safer communities for each and every one of us. Just to mention, it is also a feature of the proposed new parole system which is currently before this house.

The Hon. P. CAICA: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 149. Minister, can you inform the committee about the department's Operational Security Unit (OSU)?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Since the department's Operational Security Unit re-formed in August 2014, it has undertaken 185 search operations which has included 1,868 cell searches, 2,054 prisoner searches and 1,585 visitor searches. These searches yielded 166 positive indications by the dogs. Today I met one of the dogs whose name was Bolt—a very friendly dog, too, but he

does the job well. The dogs have also found a number of items such as methamphetamines, marijuana, steroids and other illicit items.

The primary focus of the unit is to maximise the safety and security of staff, prisoners and the community, and to provide drug detection and specialist support, including an armed response capability. The Operations Security Unit—which I will call dog squad for short—concentrates on reducing the risks presented by contraband entering prisons by strengthening access control processes and mechanisms. The unit's work also impedes the operation of criminal gangs within the prison system. We have a few people who, unfortunately, are in that situation.

The unit's highly-trained officers are authorised to carry firearms and as well as operating in prisons and community correctional centres they provide armed support for escorts of high-security and high-risk prisoners. The dogs play a crucial role in helping to fight the war on drugs in our prisons. The unit currently has four passive alert detection dogs and one general purpose dog. There are four males and one female—it is clear we have a gender imbalance there.

The general purpose dog is a German Shepherd and is trained to provide handler and staff protection as well as conduct area searches for drugs. The four PAD dogs are Labradors which are trained to conduct searches of people and areas to sniff out a range of drugs. A dog's sense of smell is much more sensitive than that of humans and it enables them to discriminate between the faintest of odours.

These dogs and their handlers undergo extensive specialist training in Queensland—and this is a 12-week program—to refine the dog's ability to detect various drugs. The accredited training is considered to be amongst the best of its type in Australia and is used by a number of other correctional jurisdictions.

You may be aware that on the weekend there was a joint SAPOL and Corrections operation at Mount Gambier Prison. In a first, a camera was fitted to one of the dogs as it assisted its handlers in a sweep of the prison. While no contraband was found inside the prison, SAPOL turned away 15 visitors from the 61 they checked, four visitors were banned for 12 months and one was arrested for allegedly attempting to take drugs into the facility.

Like all jurisdictions we face major challenges from gangs and other criminal elements who seek to introduce drugs and weapons into the prison system. The dog squad is critical to meeting this challenge and I would like to commend the staff and dogs for their hard work and dedication. What they do is complement the work of custody officers and SAPOL and are not there to replace either. By doing all three we send out a very strong message that if you do something wrong you are likely to be caught.

Mr GARDNER: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 144 and 145, Workforce summary and net cost of services. Does the government have any plans or has the government done any scoping work on getting any services privatised in the coming year or over the forward estimates, apart from those services which are already operating under the G4S contract?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No.

Mr GARDNER: Last year the CEO identified four sets of savings that the department was seeking to implement and, for clarity, I will go through them. The first was looking at hours of operation in some facilities and redesigning those; the second was making increased use of prisoner industries to deliver support services; the third was the reorganisation of Community Corrections, especially in the northern country region; and the fourth was general productivity improvements. How did we go?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I can advise the following achievements in terms of those strategies.

Mr GARDNER: I think 'savings' was the word he used last year—savings initiatives.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I was going to give you the figure. By 'achievement', I meant that we actually did it, therefore we achieved it. It must mean a different thing in the eastern suburbs, I suppose. In terms of the women's prison and the AP Centre, site integration, we saved \$400,000; Marla and Cooper Pedy CCC, \$500,000; increased use of prisoner labour, we've saved \$600,000;

reduction in discretionary spending, we made a saving of \$250,000; and, vacancy management, we saved \$3 million.

Mr GARDNER: So \$3 million worth of savings there. Page 149 identified an increase in cost.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, it was not a total of \$3 million, it was \$3 million, plus the amounts given above.

Mr GARDNER: So \$3 million was the last figure and not the total?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, that is right. I am advised that the target was \$5.2 million and we made \$4.75 million in savings.

Mr GARDNER: So, nearly achievement.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr GARDNER: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 149 outlines that the budgeted net cost of providing services in 2014-15 was \$185.4 million, the estimated result was \$194.06 million. What was the actual result for the net cost of providing services for 2014-15?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Unfortunately, we will have to wait a little longer as we are still finalising those figures. I will make them available.

Mr GARDNER: I will ask a question based on the estimated result, which was \$194 million, which was \$8.5 million higher than was budgeted. So, with \$4.7 million worth of savings achieved, and \$8.5 million greater in the actual result, that suggests to me there was some \$13 million in expenses that came about, I am assuming as a blowout in prisoner numbers led to overflow into police cells. Can you confirm for us whether that was the case and, if there are other aspects, what were those other aspects?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We are predicting a year end balanced budget after adjusting for the \$8.1 million in unfunded research expenditure during and including 2014-15, which was revised down from an initial \$9 million. In terms of the figures, the \$8.6 million increase in net cost of services is predominantly due to the funding for the commissioning and operating cost of 156 beds to commence operations in 2014-15, which is \$7.5 million.

You raise a very good question here, and I will explain why. The way Treasury deals with the way we are funded, it implies literally what you just said. You only are funded for the approved average beds that you have, and therefore if you have more prisoners, which we invariably do because we cannot predict exact growth, that is seen as additional funding. As you can image, we cannot send people back or say that this is an elective facility, come back some other time. Also, funding to undertake the development of a business case regarding future prisoner infrastructure cost \$1 million.

Mr GARDNER: What payments have been made to SA Police in the 2014-15-year?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: For the use of the cells?

Mr GARDNER: Or for anything else. I think there was at least one historical invoice where police tried to reclaim some funds from Corrections as well.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The department has reimbursed SAPOL for additional costs incurred for overtime, meals, etc., in December/January—and this is something the commissioner mentioned earlier—\$21,000: I think that is one you are referring to. During 2014-15 also, Corrections paid SAPOL for City Watch House costs relating to costs incurred in 2008, which is \$42,000.

Mr BELL: Minister, could you just detail what is the most cost-effective prison to run in the state of South Australia?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Is that because it might be in your electorate?

Mr BELL: I just want to have that confirmed, if indeed that is the case. I have heard the rumours.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The CEO will provide some more detail to that answer.

Mr BROWN: Firstly, we have eight correctional facilities across the state. Each of those facilities performs a very specific role and function in the system, so a straight cost comparison between those facilities would not be legitimate. For example, the low security part of the Adelaide Pre-Release Centre is going to have a different cost profile to the high security part of Yatala Labour Prison. Likewise, an open campus prison like Mount Gambier, which is targeted for medium and low-security prisoners is going to have a different cost profile to Port Augusta Prison, which caters for all classifications and both secure and open custody. I am happy to take on notice the request for some other information around the cost profile of each of our facilities.

Mr BELL: Minister, is there any intention to increase the rating for the Mount Gambier Prison to maximum security?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No.

Mr BELL: Is it also true, then, that the perimeter fencing in the latest upgrade has been set at a maximum security rating?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The CEO will answer that.

Mr BROWN: When we undertook the last two infrastructure upgrades at Mount Gambier, we undertook a common practice to construct outside the secure perimeter for the 108-bed Waawor unit and the 84-bed independent living units that have recently been commissioned, then we construct or cut over the perimeter around those two buildings. The standard of the perimeter's security has not changed, so the perimeter's security at Mount Gambier has always been at what we would consider a high security standard, but the way in which the facility is operated is an open-campus medium/low-security programs and industry-orientated prison.

Mr BELL: There is no intention to change that?

Mr BROWN: No.

Mr BELL: Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, page 153 talks about conducting a review into 'community corrections supervision standards and integrate home detention into case management'. Could you just detail a little bit around that home detention into case management and just some background? I have had a prison warden come and see me regarding an inmate who is on home detention but lives directly across the road from where he is located, and that is causing some issues obviously for he and his family. Will any review into the case management and home detention take in factors such as location of existing wardens and released prisoners?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I will get the CEO to answer that in detail. I am familiar with the case. It would be fair to say I have received correspondence on this matter, not by the employee. The correspondence has not come from the employee. It would be fair to say that it is not as simple as perhaps it has been portrayed to you, given that these require court orders and the flow of information and knowledge. I will ask the CEO to provide more details to the extent that we can in a public forum.

Mr BROWN: The Intensive Compliance Unit, and the home detention program that sits alongside that, cater for a number of different categories of people. The case you refer to is in fact an offender who has not yet been convicted of an offence and has been released on bail by the responsible court. The responsible court has imposed on that person a requirement to be subject to intensive bail supervision, which conditions are not dissimilar to pre-release home detention prisoners.

The fundamental difference, though, is that the decision to release is a decision taken by the court. It is not a decision taken by me or one of my delegates under a power through the Correctional Services Act, nor is it a decision that was taken by the Parole Board.

Mr BELL: Thank you for that; I really appreciate it.

Ms DIGANCE: Minister, my question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, pages 147, 148 and 150. Can the minister inform the committee about what the Department for Correctional

Services is currently undertaking to address the specific needs and sensitivities of female prisoners and offenders?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I thank the member for her very important question. It is obviously an area which requires some attention. When you look at the unprecedented growth in prisoner numbers, there has also been an increase in the female daily average prisoner population of 79.3 per cent over the past decade. The department recognises this trend and has taken positive steps to improve the service delivery to female prisoners and offenders. These steps include the department increasing the numbers of women released to home detention.

Home detention provides an option for certain prisoners to complete their prison sentence at home. The program, which has been operating in South Australia since 1986, is one of the department's most intensive and also successful community-based programs. In 2013-14, there were 26 women released to home detention. In 2014-15, this has increased to 50. Home detention enables offenders to re-engage with community, and most importantly with family, particularly children.

I can also advise that in November 2014, 24 beds came online for female prisoners at the Adelaide Pre-release Centre. This has enabled female prisoners to commence the final stages of transition on a controlled basis, and within a facility focused on ensuring linkage to accommodation, community-based training and employment, and resettlement services. This includes access to employment and training at the Northfield Distribution Centre, which supplies goods to prisons throughout the state.

Employment and training is also now available for women at the Adelaide Women's Prison's new industrial kitchen, which was commissioned in August 2014. As of 1 July 2015, prisoners from the Adelaide Women's Prison are now employed at the canteen at the Northfield site. Women also have access to employment and training through the Greyhound Adoption Program, which has been located at the women's prison since October 2014.

It is widely recognised that women who offend have multiple complex and interrelated needs, with many entering the correctional system with limited education, poor employment history, childcare responsibilities, poor coping skills, and experiences of childhood and adult abuse. Additionally, female prisoners are often mothers and the sole carers of the children prior to their imprisonment. Previous research has indicated that having a parent in prison can profoundly affect a child's social, emotional and behavioural development.

An understanding of the needs of female prisoners is required to develop appropriate and effective responses to women who offend. There is also a growing recognition of the different pathways into and out of offending for women. Rather than generic interventions designed to address male criminogenic needs, gender-responsive approaches are required. The department has therefore made a commitment to improve the service delivery to female prisoners and offenders.

In recognition of the importance of this work, addressing the specific needs of female offenders is included as a priority on the department's 2014-17 Strategic Plan. To achieve this, a two-phased approach to develop the department's response for women offenders has been undertaken. The first phase was to undertake stakeholder consultation, which culminated in the development of a report on stakeholder perspectives. The second phase will see a development of a strategic framework and action plan to advance agency responses to offending by women.

As part of phase 1, in April 2014 the department released a consultation paper entitled, 'Improving responses to women offenders and prisoners involved in correctional settings'. During the consultation, a broad range of responses were received from justice sector partners, correctional service staff, allied government and community service agencies, peak bodies, culturally specific service providers and groups, victim and offender advocates (both individuals and groups), women offenders and ex-offenders. In all, 108 individuals and 19 groups responded to the consultation.

This process informed the drafting of the subsequent report on stakeholder perspectives, entitled, Consultation Report—Women Offender Framework Development Project. That was in October 2014. The phase 1 consultation report was released on 6 May 2015. The report will provide further opportunities to engage partners along with a number of community stakeholders to inform the remaining work.

Phase 2 is now in progress. A women offenders framework and a five-year action plan is under development and will be released in September 2015. The framework and action plan will guide further infrastructure development at the Adelaide Women's Prison, including two transportable accommodation units, a program facility and a children's playground attached to the new visitor centre. Progression of a business case, to bring the main prison precinct at the women's centre up to a contemporary standard of accommodation, is a priority for the department.

Community service work can be ordered by the department if an offender who has applied for home detention has no employment or study, which provides opportunities to make restitution but also to gain vocational skills that may lead to employment. It is anticipated that the department will continue to proactively seek female prisoners for the sentenced home detention program due to the positive success rate and the opportunities for prisoners to remain engaged with the community while serving a court imposed sanction.

Mr GARDNER: I refer to the same budget paper, Volume 1, page 148, offence focused programs. I understand this would be the one that covers the new domestic violence related cognitive behavioural therapy program. Can you identify on what date that commenced and where, and how many participants there were?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am trying to find the short answer for you rather than the long answer. The domestic abuse program: in addition to the Violence Prevention Program, a program was sought for prisoners and offenders who have been charged with a domestic abuse related offence who are currently under the department's supervision. The department identified an appropriate domestic abuse program from New South Wales Corrective Services to implement during 2012-13.

The program was run as a pilot on two occasions: from July to September 2013 (10 weeks duration) in a Community Corrections setting, and from April to June of this year (10 weeks duration) in a prison setting. The evaluation report is currently being written and will assist in informing the future of the program.

The department is also planning to implement further domestic abuse programs in both Community Corrections and prison settings for the upcoming year 2015-16. Similar programs to the DAP are currently being delivered in Victoria, the ACT and New South Wales. Unfortunately, we do not have a specific number for that program. It is broken down into other programs.

Mr GARDNER: Can I ask a couple of detailed questions? You are welcome to take them on notice. How many participants commenced that April to June 10-week pilot and how many completed it? My understanding is that there was a pilot at the Cadell Training Centre. Is that the only one that has taken place or is there another location where that has happened as well? This is for the one inside.

Mr BROWN: The first pilot of the program was delivered in the Community Corrections setting. I think we did that out of the Elizabeth Community Corrections Centre. The second pilot has been delivered at the Cadell Training Centre this financial year.

Mr GARDNER: I would like you to provide now or on notice the actual end of year results for all of those offence related programs. Also, for the number of program commencements, projections for the 2015-16 year and the actuals for the 2014-15 year, if you could break those down by which program: Making Changes, the domestic abuse or the other ones.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, we will do that.

Mr GARDNER: Going back to page 149, Custodial Services expenses, how many days in 2014-15 was the City Watch House used—it might be quicker to ask whether there were any days when it was not used—and at what cost, and how many days in 2014-15 were Holden Hill and Sturt Police cells used and at what cost?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Can I just say one thing? They are also used at different levels, so it is not a case of where they are actually completely used every day.

Mr GARDNER: I also understand that police will sometimes charge for use of the whole facility even if there are only a couple in there, and Corrections has staff costs which go up and down.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is not correct. They do not charge us for the use of the facility; they actually charge us for the additional costs they incur, which is different. That would actually be based more—

Mr GARDNER: The memorandum of administrative arrangements does not make the distinction quite that clear—not that it has been signed yet.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That's right. We actually work very closely together. I think both ministries have a good minister.

Mr GARDNER: Maybe you can get your CEOs to sign an agreement to it, sir.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is 356 days that it was used in 2014-15—

Mr GARDNER: Is that 356 or 365?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is 356.

Mr GARDNER: Excellent; a quiet week.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: For Holden Hill it was 336. Those were the two questions, weren't they?

Mr GARDNER: And Sturt.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That was 218 days.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Sadly, according to the agreed timetable I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the Department for Correctional Services completed. Thank you, minister, and thank you to your advisers.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would also like to thank members of the opposition for the courteous way they have asked questions.

The CHAIR: Me too. In accordance with the agreed timetable, the committee stands suspended until 2pm.

Sitting suspended from 13:01 to 14:00.

DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE, \$55,722,000

ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE, \$1,592,537,000

Membership:

Dr McFetridge substituted for Mr Gardner.

Mr Goldsworthy substituted for Mr Bell.

Mr Williams substituted for Mr Pederick.

Minister:

Hon. A. Piccolo, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr M. Jackman, Chief Executive, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Mr G. Nettleton, Chief Officer, Country Fire Service.

Mr G. Crossman, Chief Officer, Metropolitan Fire Service.

Mr C. Beattie, Chief Officer, State Emergency Service.

Mr P. Lambropoulos, Manager, Financial Services, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Ms L. Lew, Business Manager, Metropolitan Fire Service.

Mr J. Schirmer, Business Manager, Country Fire Service.

Ms I. Calabrese, Business Manager, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Mr J. Linde, Business Manager, Community Emergency Services Fund, South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

The CHAIR: We are examining emergency services for the next hour. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and I refer members to Portfolio Statement Volume 4. I call on the minister to make a statement if he wishes and to introduce his advisers.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Thank you, Mr Chair. I will introduce my team of advisers. First, on my right is Malcolm Jackman, the new CO of SAFECOM. This is his first estimates; I hope it will not be his last. I will have to explain. He may walk away from this experience thinking, 'I'm not going back to this next year,' as all the rest of us think. On my immediate left is the Chief Officer for the CFS, Greg Nettleton; to my further left is the Chief Officer of the MFS and new to the role since last estimates from March this year is Greg Crossman. To my immediate left here is Chris Beattie, the Chief Officer of the SES and we also have Peter Labropoulos, Joel Schirmer, Lisa Lew and Johan Linde from SAFECOM, and Iolanda Calabrese from the SES.

During January this year, our state confronted the largest emergency in the Adelaide Hills since Ash Wednesday. The CFS, MFS and SES worked together admirably to protect communities in the path of the fire. The agencies not only worked well with each other but across government with agencies such as SAFECOM, SAPOL, SA Ambulance Service, DEWNR, SA Water and ForestrySA amongst many others. It is remarkable that during this extreme event no lives were lost and property damage was minimised, thanks to our emergency services, both paid and volunteers. I also acknowledge the outstanding efforts of all staff and volunteers, particularly from the CFS and ForestrySA, who confronted the large fire at Tantanoola in the South-East.

Over the past 12 months, our emergency service capabilities have been further strengthened through state government funding, including a new MFS station at Salisbury; four new CFS brigades in the APY lands; new SES units at Whyalla, Enfield and Kangaroo Island; 19 new CFS replacement appliances and nine SES light vehicles; four new vessels for the VMR and SES at Cowell, Kingston, Berri and Barmera; new equipment for the CFS, including almost 843 breathing apparatus sets with cylinders and 12 thermal imaging cameras; new equipment for the MFS and SES including road crash rescue equipment; and an SES incident management system.

Two serious challenges confronting the government and the budget last year were the further expansion of the presumptive legislation scheme and the ongoing decline in emergency service volunteers overall. I am pleased to note that the presumptive legislation scheme has now been expanded to include all operational CFS volunteers. The number of CFS volunteers has also risen every month since October 2014, although more work is required to sustain this trend. There are many challenges remaining such as the new national legislative reform in marine safety and the general increase in the cost of priority emergency services.

In May this year, I announced the structural changes proposed as part of the emergency services reform process would be put aside. However, during the reform process, stakeholders advised that some type of reform and continuous improvement is required. I am now working with the chiefs and the new CEO of SAFECOM to ensure that the many excellent ideas raised during the reform process are implemented and resources are allocated where they are most required, that is, on the ground.

As always, the sector is performing well, but there is more to be accomplished over the coming years to ensure that the sector continues to modernise, innovate and become more sustainable to meet the challenges of the future and serve the community.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I put on the record that the opposition is one of the strongest supporters of our emergency services and certainly values the input of every member of the emergency services both the paid and volunteer staff. I welcome chief Crossman to his first estimates as a MFS chief, and certainly Mr Jackman, welcome to this wonderful process.

The issue of emergency services in South Australia has been highlighted in the last 12 months, or in fact nearly two years now, with the increase in the ESL, but also then having significant incidents around the place, whether they are the Wingfield fires or the more prominent, certainly from a media point of view and contribution of emergency services, the Sampson Flat fire. Our emergency services are held in the highest regard by not only the people in this place but also South Australians for the job that they do, and it is well deserved.

The funding for emergency services, though, has become tighter and tighter. The Productivity Commission has shown a very slight increase this year but there has been a significant decrease over many years in South Australia which was unfortunately the only state where funding had gone down. I note last year the minister commented in one of the answers to the committee here about the cuts in federal funding.

I point out for the committee's interest that the difference between the promised funding in the forward estimates under the federal Labor government compared with the current funding under the current federal Liberal government is nearly a \$2 billion increase on what was expected in state funding. It is in 2014-15, \$232 million; in 2015-16, \$678 million; 2016-17 \$1.11 billion extra GST on top of what was in the then Labor government's federal budget, so to say that funding has been cut is not correct.

There is significant funding and that is the issue that I and my colleagues and South Australians have when the ESL has been put up the way it has and the federal funding has been blamed. There has been no cut; there has been a massive increase, and it really is time for this government to be honest with this state's taxpayers and reintroduce their remissions to the ESL. With that we will move on to some questions.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That was your paid political statement for the day; that is good.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, investing summaries, capital investment. We will do SAFECOM then the CFS, MFS, and SES if that is okay, and I will watch the times so that I am not unfair on the chiefs and all their staff because a lot of work goes into this. Through the capital investment statement for the ESL, how much funding for emergency response vehicles, fire stations and building operational equipment and information technology under the investment expenditure summary will be funded through the Emergency Services Levy rather than from funding through general government revenue? How much is coming from general revenue and how much is coming from the ESL?

I think the total ESL in 2015-16 was \$285.7 million. When you take away rebates for pensioners and some concessions, some comes from general revenue, so how much is coming from general revenue and how much is coming from the ESL?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I cannot give you the exact figures but what I can tell you is that all the funds used to provide capital for the emergency services overwhelmingly come from the ESL, bar some moneys which are raised by various brigades, etc. They are fairly small amounts but they are important to those individual brigades. They are usually for discretionary-type equipment rather than mandatory or basic equipment.

Secondly, the only general revenue component which goes into the budget is that component which is designed to pay for the concessions. The rest is all generated by the ESL—and that is no secret, that has been made clear by the government on a number of occasions.

Dr McFETRIDGE: How much is coming from the concessions and the rebates for pensioners; what proportion rather than out of the levies? You are topping up the \$278.2 million

spend on emergency services. Some comes from the ESL but then you take the rebates out so how much is coming from general revenue now?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Whatever concessions we provide, the rebates come from general revenue because, as you would be aware, under the act every dollar raised from the ESL has to be used by emergency services. Concessions are not an emergency service and, therefore, it is provided by general revenue. As to the actual figure, that would have been better put to the Treasurer because he actually manages the collection of the ESL—I just spend the money.

Dr McFETRIDGE: In that spending this year, of the \$285.7 million, \$7.5 million was for Sampson Flat. Last year you told the committee, when we were talking about the same subject, that all that additional money is going into the community emergency services fund. That is replacing general revenue or consolidated revenue which has been reallocated to other parts of the budget. Then you went on to say that, if there was a serious incident or there was a major fire of some sort, the government does make a supplementary allocation available to the services involved. The question is: the increase in the ESL this year was blamed on funding for the Sampson Flat fire, if we had two Sampson Flat bushfires or an earthquake or other major incident, would the government be putting in from general revenue or would the ESL be going up?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The answer I am about to give you is not inconsistent with what I said last year. The budget is set for, say, the 2015-16 year and it presupposes a whole range of planned expenditure. One thing we do not plan for is a major incident because it is very hard to know what the major incident may be and the scope of it. Having said that, we have also made it clear—and I certainly have communicated that to the CFS and other chiefs—that if a major incident occurs they are to go out there and spend what is required to keep the community safe. What is also clear—and I said this last year and this year—is that the government would make sure that the money is available to pay those bills to make sure it happens.

Dr McFETRIDGE: But where is that money coming from?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Let me finish: I am about to get to that point. In effect, the Sampson Flat and other major incidents are unfunded—it is an unfunded, if you like, part of the budget. Because it is an hypothecated fund, what goes in has to be spent, etc., and we then back pay the fund the year after. We work out exactly what has been spent, whether it is Sampson Flat or whatever other event, whether it is a flood, etc., the money is then raised in a subsequent year and paid back—

Dr McFETRIDGE: Raised from whom, though, minister?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The ESL.

Dr McFETRIDGE: So the ESL will go up. If there are two Sampson Flats the ESL will then go up again, further and further—that is what you are saying.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Well, we said that this year.

Dr McFETRIDGE: So if we have an Ash Wednesday, where there is billions of dollars worth of damage, who pays?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Who do you—

Dr McFETRIDGE: The taxpayer.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes. Who do think pays the GST and who pays all the other taxes—some fairly?

Dr McFETRIDGE: But proportionally acts as a land tax—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The taxpayer pays. Whether it comes from the ESL, GST or the other taxes we impose, the taxpayer pays. I read an editorial in a newspaper which was quite embarrassing to read—they must have got the information from you, member for Morphett, because it was so inaccurate.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Don't go there, Tony; just don't start, mate.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Well, you started with your opening comments.

Dr McFETRIDGE: It is true. Here are the budget papers. Do you want them? It is true; it is all true.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It said—

Members interjecting:

Dr McFETRIDGE: I am sorry, chiefs; I do not mean to embarrass you by this but we will just—

The CHAIR: Order! The minister has the call.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: This editorial said that the government should provide the money, as if the government gets the money from thin air. All the money the government gets is from taxes; it all comes from taxpayers, all of it.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Really? I had never realised.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Well, you have asked a question. Your question was whether it comes from taxpayers. I said that of course it comes from taxpayers. Whether you think it should be ESL revenue—

Dr McFETRIDGE: Is it general revenue or is there a dedicated source of these funds, as in the ESL—that is what I am asking. You are saying that if there are two Sampson Flats or an Ash Wednesday, that taxpayers' ESL could quadruple next year?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Well we'll have to wait and see.

Dr McFETRIDGE: You'll have to wait and see: well, let us hope for everybody's sake there isn't, anyway.

The CHAIR: Presumably these are questions for the Treasurer anyway.

Dr McFETRIDGE: To look quickly at more SAFECOM items: I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 2, workforce summary, page 104. The workforce summary indicates that the FTEs have been reduced by 18 in SAFECOM since 2013-14. Will the minister provide the committee with details as to what positions will no longer be filled in SAFECOM as a result of this FTE reduction?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am advised that the SAFECOM management has not made those decisions yet. I am awaiting their decisions on that. It will be an operational matter that they will make, and as soon as a decision is made I am sure they will let people know.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 2, net cost of services summary, the Emergency Services Reform Office. Is the Emergency Services Restructure Office being funded out of SAFECOM or by the Department of Corrections?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is actually provided by SAFECOM. It was only established in Correctional Services administratively for the purpose of finding a home for that originally.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What has been the cost of operating this office since it was established, and what is the cost this financial year?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The reform was funded from what we pulled forward from SAFECOM for the 2015-16 operating budget on the assumption that efficiencies would have been made from one department model. As the reform was rescoped, this amount was reprofiled across SAFECOM's forward estimates to better reflect the likely outcome of achievable efficiencies: \$100,000 in 2016-17, \$200,000 in 2017-18 and \$259,000 in 2018-19.

Dr McFETRIDGE: How many people work in the ESRO now?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The FTEs are 1.8.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Has the name changed from 'restructure' to 'modernisation' or something like that?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: There are changes. We are moving towards that. I have left that decision to the CEO of SAFECOM, who can comment.

Mr JACKSON: We will have a discussion on the topic with the board on Wednesday.

Dr McFETRIDGE: How much has been spent on the whole of the restructure—the round tables, the advertising, the publicity—since the whole thing was started?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Last year, even though \$550,000 was budgeted for the office, only \$347,000 was spent.

Ms DIGANCE: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 70. Can the minister inform the committee about the establishment of the state strategic reserve brigade capacity?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I can. I thank the honourable member for her question. As members would be aware, there has been a significant influx of new members following the Sampson Flat fire this season and fires at Bangor and Eden Valley last season. A number of new membership inquiries have been from people in metropolitan Adelaide interested in volunteering as firefighters. These people are currently unable to do so if they do not live near to a CFS station. I also note that some peri-urban brigades like Dalkeith and Tea Tree Gully often have waiting lists for people who want to join.

When multiple major incidents occur across the state, it stretches the capability of the CFS. Establishing a volunteer reserve capability, utilising trained metropolitan-based volunteers or volunteers on waiting lists elsewhere, would provide additional capacity to maintain a response to large campaign fires or multiple concurrent fires, reducing the need for the more expensive interstate assistance due to travel and other costs. The CFS has commenced detailed planning for such a state strategic reserve brigade to be located at Roseworthy and Salisbury.

In 2015-16, \$700,000 has been allocated in the budget for this reserve brigade, with two firetrucks, personal protective equipment, as well as a contracted coordinator for this project. In the future, similar reserve brigades are being considered, potentially in the CBD, utilising city-based trained volunteers. This is a fine example of innovation that solves multiple problems and enhances the CFS's capability when most needed while reducing expenditure, particularly on interstate support. If I remember correctly, some additional moneys were made available in the last financial year to support a small expansion of the state reserve brigades, because I remember meeting the people at Salisbury that day.

Dr McFETRIDGE: On that same topic, minister, can you give us an outline of what the budget is for training, will they get two sets of PPE each, and what the budget is for the two new appliances for the strategic reserve? Because I thought the strategic reserve, which I have no objection to the idea of, was to provide extra crews, not extra appliances and things. I thought it was to relieve crews and things like that.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The chief officer from CFS can answer that one.

Mr NETTLETON: The budget for the strategic reserve has a number of components. One is there is training costs, obviously for the new people who join. There is PPC cost to fit each of those volunteers out with their protective clothing, and in the budget there is provision for two appliances, because at the moment that particular strategic reserve has two appliances allocated to it, but they are appliances that were going out of service at end of life. What we will be looking at doing is providing a more modern appliance to the strategic reserve. They will not be brand-new ones. Brand-new ones that are in the budget will go to existing operational brigades, and that will force out a mid-life appliance that will be allocated to the strategic reserve.

Also in that funding are the running costs of those appliances and the normal running costs of that brigade. At the moment, the strategic reserve is funded through some additional funds from the government, but it is only for the project life, which was the end of last financial year. It does not allow for ongoing funding, so the budget that was announced for this financial year allows for ongoing funding of that strategic reserve.

Dr McFETRIDGE: That strategic reserve has not been established yet, though, so surely there must be a budget for training and PPC for the expected numbers that are going to come into that reserve.

Mr NETTLETON: That is inclusive in the total costs.

Dr McFETRIDGE: We do not have a breakdown on that at all?

Mr NETTLETON: I do not have the details of it. It was rolled up in a number of other sub-projects related to that particular activity.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I think we are going to have to move on here. Just before I leave SAFECOM, and I think it comes under SAFECOM this one, and the chiefs will be able to help us if not: is InterCAD now fully operational? InterCAD, the communications system—is it fully operational?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am advised it is. They are all three nodding, yes.

Dr McFETRIDGE: The whole idea of InterCAD—I am here to be educated. I understood InterCAD was to enable a first responder, as in the MOU in 2007, to be the closest, fastest and most appropriate service, and in this case ambos as well. So, if the CFS have been turned out to jobs and we get there first (I use the royal 'we' there), are CFS volunteers all getting first aid training? All CFS volunteers, because it was being rationed under the SEFC.

Mr NETTLETON: In last year's budget, we had additional funds allocated for first aid training. I am not sure that we have been able to train every single volunteer, but certainly we have increased the number of volunteers that have received first aid training.

Dr McFETRIDGE: All those that want it can get it now?

Mr NETTLETON: I believe so. There is a finite number of people you can train with the funds that are available, but certainly—

Dr McFETRIDGE: That is my concern, chief, in that it was being rationed at one stage, and I would have thought that all CFS volunteers—same as MFS firefighters—would get first aid training. That's one of my little—

Mr NETTLETON: Just in relation to InterCAD, certainly from what I have seen, it is working between ambulance, police and the SAFECOM MFS operated computer-aided dispatch. I have seen instances where that has been recorded in the logs. The issue we had before in relation to delayed calls for some CFS brigades, I do not believe that is occurring now that the InterCAD is operational.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I might talk to you about that. Another very important area is volunteer support. There were issues a number of years ago with the number of volunteer support officers being reduced and centralised in Adelaide. How many volunteer support officers have we got, and are they all based in Adelaide?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: There are two aspects, and I will ask the chiefs if they wish to add to the response. I am advised there are two things: one is that we were able to secure some funding from the commonwealth to actually undertake a recruitment drive or campaign for volunteering right across the sector, and I understand that campaign goes live later this year. In terms of support from day to day, my understanding is that there are five FTEs which are involved in the day-to-day support work, in addition to what happens at brigade levels and within each individual service. I am happy for the two volunteer services to add to that if they wish to.

Mr NETTLETON: I have nothing to add.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: They have nothing to add.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I am watching the clock. Minister, you will not be surprised by this next set of questions about Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 70, highlights:

- Undertake a trial of enhanced firefighting capability at Mount Barker.

In the SAFECOM 2013-14 annual report, on page 17 it says:

- Standards of Fire and Emergency Cover (SFEC)...have been developed for every brigade and [every] group...The new prescriptions and SFEC will advise all future operational resourcing decisions.

So, what is so different about Mount Barker that the SFECs were altered, ignored or changed so that we have two MFS pumpers at Mount Barker badged up with CFS?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am aware that you have asked related questions in parliament, so you are quite right, I did expect these questions. The Mount Barker brigade initially sought to

become part of the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service, I assume, to provide an enhanced level of capability to the growing community of Mount Barker. The brigade has agreed to participate in a 12-month trial, whereby an increased number of brigade members are trained in urban fire response and operate the two loaned MFS appliances to allow a detailed study and evaluation of this enhanced capability in meeting the perceived increased risk to the community. The trial was not part of the emergency services reform process; however, the outcome of the trial will help inform potential alternate service delivery models involving enhanced CFS capabilities.

In 2014 the Mount Barker CFS Brigade raised concerns with me about the brigade's response capability due to perceived limitations of the CFS in the provision of support, training and logistics. This was first raised by the brigade with the minister prior to me, minister O'Brien, if my memory serves me correctly. At that time SAFECOM undertook some work in conjunction with the other services and the brigade's preferred model was what they call retained service. That was certainly their proposal. The advice to me was that the retained model was probably the least preferred by SAFECOM and the services, and I will explain that in a second.

The Mount Barker brigade has obviously spoken to me, and in fact I think the first time we had face-to-face talks was at the Hahndorf round table, when they met me for the first time. They wanted a decision based on that and I said to them that no decision regarding the future of the brigade would be made until the reform process had been advanced. They were not particularly happy with that response. It would be fair to say that it was impacting on morale in the brigade and certainly they continue to agitate for changes.

As a result, I asked SAFECOM—and the SAFECOM board discussed this matter, and you have the minutes of that SAFECOM board meeting—if they could look into it and, as a result of that, there is a trial that will be looked at. However, let me just put on the record that the trial for what we learned from Mount Barker may be of equal importance in the other peri-urban areas. There are a number of growing peri-urban areas, and we may disagree on what might be a peri-urban brigade, but clearly there are some that are peri-urban, both at the south and also in the north, up my way.

We are hoping that this trial will indicate what can work and what will not work and help inform us about whether a more appropriate transition from a CFS brigade to an MFS brigade might be required. Certainly they have been given no undertaking regarding the outcome, apart from the given outcome, and discussions within emergency services indicate that, at some appropriate time, Mount Barker may go to an MFS model given the sheer growth, but that date has not been determined.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Just on the nuts and bolts of it, who is paying for the maintenance of the two appliances and who is paying for the training of volunteers?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The CFS.

Dr McFETRIDGE: The CFS is paying for the maintenance of the appliances as well?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Just on that, they are a CFS brigade—

Dr McFETRIDGE: But they are MFS appliances. Anyway, it does not matter.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, hold on. The appliances—

Dr McFETRIDGE: Are owned by the MFS.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, they are appliances purchased through the committee fund, the ESL fund. They are appliances that belong to the community, to the state. In fact, I made this point very early: one of the things that I have actually said to the services, and certainly to the SAFECOM chair, is that we need to start looking at all our assets as community assets needing to be deployed where required. For the first time, under the leadership of SAFECOM, the services are preparing a combined capital investment plan. In other words, we—

Dr McFETRIDGE: A one-service model?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Not at all. We have one community that needs to be serviced and I will not have the sort of discrepancy which has occurred to date where somebody says, 'I have this

budget, I will spend it how I like.' The budget will be spent according to risk, and that takes into account—

Dr McFETRIDGE: But that is what the standards of fire and emergency cover are for, which seem to be ignored in Mount Barker.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, let me finish. No, not at all. That sort of thinking, within a silo, actually impacts on the community. What we need is thinking that goes right across the sector. It is interesting because the services have responded. They are now putting together a plan for what is required right across the service, and in some areas it may require some service to be adjusted and increased in other places, not according to the silo but according to what is required by the community. They are the sorts of serious and important reforms and modernisations that need to take place. So no, they are not MFS appliances; they are appliances that are used by the CFS brigade, they are used to protect the community. The only people using MFS and CFS and that sort of language are those people who seek to divide our communities.

The Hon. P. CAICA: I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, page 83, under the heading of investing expenditure summary. Can the minister inform the committee about the new Metropolitan Fire Service station and State Emergency Service unit at Salisbury, a very good example of operating together. I think it might be the answer.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I actually had a sneak peek at the new station; we had the metropolitan cabinet meeting out there in the northern suburbs recently, so I took the opportunity to visit. I also had the local SES and CFS people there with me, again to reaffirm that we are one service to the community which is about providing protection to that community.

The MFS has almost finished construction of a new four-bay command fire station on the corner of Main North Road and The Grove Way at Salisbury Heights. This \$7.4 million facility will accommodate operational crews and incorporate an enhanced incident management capability to manage major emergencies within the northern and north-eastern suburbs. The government has invested a further \$480,000 in a state-of-the-art traffic management system to ensure safe emergency response from all emergency service agencies from the new precinct. The MFS has also included environmentally sustainable design elements within the Salisbury command fire station.

Once completed, appliances and crew from the existing Salisbury fire station will transfer to the new station. The current Salisbury fire station will then be decommissioned and sold. The new station is expected to be commissioned in early September, and I look forward to inviting the member for Morphett to the opening. The Salisbury fire station forms part of the overall Salisbury Emergency Service Precinct. The new station will improve the interlocking response area of the Salisbury fire station with existing MFS stations at Golden Grove and Elizabeth.

Land has been allocated—I repeat, land has been allocated—on the site to host a future State Emergency Service facility, which is likely to be constructed in the coming two years. The SES unit at Edinburgh will be closed and volunteers will transfer to the new location. The SES will utilise various facilities, when required, within the MFS station and work closely with their MFS counterparts during emergencies. The new arrangement provides not only better community safety outcomes but creates efficiencies that are realised through co-location, which is a good outcome for all South Australian taxpayers. I would also like to advise the committee that when I was there for a sneak peek, the captain of the Salisbury CFS brigade showed an interest in investigating the feasibility of them possibly co-locating as well.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I congratulate the MFS on this terrific advance. Salisbury was opened, I think, in 1977, and my father was one of the first officers at that station. It was a very proud moment for my family, obviously. Is the government considering building a similar command station at O'Halloran Hill?

Mr CROSSMAN: At this stage the MFS is looking at its forward capital plan and aligning that capital plan to the 30-year master plan for the state. We have not yet landed on a replacement for O'Halloran Hill. We are looking at a whole range of various options, so the O'Halloran Hill decision has not been finalised as yet.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I understand that the MFS owns quite a large block of land next to the current O'Halloran Hill station, and it is almost the same vintage at Salisbury, so you would be looking at replacement fairly shortly.

Mr CROSSMAN: Very much so. We are also looking at what the development down south is and where the appropriate need is for a fire station or a fire precinct response. At this stage we cannot close off on that.

Mr WILLIAMS: My question relates to Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, pages 69 and 111. Page 69 is the program summary for the CFS and 111 is the program summary for the State Emergency Service. I was expecting substantial increases in expenditure, particularly in rural areas—and I represent a rural seat—but I have looked through the summary of expenses for both the CFS and the SES, which principally operate in rural South Australia, and I see very little increase.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I think I was right the first time when I said next year.

Mr WILLIAMS: My confusion arises because information—

The CHAIR: Member for MacKillop, can you pull your microphone down.

Mr WILLIAMS: My confusion arises—I was expecting substantial increases in expenditure of both the CFS and the SES, which are the principal emergency service responders in regional South Australia—because information given to the Economic and Finance Committee earlier in the year with regard to the emergency services levy suggested that expenditure on direct emergency services in the rural areas, regions 1, 2 and 3 (that is regional area with regard to the ESL, not fire or emergency services regions), should increase by some 60 per cent, and that is an increase of \$18.2 million. I certainly cannot see those increases reflected in the budget paper. What is the explanation for that?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I have been advised that the figures you refer to which reflect additional income this year (I think you are referring to) actually sit in the SAFECOM budget and have not been transferred across to the other budget areas. As was announced by the Treasurer, there will be additional moneys put in for training and that is exclusively CFS and SES volunteer training. There will be additional equipment. I think there are a couple of extra bulk water carriers being purchased. There is also the issue of personal protective clothing, again, for volunteers. There is a program for that and that is reflected in the budget—that will be spent—and they are non-metropolitan areas. As you have indicated, most of the SES and CFS are non-metro and that is where most of the money is going.

Mr WILLIAMS: So, minister, you are saying that there is—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: What I can say is that of those new measures included in the 2015-16 budget, \$6.7 million will go to the presumptive legislation for CFS volunteers and half a million is going to the Regional Capability Community Fund, which is rural. Three point 7 million dollars in 2015-16, with \$5.4 million over four years, to provide training and personal protective equipment to fit out an estimated additional 1,250 new CFS and SES volunteers; \$700,000, which is the metropolitan CFS reserve capacity, for training and additional vessel and tow vehicle for volunteers and additional volunteer support contractors for SAFECOM; \$600,000 this year, \$9 million over four years, for a second set of personal protective clothing for each operational CFS volunteer; and \$400,000 in 2015-16, \$1.7 million over four years, for two additional bulk water carriers per year for four years. All those expenditures are for volunteers, and most of those volunteers are in rural areas. You are quite right that you would not find them in the budget papers and I have just been advised as to why that is the case.

Mr WILLIAMS: I appreciate the explanation, but it is still well short of the numbers that were given to the Economic and Finance Committee. Maybe you can answer this question: the numbers that were given to the Economic and Finance Committee—and I know they were given by the Treasurer and not by you—were they prepared by your agency or were they prepared in Treasury?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It was prepared by SAFECOM on behalf of the three services. If you want to know about the presentation of that information to the Economic and Finance Committee,

you will need to ask the Treasurer, because he actually is responsible for the presentation of that information.

Mr WILLIAMS: Yes, I accept that and that is why I asked where the numbers came from. The Economic and Finance Committee was given the information that the expenditure on direct emergency services in the levy regions 1, 2 and 3 was going to increase by 60 per cent between the 2014-15 financial year and the 2015-16 financial year. To put that in dollar terms, that is an increase from \$30.1 million to \$48.4 million, a 60 per cent increase.

The people in my electorate, and I am sure my colleagues who represent rural and regional electorates, would love to see an increase in the fire cover and the emergency services cover in regional South Australia. However, those increases, as were given to the Economic and Finance Committee, are certainly not reflected in the budget papers and we are rightfully asking: where has the money gone?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I have indicated where the money has been allocated. In terms of the presentation, I suggest you ask the Treasurer to reconcile those figures; that is his job. I do not know if he has appeared yet before the committee. Has he appeared yet?

Mr WILLIAMS: I presume he has. So you are saying that you are unaware of where the additional \$18.2 million has been spent.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, I did not say that at all. What I said was, in terms of the presentation of the information to the Economic and Finance Committee, that is the Treasurer's business. In terms of what we have spent, we put up a bid of what we think will be required for the training, the protective clothing, etc. I look after the money that I am allocated and I will spend it.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, you have to concede that the numbers that you have just given the committee fall well short of \$18.2 million.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I have not seen the Economic and Finance Committee papers to know what my response should be. I have not seen those, so I am taking it on face value—not that I do not trust you, but I am taking it on face value that they are the correct figures. You will need to ask the person who is actually responsible for those papers. If you have not done that, I am sorry, but I cannot help you.

Ms DIGANCE: He is on tomorrow.

The CHAIR: I suggest we move on. Are there any further questions from the opposition?

Dr McFETRIDGE: Yes, there are, in the 12 minutes we have left. I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 2, page 72, Highlights. You purchased new breathing apparatus. Was the selected breathing apparatus the one that was recommended by those who were selecting it, and why did we not go to a similar type to what the MFS has, which I understand are seven kilograms lighter than those that have been selected for the CFS.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: All I know is that I signed off on the recommendation to me, which was made by the CFS, and we went through a tender process. As to whether they are different, perhaps that is an issue in the future where we need to perhaps look at it as a community-wide service, which a few minutes ago you actually did, tongue in cheek—

Dr McFETRIDGE: No, do not verbal me. I am happy to look at some areas of cost efficiencies, and purchasing is one classic area. Why do you end up with two systems?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I should ask you that question.

Mr NETTLETON: I can offer some explanation to that. The breathing apparatus tender for Country Fire Service went out to a competitive tender process and a number of tenders bid for that. As part of the tendering process, there was a trial that was undertaken by a number of our volunteers and staff. They made a recommendation on one of the particular sets. There are other things that are taken into account, like value for money, support services and the like. In this case the set that was chosen is a set that was provided by Draeger for the trials, and that is the set that has been issued.

I point out that the reason we did not go to buy the same sets as the MFS is that the MFS sets are a number of years old and the sets we have are more modern. We have also gone to larger capacity cylinders for the BA sets, so our sets are nine litres and 300 barometric pressure. The MFS sets are smaller in volume. The contract is also for long-term management and maintenance of the BA sets and that is taken into consideration as well. So while the trial wearers might have a preference for a particular set, there are many other factors in the valuation of the tender that led to the tender outcome and therefore who gets the contract.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you for that. I am concerned that we have gone from 200 bar to 300 bar cylinders and the new sets are a little heavier than the older sets. I understand that the MFS—and perhaps chief Crossman can tell us here—is modernising its sets for health and safety, if for no other reason, as well as operational efficiency, so getting a common set, I would have thought, would be something that perhaps we should start looking at. That is perhaps a comment more than a question. I should also say I am getting—

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Just on that point, if I can, member for Morphett, I can advise that those sorts of discussions are taking place as we speak now, the result of the modernisation project, in fact last week. Those sorts of discussions about purchasing across the sector are taking place for the very reasons you have outlined, and it would have happened a bit earlier had we not had other processes being derailed by other people.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I will treat that with the contempt it deserves. I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 2, Investing Expenditure, Capital Works.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Well, I am sorry.

Dr McFETRIDGE: How many new CFS tankers—'tankers'; that is the 'in' term now—appliances are being manufactured? Are they being manufactured in South Australia? I noticed last night on the news the Minister for Transport said that 90 per cent of DPTI contracts were for South Australian companies, but my understanding is that we might be getting the 10 per cent in CFS appliance bills. And why only Isuzu? Are they the only ones, because certainly I am not so sure they are built for Australian summer conditions, some of them. The air conditioning conks out when the motors overheat.

Mr NETTLETON: In relation to CFS appliances, the tender for cab chassis, which I think was a three-year plus one plus one tender, that contract was awarded to Isuzu on a competitive tendering basis. It is the pump sets that go on those appliances. It went out to tender through a competitive tendering process and a particular pump set was chosen. There are a number of bodybuilders who assemble the trucks for us. One is Fraser in New Zealand, which is on a three plus one plus one contract. Moore Engineering at Murray Bridge has contracts. They have recently completed some 14 appliances for us. They do all our bulk water carriers.

Another contract was with a company in Queensland for a variant of the 14s, and we have some other vehicles being made in various locations around the country. In relation to Fraser Engineering, this state has a free trade agreement with New Zealand and they are able to compete the same as any Australian manufacturer. They won a competitive tender and that is why the contract was awarded to them.

Similarly, when the contract with all those agencies expires, we will put out a tender for cab chassis into the future, and it will be up to a number of cab chassis suppliers to bid to win that contract. I do not know who will win that; I cannot say which company. Essentially, we buy those contracts using the value-for-money methodology that is sent to us by the state procurement people.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Why is it that DPTI can have a 90 per cent stipulation in their contracts, yet Emergency Services just says that is a free trade agreement?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: What I can add is that, in opening the Office of the Industry Advocate, the government has to be very mindful if we are going to set up barriers because equally, if every state set up barriers, it means our people cannot compete interstate either. So I think we have to be a bit more sophisticated and intelligent about how we approach this. What we have done as a government is that, to make sure that our small businesses in this state compete, we have made

the Office of the Industry Advocate available to assist companies to make sure they put their best bid forward and assist them. That makes them competitive.

Sometimes they are not aware of contracts or tenders or they do not know how to complete that documentation, and we provide that assistance and support for them to do that. I would be very keen to make sure that local people do win it. Having said that, I have also accepted advice from the CFS regarding what they need to purchase, and I probably would be accused of micromanaging if I was to ignore their advice.

Dr McFETRIDGE: The same question is for the MFS about their new appliances. Are we building any of those in South Australia? We used to.

Mr CROSSMAN: Pretty much the same response, Chair, is that the MFS does have an open tender process and we go through an evaluation of each cab chassis builder. At this stage we do not have any local contact being built in South Australia but we are very aware of that and we will be looking at what we can assist with in the future.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I should tell the committee that one of the reasons that I am really keen on having South Australian builders, having visited the Tasmania Fire Service, their engineering department is building top shelf appliances. In fact, they are finishing off the new CAFS conversion on the bulk water carrier for the Blackwood brigade, and if Tassie can do it, I would have thought that we can do it. We can build submarines and ships but not fire appliances.

I should not leave the SES now with a few minutes left—if Chief Beattie perhaps wants to come forward. Budget Paper 4, Volume 2, Net cost of services. This is about the 2007 MOU between the MFS, CFS and SES signed by the then three chiefs—I think it was David Place, Grant Lupton and Euan Ferguson—for the closest, fastest and most appropriate response. Does that still apply for the three services, minister? Does that MOU still apply?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It does.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I am very concerned about the operational implementation of that MOU, and I will give a local example. The other night, the Strathalbyn SES went past the Meadows CFS and Kangarilla CFS to clean up a priority 2 tree down on Cut Hill Road. To me that is an abuse of volunteer time. I ask, why are we not applying that MOU? I understand that there are serious issues still in the Onkaparinga SES about this closest, fastest, most appropriate response.

Mr BEATTIE: The MOU that was signed is operationalised through our response plans that are embedded in the call, receipt and despatch system (SACAD) and you are quite right that the fastest most appropriate resource for emergency events are fundamental to our response protocols. It is also clear that for non-life threatening incidents and for community assistant incidents that fall outside of that life threat 000 category, that we have a range of response protocols that move beyond simply having the nearest appliance turn out.

That is particularly important when you have multi-incident storm and flood events where you can quickly saturate the field with appliances and deplete the community of fire cover. So where there are non-life threatening emergencies that can be responded to by the SES, a priority 2 or a priority 3 incident, they will be triaged by the unit and responded to through whatever means the unit sees fit. That may mean deploying unit assets throughout their area of response to the scene of the incident and normalising it, or alternatively it may be liaising with the CFS that may be closer and dealing with the incident in that way.

Dr McFETRIDGE: On that same issue, what is happening with the Onkaparinga unit? I am hearing rumours that the Onkaparinga SES is going to be closed down because of issues about the closest, fastest, most appropriate priority 1 responses.

Mr BEATTIE: The Onkaparinga SES is in a not unique but special situation where nearly all the membership of the SES are also joint members with the Country Fire Service, with the Onkaparinga group, and there are some members who are also joint members with the MFS and other services, including ambulance.

Over the last 12 to 18 months that particular unit has been advocating for and negotiating to have implemented some bespoke response arrangements whereby their members would be

deployed from home locations rather than from the unit base. Within that group there are four brigades and in each brigade there are SES members. They had negotiated with the SES and obviously through their own service with the CFS to have bespoke paging arrangements implemented such that the nearest brigade would be responded to SES units, and the SES members from that brigade would respond from home brigades.

Those response plans were developed in consultation with the MFS and CFS over the last six to eight months and have now been implemented within the call receipt despatch system. There is a final piece in the equation and that is some recoding of the members' pagers so that they can be responded to appropriately, and we are waiting to get that done.

The CHAIR: Thank you, sir, and thank you minister. I declare the examination of proposed payments for the administered items for the Department of Treasury and Finance in part adjourned to committee A. Thank you, minister; thank you to your advisers; thank you to members on both sides.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE, \$560,412,000

**ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE, \$7,928,000**

Membership:

Mr Wingard substituted for Mr Williams.

Minister:

Hon. A. Piccolo, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr G. Stevens, Commissioner, South Australia Police.

Mr P. Gelston, Chief Operating Officer, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Ms P. Norman, Manager, Safety Strategy, Safety and Policy Programs, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Mr B. Cagialis, Chief Finance Officer, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Mr I. Hartmann, Manager, Financial Management Services Branch, South Australia Police.

Mr W. Burns, Chief Inspector, South Australia Police.

Mr N. Lombardi, Chief of Staff.

Mr J. Agness, Ministerial Adviser.

The CHAIR: I welcome the minister, this time with his Minister for Road Safety hat on, and I welcome back the commissioner and the minister's advisers. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and refer members to portfolio statement, Volume 4, and call on the minister to introduce his new advisers and make a statement if he wishes.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am now pleased to say that my cheat sheet is actually correct this afternoon. Not only do I have the right names but people are sitting in the right seats, so it will be less challenging. I reintroduce Commissioner Grant Stevens, Paul Gelston, the Chief Operating Officer for DPTI, Paula Norman, Manager, Safety Strategy, Safety and Policy Program, Department

of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, Bill Cagialis, Chief Finance Officer, DPTI, and Ian Hartmann from SAPOL, who was with us this morning.

South Australia's Road Safety Strategy 2020—Towards Zero Together—has set a target to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries by at least 30 per cent by 2020 to less than 80 fatalities and 800 serious injuries respectively. Having said that, if we have a lot less I would be most pleased to see that. While much attention has been given to fatalities, serious crashes can often result in permanent injury to the victim, and have substantial impacts on their families and friends and on the community in general. In fact, I would add that this is one of the areas often overlooked more generally, and if you go to some of our institutions, as I am sure the member for Morphett has, in terms of our disability facilities, you see people with permanent brain damage and head injuries as a result of car crashes, and their quality of life is tragic.

Dr McFETRIDGE: And for their families.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is correct. There has been a substantial decline in the number of serious injuries on South Australian roads over the past few years from 790 in 2013 down to a record low of 711 in 2014. The previous five-year average (2009-13) is 928 serious injuries, so it is good to see that trend maintaining down. While we have achieved substantial reductions in fatalities over the past decade, the 108 fatalities recorded in 2014 is unacceptable, and we know that we have to do more as a community to reduce that, and we are committed to do that.

The Motor Accident Commission, SA Police, and Emergency Services continue to work alongside the department, DPTI, and with the community to play a pivotal role in raising awareness of key road safety issues, including the importance of enforcement, engineering and infrastructure initiatives, emergency services and education. We work with a number of organisations and community organisations, and with residents in a number of other programs and the community road safety groups, to instil a road safety culture in our communities. In addition, we have the road safety stakeholder reference group, which has representatives from 43 public and private organisations (perhaps non-government organisations as well), which try to get out the message. That is the group I chair and I work with them to reduce road trauma on our roads.

The department, with the input of SAPOL, MAC, the RAA, local government and the Centre for Automotive Safety Research at the University of Adelaide, is reviewing the road safety strategy in developing South Australia's road safety action plan for 2017-20 in collaboration with our key stakeholders. Interestingly, tomorrow marks one year since the changes were introduced to the graduated licensing scheme to help protect South Australian young drivers and their passengers in their first and most vulnerable year of unsupervised driving. While young people are overrepresented in fatalities and serious injuries, the stats show that in the last five years the number of young lives lost has decreased. In the 12 months since 28 July 2014, five P1 drivers/riders under 25 years of age have been involved in fatal crashes, compared with an average of 11 per year for the years 2009-13. I also congratulate P1 drivers and the community for supporting young drivers with these changes.

One of the major programs the agency undertakes is the road shoulder program, and 1,200 kilometres of road shoulder have been sealed under the state government's program of works, including the Barrier and Riddoch highways, as well as the Victor Harbor Road and Main North Road. The state budget includes \$40 million to be spent over the next four years on shoulder sealing and audio tactile line marking on rural roads. Over five years, it is estimated that more than 30 fatal and serious crashes can be prevented and more than 70 casualty crashes avoided through this initiative.

Funding also provided to other road safety infrastructure includes State Black Spot programs (\$8.9 million), Responsive Road Safety Program (\$5.4 million), Rural Road Safety Program (\$8.7 million), and also working alongside the community. An example of this is the Residents Win program, which provides funding to communities to identify and help resolve local road safety issues. I would just like to emphasise that every one of us has a role to play in improving road safety. We must continue to strive for the best possible results and this requires a concerted effort from every road user.

Mr WINGARD: My first question refers to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 74, line 2: 'an increase in the payment to South Australia Police for road safety (\$1.7 million)'. I am presuming this

is allocated through the community road safety program. How much in total is paid to SAPOL for road safety through the Community Road Safety Fund last year in 2014-15 and budgeted for 2015-16?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: In 2014-15, the budget was \$38.3 million and in 2015-16 the budget is for \$39.3 million.

Mr WINGARD: Can you give us a list of all the road safety programs administered through SAPOL and the funds and costings of each of the programs?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I do not have the individual breakdowns, but I can give you an indication of how the money is spent.

Mr WINGARD: If you could give us an indication that would be great. If you could get us a breakdown, that would be fantastic, too.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Certainly the police will endeavour to do that. SA road safety policing, including enforcement of the road rules and provisions under the Road Traffic Act 1961 and the Motor Vehicles Act 1959, includes the maintenance and operation of the mobile red-light cameras, driver drug and random breath testing, traffic enforcement initiatives, major crash investigations, heavy vehicle legislation enforcement, regulation of road use, vehicle collision prevention, driver education, highway patrols, targeted rural highway policing, and processing infringement notices.

Mr WINGARD: Next I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 74, line 4: 'additional expenditure on community road safety programs in 2014–15 (\$0.5 million)'. As part of the Community Road Safety Fund, how much is spent on staff and running the Smarter Travel @ Work program and what are the measurable outcomes?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The actual number of staff I will need to get a breakdown for you, which we will do, but the \$4.9 million is on information, education and training programs road safety grants and bike education. We will have that broken down for you.

Mr WINGARD: Sorry, I did not quite hear the start; you are going to get a breakdown for me?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr WINGARD: Thank you. Will that include the TravelSMART for residents program as well?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr WINGARD: Thank you. Do you or one of your assistants know how much money is spent on the Living Neighbourhoods program, their FTEs and the funds in that program?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: They will be part of that breakdown.

Mr WINGARD: The Living Neighbourhoods website, which is funded through the Community Road Safety Fund, promotes, as small projects:

- Painting or decorating your stobie pole...
- Developing community posters to raise awareness of street safety.
- Planting herbs, flowers or shrubs on the verge [or]
- Decorative fencing or unusual artwork in your front yard.

Do we know how much has been spent on these specific projects?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, not individual projects; I will have to get that information for you.

Mr WINGARD: No worries at all. Do you have a measure of outcomes for those projects as well? Can we get a measure of outcomes?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: My understanding is that various programs have a whole range of valuation tests. I will need to provide more information than I have here before me in terms of how we measure some of those outcomes for you.

Mr WINGARD: How much was spent on the Adelaide Hills Community Road Safety forums looking at speed limits?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: The bulk of that cost was just employee costs, and that is absorbed by existing staffing arrangements. That is an ongoing project, and we are about to implement some of the recommendations. We will evaluate the effectiveness of those and if they are not effective, we will look at other alternatives.

One of the things we are looking at is a suggestion about the painting of speed limits, etc., on the pavement itself. We will undertake those, but we will then measure to see if they are actually effective. We will measure pre and post speeds (what people drive at) and we will compare those. If they are ineffective, we will look at other measures. It would be fair to say, about the Hills project, that there is a whole range of variety of views, from people saying that speeds should be reduced to people saying that speeds should not be reduced, and everything in between.

It is anticipated that the work regarding the painting of the speed limits on the roadways will be undertaken by the end of August 2015. We will have a six-month trial (in other words, we will measure the effectiveness of that) and then we will have ongoing engagement with both the Adelaide Hills Council and the community.

I think, in terms of road safety, it would be fair to say there is not one answer which is unique across the state. You have to find different strategies to impact on or influence people's behaviour according to communities and a whole range of other local factors.

Mr WINGARD: Can I just confirm, then, that the Community Road Safety Fund—and I appreciate you getting me some figures on that, but just to make sure my maths are correct—has a pool of around \$88 million, and a little bit less than \$40 million of that goes back to SAPOL to implement road safety strategy and the other half is done through the department?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: It is \$81.3 million, which I think you indicated, for 2015-16. Of this, \$39.4 million is actually to SA Police for road safety; \$9 million is the Black Spot Program; \$5.4 million is for the responsive road safety program; \$8.8 million is for the rural road safety program; \$4.9 million is on the information, education and training programs, and also bike education; and \$6.6 million on providing policy advice, coordination and driver training standards and a whole range of other things. They are all designed to obviously improve road user safety.

Mr WINGARD: So, again, you agree that half goes to the police and half runs through the department. Thank you for clearing that up. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 68, line 13.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Can I just make one point there, because it is very important. The commissioner will correct me if I am wrong, but even though they get that amount, they spend a lot more than that amount on road safety measures. I think it is more than twice—

Cmmr STEVENS: \$106 million.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: They spend \$106 million. I think if you want to provide some context to those answers, of the \$106 million they spend, part of it comes from the Community Road Safety program and the rest is actually from general government revenue to Police. I think they would argue that perhaps they should get more—all my agencies say that, though—but it would be fair to say that, if was not for police activities, we would have a much worse road toll.

Mr WINGARD: I appreciate that. The most recent reference was Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 68, line 13, increased detection of unregistered and uninsured vehicles, to be completed by June 2019. Is this the budget for the Safe-T-Cam program?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr WINGARD: Are all the cameras set up under the Safe-T-Cam program operating?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Do you mean today?

Mr WINGARD: Yes.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Well, I will have to tell you at the end of the day then.

Mr WINGARD: Are they all operational? Are they all working?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: They are all designed to be working.

Mr WINGARD: Can you tell us in particular when the ones at O'Halloran Hill and Seacliff Park were erected and when they came online or were switched on?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: They were erected some two years ago. We will have to look back in the books to see when they came online.

Mr WINGARD: So you will get back to us?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes.

Mr WINGARD: Thank you very much. An amount of \$4.9 million is budgeted on this project and it is scheduled to be finished in June 2019. What more needs to be done?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: We have to get that information to you. We will take it on notice. We will make a note of it.

Mr WINGARD: Could I also get a breakdown of the number of unregistered and uninsured vehicles detected at each of the locations?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I am advised that we can get that for you.

Mr WINGARD: I will move on to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 74, targets 2015-16, dot point 4:

Undertake specific road safety infrastructure treatments, including constructing roundabouts, in rural locations...

And it goes on. They are some of the things that are happening in rural locations. I am just wondering whether these specific road safety treatments include assessing and, where practical, removing dangerous roadside vegetation, as suggested by MAC Chairman Roger Cook.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Vegetation is one of those things that is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Certainly if alternative measures cannot be put in place to safeguard rail, etc., and other measures that are put in place, then obviously it would have regard to actually removing the tree and other vegetation as well. This is something that I heard from the gentleman from CASR; he said that the amount of vegetation required to be removed from roadsides in some locations is that extensive that it would not make any discernible difference.

Sometimes the reason we put in guards and other hazard prevention or minimisation measures is that it is more effective. To actually be effective, it is not just a case of removing one tree on the side of the road; to make a discernible difference you may have to go back 20, 30 or 40 metres. You either do that or you work out an alternative. That is why sometimes it is unhelpful when people to say, 'If you remove a couple of trees it will fix it.' Well, it does not fix it because the actual impact is still quite serious, quite a distance.

In some cases there is no alternative, but certainly the agency tries to provide a net benefit by saying, 'If we put this railing or some other measure in place, it will reduce it by so much', 'If we remove this tree, we don't get that much.' In most cases, where there is no alternative, vegetation will be removed, and I have seen it happen.

Mr WINGARD: Will this project focus on making that assessment for trees or vegetation?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes, part of it will; very much so.

Mr WINGARD: I will move on to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 75, performance indicators.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I just want to add one other thing so I can give a fuller picture. Trees are pruned under maintenance programs, not just capital projects. Some are removed and some are

trimmed back, etc. In fact, I can recall that some people contacted my office about some overhanging trees, and they were removed and also trimmed under the maintenance rather than capital projects.

Mr WINGARD: I shall skip forward because we are running out of time here. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, page 68, line 19, and mid-block safety cameras. There is \$386,000 in the budget there for that. Where will this camera or, if it is more than one, these cameras be positioned?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Of the ones that have been planned, they will all be operational this financial year. That is just the final payment. We will get a breakdown for you.

Mr WINGARD: Can I also get a breakdown of the fatality and crash figures at the locations where they will be installed?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Yes; the speed figures as well.

Mr WINGARD: How much of the \$2.6 million allocated to the project has not been spent?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That is the figure.

Mr WINGARD: That is the amount? Thank you. I do have a few more but I am told to go onto the omnibus questions now.

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 in 2014-15 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 2014-15, please provide the number of public servants broken down into heads and FTEs 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 the financial year 2014-15, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs (1) was and (2) was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2015-16?

4. Between 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of each position with a total estimated cost of \$100,000 or more—(1) which has been abolished and (2) which has been created?

5. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, please provide a breakdown of attraction, retention and performance allowances as well as non-salary benefits paid to public servants and contractors in the years 2013-14 and 2014-15.

6. For each year of the forward estimates, provide the name and budget of all grant programs administered by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister and, for 2014-15, 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 grant and whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instruction 15.

7. For each year of the forward estimates, provide the name and budget for each individual program administered by or on behalf of departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

8. For each year of the forward estimates, provide the name and budget for each individual investing expenditure project administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

9. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, what is the budget for targeted voluntary separation packages for the financial years included in the forward estimates by year and how are these packages to be funded?

10. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 30 June 2015, including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices and ministerial liaison officers?

The CHAIR: Well done; excellent work, member for Mitchell. Are there any further questions, member for Mitchell? Thank you minister, thank you commissioner, thank you to your staff and advisers. I declare the examination of proposed payments to the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and administered items to the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure adjourned, and thank you for your time today. In accordance with the agreed timetable this committee stands suspended until 3.45pm.

Sitting suspended from 15:29 to 15:45.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS, \$104,085,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS,
\$4,099,000

Membership:

Mr Griffiths substituted for Dr McFetridge.

Mr Pederick substituted for Mr Goldsworthy.

Mr Bell substituted for Mr Williams.

Minister:

Hon. G.G. Brock, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Local Government.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr S. Ashby, Chief Executive, Department of Primary Industries and Regions.

Mr D. Frater, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of Primary Industries and Regions.

Mr T. Mader, Executive Director, Regions SA.

Mr B. Paolo, Director, Regions SA.

Mr S. Johnke, Director, Finance and Prudential Management, Department of Primary Industries and Regions.

The CHAIR: Welcome, minister, and welcome to your advisers. I have a quick proforma to go through as I understand this is the first time you have sat in estimates this year. The estimates committee is a relatively informal procedure and, as such, there is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. I understand that the minister and the lead speaker for the opposition have agreed on a timetable. My understanding is that 3.45 to 5.15 is regional development and then 5.15 to 6.15 is local government. Is that your understanding?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Yes, that is correct.

The CHAIR: Changes to committee membership can be notified as they occur. If the minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it needs to be supplied no later than Friday 30 October, to be published during the 17 November sitting week. I propose to allow both the minister and the lead speaker 10 minutes each for an opening statement. There will be a flexible approach to giving the call for asking questions, based on about three questions per member. Supplementary questions will be the exception rather than the rule. Questions must be based on lines of expenditure in the budget papers and must be identifiable or referenced. There is no formal facility for tabling of documents.

All questions are to be directed to the minister, not to the minister's advisers; however, the minister may refer questions to advisers for a response at any point. We are pretty flexible about that, so we will allow conversations with advisers if the minister is happy with that and, if it gets argumentative, it is directed at the minister again, which I am sure it will not. During the committee's examination television cameras are permitted to film.

I declare the proposed payments open for examination and I refer members to Portfolio Statement, Volume 4. I now call on the minister to make a statement if he wishes and to introduce his advisers.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Good afternoon to the Chair and also committee members. It is my pleasure to provide information about the regional development programs and work conducted by Regions SA, which is part of the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA). I would like to introduce the members of the department who are with me today. On my immediate left is Scott Ashby, the Chief Executive of the Department of Primary Industries and Regions; next to him is Trent Mader, Executive Director, Regions SA; on my right is Don Frater, Deputy Chief Executive of the Department of Primary Industries and Regions; and behind me are Bengy Paolo, Director, Regions SA, and Stephen Johninke, Director, Finance and Prudential Management.

The 2015-16 state budget highlights the government's continued commitment to regional communities through significant investment in key service areas, programs and infrastructure for regional South Australia that provide opportunities for regional South Australia through the Charter for Stronger Regional Policy. It builds on the good work and collective efforts of government and regional communities during 2014-15.

Our regions continue to face various challenges and they are eager to engage in new opportunities to grow their communities. The success of industries such as agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and minerals processing, manufacturing, tourism, energy production, aquaculture, and food and wine production is vital to the wellbeing of South Australia's economy.

The South Australian government's targeted investments are expected to drive growth and generate flow-on benefits for regional communities and to provide a range of improvements to regional infrastructure, because this government recognises the need for regional communities to build on their economic foundations, to generate social vitality and to preserve and restore their environmental assets.

Creating the conditions for regional businesses and communities to grow and prosper is fundamentally important for all South Australians. Building stronger regions is an imperative acknowledged by the state government and is a key reason for my decision to support stable and effective government based on the delivery of a series of agreements between the Premier and myself in my capacity as the member for Frome, which were reached in March 2014.

The government's commitment to the Charter for Stronger Regional Policy is aimed at building a stronger regional South Australia that is dynamic and continues to thrive and develop. The Charter for Stronger Regional Policy sets out a number of opportunities for regional communities to interact with the government, including: the reintroduction of three country cabinet meetings each year; the requirement that at least one minister spend a day each week in a regional area; and the holding of at least three senior management council meetings in regions each year. These initiatives have been received very warmly by regional communities.

As an example, country cabinet is proving to be a winner, providing an opportunity for regional South Australians to have direct input and provide feedback on how government can better support communities to grow and flourish, both socially and economically. Issues that emerge from country cabinet that are identified through events held during the visit and from comments made on the YourSAy website are collated by the government. This feedback is used to develop an issues paper, which is published on the YourSAy website, providing the regional communities with a further chance to provide comment. Also, government agencies provide a response to the issues they are responsible for, and a report is released within 90 days of a country cabinet event.

For example, the first country cabinet meeting in 2015 was held in the Mid North, with a country meeting held in Jamestown and other events at Peterborough. Prior to the country cabinet, I met with local community leaders in Peterborough, including the mayor and the Regional

Development Australia Yorke and Mid North, and they told me about the urgent need for government services to be better coordinated and the importance of having a physical presence at a central location in the town to support those requirements.

As a result, I announced my funding for a community development officer to be located in Peterborough. The position will be delivered on behalf of the state government by Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North, with close support of the Peterborough council. I will provide \$120,000 per year over three years, with the expectation that the role will focus on improving the coordination of government services to improve the wellbeing of the local community as well as developing small-scale economic development projects.

The second outcome was my decision to fund \$70,000 for the construction of a hard stand for helicopters and fixed wing aircraft, to be located at the local airport. Peterborough's geographical isolation, combined with the demands placed on the Peterborough Memorial Hospital, means that effective emergency service delivery to the town is critical.

To build on the work during 2014-15, the 2015-16 state budget highlights the government's continued commitment to regional communities through significant investment in key service areas, programs and infrastructure for regional South Australia. These investments are outlined in the regional chapter of the state budget which I negotiated to be included in my capacity as the member for Frome, bringing transparency to government expenditure in regional South Australia by, importantly, placing together information about the programs, new initiatives and investing expenditure in the 2015-16 budget that provide opportunities for regional South Australia through the Charter for Stronger Regional Policy.

Targeted investments are driving growth and generating flow-on benefits for regional communities, and are providing a large range of improvements to regional infrastructure. The Charter for Stronger Regional Policy provides for a greater focus on regional South Australia in government decision-making. While issues and opportunities affecting regional South Australia impact every government department and the delivery of the government's commitments to the regions belongs to various agencies, new endeavours and existing activities must be coordinated to build an integrated and effective approach to regional engagement. To this end, the Regional South Australia Cabinet Committee, specifically created to focus on regions, was established and held its inaugural meeting on 26 May 2014.

I chair the cabinet committee, and the other members are: the deputy chair, the Hon. Leon Bignell MP, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Tourism and Minister for Forests; the Hon. Gail Gago MLC, Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills and Minister for Science and Information Technology; the Hon. Tom Koutsantonis MP, Treasurer, Minister for State Development, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy; and the Hon Stephen Mullighan MP, Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The cabinet committee continues to oversee growth and improved infrastructure in the regions. This committee's work will continue throughout 2015-16.

Since its commencement, there has been a strong interest in the Regional Development Fund (RDF) grants program for all regional areas. The need for the RDF grants program is demonstrated by the high demand, as the number of applications received and funding sought has far exceeded the amount of grant funding available. I have been delighted with the outcome of the RDF grants program for the 2014-15 financial year. So far the RDF grants will support 40 separate projects which will lead to the creation of 653 new jobs in regional South Australia and generate investment of more than \$334 million.

Among the grant recipients in 2014-15 was Sundrop Farms, which will receive \$6 million towards a 20 hectare expansion of its greenhouse business at Port Augusta, involving at least 100 jobs during construction and about 150 jobs in operation. An amount of \$500,000 in funding was also granted to South Australia's largest egg producer, Days Eggs, for a new free-range facility in the Yorke and Mid North region.

On 9 April 2015, I announced the opening of the RDF 2015-16 round. Under this round, the RDF comprises two programs requiring expressions of interest or EOIs. There is the Major Projects Program for grants of between \$200,000 and \$2 million, and this is aimed at supporting major economic projects, strengthening regional industries and assisting regional businesses to take

advantage of new opportunities. There is also the Community Infrastructure Program for grants of between \$200,000 and \$1 million to support investment in regional communities to develop their economic infrastructure and grow their capabilities as a foundation for future jobs and economic growth.

During the last two weeks of April 2015, Regions SA staff held information sessions throughout regional South Australia to promote the second round of the RDF. The purpose of these sessions was to introduce and promote the RDF for 2015-16 and to respond to questions from potential applicants regarding the guidelines and application or assessment process. A total of 127 people attended the information sessions and the feedback from attendees was very positive, and since that time staff from Regions SA have fielded a significant number of inquiries from interested parties regarding the fund.

The regional breakdown for the EOIs shows a spread of interested parties from all regions of South Australia. I am very pleased with the response to this current round of the RDF. The EOIs closed on 22 May 2015, with shortlisting being undertaken. The successful EOI proponents were then asked to submit a full application by early July 2015. There were 88 expressions of interest received in round 2 with the funding sought far exceeding the amount of grant funding available.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Mr Chair, can I just make a point of order, please. I am reluctant to interrupt the minister, but indeed I think the notice that you gave at the start was for a statement of about 10 minutes.

The CHAIR: I think you are right; I uphold that. Minister, I think the 10 minutes is pretty close to expiring if you just want to get to any salient points you need to make before we get started. How many pages have you got?

Mr GRIFFITHS: And that is my concern. I do respect the information flow that the minister is projecting but, indeed, a lot of those things will come out as part of questions.

The CHAIR: That is alright; I do not think you are trying to shut the minister down, member for Goyder. I think you are right.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Okay, what I will do—I have visited the regions to hear firsthand the opportunities that members of these communities see as key to their future, and I will continue to visit the regions to hear what people have to say about what is important to them, now and for future generations. It is important to me that the government acknowledges the contribution of our regions and that their economic and social growth opportunities are recognised and promoted. In concluding these introductory remarks, I reiterate that the government understands that the prosperity and wellbeing of regional South Australians and their communities underpin the sustainability and wellbeing of our state. There are many opportunities to grasp but we know the challenges are a constant. The government will continue to work closely with the commonwealth and local governments, industry, business and communities in striving to get the best possible outcomes for regional South Australia.

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Member for Goyder, do you have an opening statement?

Mr GRIFFITHS: A very brief one, sir. May I say here about the words, and the words are very important to me because I think they drive the inputs and, therefore, the outcomes that have to exist in regional South Australia. We three who sit on this side of the chamber concur with you on the fact that regional South Australia needs its absolute best from all of us to ensure that the outcomes there are strong ones.

I do not disagree with the words; it may be that we have debates about the actions underneath them many times, but I do commend you on the words and hope that the outcomes from it are strong for all of us because we want our regions to be the best they can. It is for that reason that I do not question the commitment that you have given to Peterborough council for its community development officer for the \$120,000 because, as a former employee of that community, I accept that there are challenges there. I am pleased to see there is some direct support happening. I commend you on that. With those brief words, I will ask some questions for the next 58 minutes or so. We are going to swap over, are we not, Chair? Do I get the full run at this or are we going to swap and have some questions from the government on this?

The CHAIR: I think there are some important questions flagged from the other side, yes.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: As do I, that is just it—as do I. Pleased to hear that.

The CHAIR: We will see what sort of roll you get on.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I just wanted to clarify what was going on. Minister, for me this is a numbers-based question but the numbers drive the outcomes, too. I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, under the program summary on expenditures between the 2014-15 budget and the 2014-15 estimated result: you did not spend all the money.

The CHAIR: Member for Goyder, can you just give us a line, please.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I do not need to give you a line, surely.

The Hon. P. CAICA: Page 34.

The CHAIR: Alright, yes.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I have given the reference; I am not going to point to it on the page for you, Chair.

The CHAIR: I beg your pardon; what did you say?

Mr GRIFFITHS: I am not going to point to it on the page for you, Chair.

The CHAIR: No, I asked what page. I did not ask where on the page.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Sorry, I thought that everyone could hear that. It is page 34. The budget was \$32.92 million for grants and the actual expenditure was \$9.264 million. Why is there such a discrepancy?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: There is an explanation between the funds committed and the funds expended. I will ask Stephen Johninke to explain the issue and how it works out, because it is to do with the expenditure committed and actual expended funds.

Mr GRIFFITHS: It does give some commentary as to why the differences exist so I can appreciate that but the question that I pose is more to your responsibility to ensure that the programs that are in the budget adopted last year were actually expended in the 2014-15 budget. It is more of the policy driver question that I asked you as to why such a significant decrease in what was there to be spent was actually spent.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: If you will bear with us for a couple of minutes, the issue is that we commit funds to a project, the funds may not be expended in that particular year because of the construction period, until such time as it goes through the contract details. I will get the finance people to explain that in more detail and if there are any other questions I am happy to answer them.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I am not sure if I need to explain the detail because the budget papers actually detail the discrepancies and why it is.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Do you want to know why they are—

Mr GRIFFITHS: Absolutely, minister.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: That is what we are trying to do, Mr Chair. We are trying to explain to the member why the—

The CHAIR: Take your time; you do not have to explain that you are explaining.

Mr JOHNINKE: As the minister has noted, the regional development grant programs are paid in arrears, in that the work has to be undertaken before the funding is reimbursed to the entities involved. PIRSA has a significant ongoing grants allocation for all the ongoing regional grant programs. Where the actual expenditure associated with those allocations spans financial years, we seek carryover approval. To date that has been approved. Carryover will not just be into 2015-16, given the breadth of grants and grant recipients we are talking about. We have already received approval to carry over expenditure beyond 2015-16, based on our anticipated expenditure profile.

Mr GRIFFITHS: To clarify, I understand that the timing is critical when it comes to cash flows. My point of view, though, and I should have made this clearer at the start, is the timing of the announcement of the programs, for example, with the Job Accelerator Fund, minister. I commend you on getting \$10 million committed towards that. I understand that it includes a \$2 million carryover in the 2015-16 year that is relevant to that, but my understanding is that the Job Accelerator Fund guidelines were not determined until late in November 2014.

Given the challenges that regional South Australia faces, and for Yorke, the Mid North and our own area the budget papers highlight that the average unemployment during 2014 was about 8.8 per cent, surely there is the imperative to get these things out quickly. So, when asking the question about the delays in the dollar spend, it comes back to the portfolio responsibility for you for ensuring that the guidelines are finalised, the programs are out there and the dollars happen.

I understand there is a lag time, particularly in a new program like that, and you have broken it up into three or four components of that, but my concern still comes back to the timeliness of it all. For example, if we can go to the Job Accelerator Fund, why was it not until November before the guidelines were finalised and grants were able to be applied for?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Are you talking about the RDF fund?

Mr GRIFFITHS: No, the Job Accelerator Fund, which is still under the same grants and subsidies line on page 34.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: It is a challenge, as the member said, but we needed to get this right and we believe we have it right now. We are carrying it over, we have the \$10 million for the Job Accelerator Fund, which I think the member is talking about. We have asked for some carryover, which is for the traineeship, and we wanted to make certain we had everything right and we want to make certain we do not waste this money out there and we believe we have everything right now.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Minister, I appreciate that, but my very clear recollection in estimates last year, when asking you a question about the guidelines for the Job Accelerator Fund, you referred to a meeting in August of that year where Mr Rob Chapman had been appointed by you to lead a group to determine the guidelines for it—that was my recollection.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Which Mr Chapman is that?

Mr GRIFFITHS: The person who used to be involved in banking.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Rob Chapman?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes. Maybe I am wrong about that. The personality is not as important as the August meeting that you advised me about, and then the 3½ month delay before the guidelines were finalised. I want to ensure, as I am sure you do, that that information goes out to people quickly, dollars are available to people quickly and opportunities are taken up quickly. That is the basis of what I am asking.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The RDF guidelines are already there, as you know. We did consult on the design of the Job Accelerator Fund; it was something different. I am sure I have given the member a briefing on this subject. We divided the \$1.6 million, I think it was, into the Indigenous outback; \$4 million into a loan section, which we negotiated with some people about utilising for loans for projects; and \$2 million for the traineeship, which was just announced recently. I stand corrected: there was \$2.6 million from the Job Accelerator Fund across into the RDF fund, and we got cabinet approval for that, too, because of the demand or the expressions of interest. The Job Accelerator Fund is out there now and the only thing we have to wait on is the acceptance towards the \$4 million of the loan project program.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Mr Chair, if I may: page 34, still on grants and subsidies. I understand that, but you still have not actually spoken about—if we can go back to July when I asked estimates of last year, between then and November when the guidelines for Job Accelerator were finalised, why did it take one-third of a year to do so?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I reiterate: we had some different views about the thing, and we just wanted to make certain we got it right. I make no bones about making certain we get the expenditure right to ensure we are going in the right direction. I am not too sure where the member

is coming from that they took another couple of months. We have made the commitment, and I have briefed the member previously. We have committed it; the guidelines are there. We just wanted to make certain we had everything right.

Mr PICTON: My question is in relation to Budget Paper 4, program 3 on page 34. I wonder if the minister can outline the outcomes from the inaugural Regional Summit?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for his question. As we know, my agreement with the Premier, as outlined in the Charter for Stronger Regional Policy, includes the commitment that the state government, in conjunction with the three South Australian universities, will hold an annual regional summit to receive independent expert policy advice. The inaugural regional summit was held at Whyalla Golf Club on Wednesday 20 May, as most people here are aware.

It was attended by over 140 people and cost approximately \$30,000, which was shared between Regions SA and the Department of State Development. Given the focus on collaboration with the three South Australian universities, it was determined that the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, the Hon. Gail Gago MLC, and the Department of State Development (DSD) would lead the organisation and delivery of the summit, with support from myself and Regions SA.

The inaugural Regional Summit had a positive economic impact on the Whyalla local community. The Whyalla Golf Club, local audio-visual technicians and a local master of ceremonies were hired. A local caterer was used. The catering sourced local produce and wine. The Country Women's Association of Whyalla, the Norrie branch, supplied morning and afternoon tea using local ingredients and the CWA merchandise was included in the presenters' gift bag. 140 people visited Whyalla on the day. These people hired taxis and hired rental vehicles, and some stayed overnight at local accommodation.

A post-summit survey was conducted, and the results highlight approximately 70 per cent of the people rated the inaugural summit as good or very good. Presentations by myself, the Premier, Professor Andrew Beer, Jill and Brian Wilson of Wilson's Pastoral, and John Phinney of Sundrop Farms, were rated as highly valuable aspects of the summit. Approximately 80 per cent of the people said they will attend the summit next year, and approximately 70 per cent said future summits should be held in regional areas.

Mr PICTON: I would like to ask a question on the same budget paper. Will the minister please explain to the committee how country cabinet meetings are benefiting regional communities in which they are held?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Again, I thank the member for his question. As one of the key state government commitments contained in the Charter for Stronger Regional Policy, the Premier and cabinet ministers will visit three regions each year, and these visits will include country cabinet meetings. Country Cabinet met in the Riverland, the Adelaide Hills, Mount Barker and Alexandrina, and the West Coast during 2014. These visits were highly popular and we received the warmest of welcomes from the communities we visited.

Country cabinet meetings have continued in 2015, and again I am overwhelmed by the warm welcome and genuine encouragement we receive from the communities we visit. Feedback on issues that emerged during country cabinet from events held during the visit, as well as issues raised by the community through the YourSAy website, are collated, and the feedback is then used to develop an issues paper which is published on the YourSAy website, providing the regional community further chances to provide comment.

Government agencies provide a response to the issues that they are responsible for, and a report is released or back within 90 days of the country cabinet event. The 2014 reports are on the website, and the report from the most recent country cabinet, which was held in the Mid North, has also been published.

Another outcome from country cabinet is individual ministerial announcements. For example, to gain a sense of what might be the most significant way the government could provide assistance, I met with local community leaders in Peterborough, including the mayor and Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North.

These people agreed that there was an urgent need for government services to be better coordinated, and the importance of having a physical presence at a central location in the town to support those requirements. As a result, I announced that I would be providing funding for a community development officer to be located in a one-stop shop in the main street of Peterborough. The position will be delivered on behalf of the state government, where regional development—

Mr GRIFFITHS: Excuse me, minister, can I just make a point of order. Minister, I appreciate the information the first time, but not necessarily the second time.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I will leave that go.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Thank you.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The state government is committed to stronger, more sustainable regions and the delivery of crucial regional infrastructure. These announcements are examples of ways in which this commitment is being realised. Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation (Hon. Ian Hunter) announced a new conservation park in South Australia's Mid North which was protected by the important sections of Burra Creek.

Acting health minister (Hon. Martin Hamilton-Smith) announced the opening of a new private clinic at Peterborough Hospital, providing the Mid North with much-needed access to oral services and care. This was a great example of a successful public-private partnership, and as the only dental clinic in Peterborough, it provides an important health service to the local community.

Minister Bignell, minister Mullighan and I announced a release of a modern transport system for agriculture, a new partnership approach project, which was identified as one of a number of reform initiatives across the state aimed at ensuring more efficient and less costly transport for primary producers. The project is already seeing recommendations in action, with the approval of quad road trains now operating between Port Augusta and the Northern Territory border, and between Pimba and Olympic Dam. The government will be implementing a range of other measures to boost regional transport productivity in coming months, including the introduction of tri-axle vehicles.

Country cabinet is absolutely providing results for regional communities. It gives the community an opportunity to speak to ministers directly about issues close to their heart. Regional communities also get to hear firsthand the result of these conversations when the government announces its support for regional communities, both socially and economically, and the material outcomes that I have described. In closing, country cabinets are a great asset to the regions and a great asset for all ministers.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 106 of the Budget Statement document, where it talks about the Regional South Australia Cabinet Committee, and your opening words, minister, where you refer to the committee being made up of four or five ministers. Is a schedule of those meetings available or are they held on an ad hoc basis? Do you attend all of those meetings and can you confirm if any of those ministers have been apologies at any of those meetings so far?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Mr Chair, these are regular cabinet committee meetings.

Mr GRIFFITHS: And?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am not going to comment on who attends cabinet committee meetings. They are in the diary on a regular basis.

Mr GRIFFITHS: From my understanding, in future the cabinet can mean a subcommittee of the cabinet and not necessarily the full cabinet.

The CHAIR: Hang on, minister, I will get some advice on that.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Sure. The reason for my questions is that it actually details quite a bit of the activities of the committee on page 106 and therefore what they do is not secretive.

The CHAIR: Member for Goyder, subcommittees of cabinet are treated the same way as cabinet, and we do not discuss what happens in cabinet.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: You have asked the question. What are you looking for?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Have you attended all of those, have there been any apologies, are they held on an ad hoc basis or are they scheduled? You have mentioned that they are in your diary on a regular basis, I appreciate that. That is what I asked for.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: They are regular programs.

Mr GRIFFITHS: And it appears as though any other question on that cannot be answered.

The CHAIR: The minister can answer it in the way he wishes, but you have no right to demand answers about proceedings of cabinet or subcommittees.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I have in my opening speech mentioned the cabinet committee and its chair. On page 106 it is called a cabinet committee. I am chairing that. They are on a regular basis and the members are on page 106. I have made comment about who the members of that cabinet committee are and I think that is as far as I will go.

Mr GRIFFITHS: If I may seek some clarification, does the cabinet committee actually consider the need for regional impact assessment statements?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Mr Chair, I certainly do not believe that I should be discussing what happens in a cabinet committee.

The CHAIR: Yes, I concur. I rule that way; you do not have to.

Mr GRIFFITHS: The role is explained, as I understand it, on page 106. If I may, I will go to a different question, still with the same budget paper reference. It is about the regional statement, one which was released by the previous minister for local government in December 2013. As part of the minister's responsibilities, does the minister intend to update that document?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I think the member is referring to what the previous minister for regional development indicated, is that correct?

Mr GRIFFITHS: It is.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: In December 2013 the state government published a Regional Statement for South Australia following extensive consultation and feedback on a draft document released on 18 December 2012. The regional statement brought together current government plans, strategies and services with regional plans and roadmap ideas, and highlighted how we will consolidate and build upon current initiatives to help ensure our regional communities are prosperous, healthy, educated and safe.

The regional statement was developed around four themes that regional communities, Regional Development Australia associations and the Local Government Association of South Australia identified through the consultation process; namely, a commitment for regions, working together, empowering regional communities and aligning regional priorities. The regional statement highlights to regional communities and government agencies the linkage between government plans, strategies, programs and services.

It reaffirms the government's commitment to regional areas by emphasising the importance of regional communities to the continuing economic development of the state, including new opportunities for major resources and other projects. It builds on South Australia's Strategic Plan by working closely with relevant state agencies and key stakeholders.

More recently, the government's commitment to regions has been further strengthened through my agreement with the Premier, with the government committing to a range of initiatives and a \$39 million funding package for 2014-15 for regional South Australia.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Is this one of last year's packages?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: That is what we are doing now—

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes; in 2013-14?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Since early July I have been holding roadshows across regional South Australia to listen and to understand how we can best assist with achieving regional priorities. The focus is on jobs, investment, economic diversity and creating the links to inform government policy that will promote improved regional economic and social outcomes. This will provide strong support for the state's 10 economic priorities, building on the strength of regional economies, which drive around half of South Australia's gross state product.

So far Regions SA has held five roadshows with key regional leaders, including participants from local councils as well as the business and community sector. I have travelled to Rowland Flat in the Barossa Valley for the Barossa, Light and Lower North region roadshow. For Adelaide Hills and the Fleurieu, the road show was held in Strathalbyn, and Port Augusta was the location for the Far North region roadshow, where we had the pleasure of being hosted in the magnificent new sports facility in that community.

The Murray and Mallee region roadshow was held last week at the Pike River Eco Resort at Lyrup, and then I returned to my home town of Port Pirie, where we held the Yorke and Mid-North region roadshow at the Flinders Motel on Main last week. Three more roadshows will be held over the next couple of weeks in Mount Gambier, Kingscote, and Port Lincoln to complete the series and cover all regions across the state

I have made it clear that the purpose of these roadshows is to identify the top priorities where a partnership between the region and the state government is essential to have the most impact. This is about accelerating each region's ability to take action. I have committed to listening and understanding the issues, and therefore I have taken part in the workshops and stayed throughout the day, speaking with people, so that I can gain a deeper insight into the opportunities and the challenges to be addressed in those regions.

I made it clear that my expectation is that those present would have the chance to nominate their top issues and that we would identify actions to take over the next three months to three years. I believe we need to be focused, given that we do not have unlimited resources, and we need to tackle those issues which are most critical. I have committed to progressing issues on a statewide level where they are raised across multiple regions, as well as region-specific priorities. Working together is key, as no single body or sector can bring about significant change on its own. The roadshows are all about action: about getting change happening to advance regional economic development.

I committed at these roadshows to getting back to the participants soon after the event with a summary of the day, highlighting the priorities identified, and then to work on priorities in partnership with the RDAs and local stakeholders. Feedback from participants was very positive. People were pleased to see a broad spectrum of participants brought together to talk about regional-level issues. They also appreciated the action orientation of the event and the chance to hear about some of the great things happening across the state to drive change, such as the recent 90-day transport project, which has already started to deliver productivity benefits to the agriculture and transport sectors.

I also made it clear that I am committed to holding another series of roadshows in 12 months' time, where we would report back on what actions have been taken and how we have addressed these priorities. It is my vision to put regions in focus and to ensure that the contribution and role of regional communities remains a key focus of government priorities, and to work in partnership with all involved.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I appreciate the detail provided there, minister. While there is a commitment in the next calendar year for the roadshows to occur again, is there a collective form of document being developed from it? The first part of my question related to the regional statement, which is rather outdated, because it would not reflect initiatives that your appointment as a minister created opportunity for. From the need to update that document, and roadshows and the issues identified—and there would be some commonality across regions. I do not want bureaucracy to be bogged down in this, but is there some form of wider ranging document, not just for accountability from your perspective but an understanding from all who have the opportunity to look at it to see that, 'Yes, the

government is working on this, this, this and this, or this exists to try to help this.' Is that sort of thing being done?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: As I said, we are out with the roadshows at the moment and it is not collaboration, it is listening to what those people have to say. We have seven regions in South Australia. We are collating all that information and bringing it all together. A regional directions paper will be brought back as we go along. Again, we need to get our facts and a basic plan, because each region is unique and everyone has different priorities.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I appreciate the minister's answer on the regional directions paper. If I may ask a question about regional impact assessment statements (RIAS), given that they are highlighted on page 107 of Budget Paper 2, Volume 3. We have had questions in the chamber, and discussions, about the regional impact assessment statements. I believe there is one now for the Snowtown police station, but before that the only additions from last year's questioning to you about them I think was the guidelines, based around how they would operate the RIAS.

I have a particular concern of a RIAS not having been prepared for the marine parks, which was a significant policy. Anyone who looks at the fact that the RIAS is actually prepared when significant change is to occur—you have required, as part of an indication of support for legislation with the government, that one has to be done based around 1 October, which I believe is the date. However, as part of the collection of that information for that regional impact assessment statement, are you advised or briefed on issues as they are arising, not just at the end of the 12-month period from the sanctuary zones being implemented?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: To clarify, are you talking about the marine parks?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: This matter relates to the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Water and the River Murray, Hon. Ian Hunter MLC, as you are aware. However, I can confirm that the government is committed to preparing regional impact assessment statements in relation to sanctuary zone impacts at Port Wakefield, Ceduna and Kangaroo Island. On 18 September 2014, the government committed to preparing the regional impact assessment statements for Port Wakefield, Ceduna and Kangaroo Island to assess the implementation of marine park sanctuary zones. The regional impact assessment statements are on track to be completed by 1 October 2015.

I am advised that the Department of Environment Water and Natural Resources has engaged the Goyder Institute for Water Research and the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies to prepare regional impact assessment statements (RIAS) for Kangaroo Island, Ceduna and Port Wakefield. The RIAS will investigate any social or economic effect on these areas that may result from sanctuary zones which came into effect on 1 October 2014. I understand that the results of the three regional impact assessment statements will be used to inform the ongoing marine parks monitoring, evaluation and reporting program, and the future review of the marine park management plan, as required by the Marine Parks Act 2007.

The Goyder Institute for Water Research has allocated \$202,016 to the preparation of these regional impact assessment statements. I am advised that the regional impact statements are on track to be completed by 1 October 2015. The Draft Marine Parks (Statutory Authorisation Compensation) regulations were released for a six-week public consultation period on 3 July 2015, and submissions close on 14 August 2015. The draft regulations support section 21 of the Marine Parks Act 2007, which deals with affected statutory authorisations compulsory acquisition and associated processes for determining fair and reasonable compensation. The aim of the regulations is to provide a clear process for those intending to apply for compensation under the Marine Parks Act 2007. Applications for compensation are not dependent on finalisation of the regulations.

At this time, the number and merit of any compensation claims, and therefore the cost of any future compensation claims, is not known. But if I could reiterate, I have regular meetings with minister Hunter, and PIRSA is also on the marine park RIAS working group.

Ms DIGANCE: I will continue on Budget Paper 4, Program 3 statement, page 34. I think you have touched on this, but I wonder could you please provide the estimates committee with a comprehensive update on the Regional Development Fund?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the honourable member for her question. The significantly enhanced Regional Development Fund (RDF) will deliver greater support for projects that provide better infrastructure, drive economic growth, create jobs and leverage increased investment in regional South Australia. In the 2014-15 financial year, over 200 expressions of interest were received, seeking a total grant volume of over \$100 million from the Regional Development Fund, excluding the country cabinet program.

I have been delighted with the outcome of the RDF grants program for the 2014-15 financial year. So far, the RDF will support 40 separate projects, which will lead to the creation of 653 new jobs in regional South Australia and generate investment of more than \$334 million. Among the grant recipients was the Sundrop Farm, which will receive \$6 million towards a 20-hectare expansion of its greenhouse business at Port Augusta, involving at least 100 jobs during construction and about 150 in operation.

The RDF grants program met its objective of driving economic growth and productivity in the 2014-15 year by investing in projects that will create jobs and new opportunities for regional South Australia. In 2015-16, there is still a high demand for grant assistance, as evidenced by the large numbers of inquiries to Regions SA requesting expressions of interest, where 158 expression of interest forms were sent out in April and May of this year.

The RDF 2015-16 grant round consists of three grant programs. The first one is a major projects program to support major economic projects that create sustainable economic benefits to the state or the broader region. Funding for this program can be provided, from \$200,000 to a maximum of \$2 million, with leveraged funding at a minimum ratio of \$3 for every \$1 of grant.

The second program is a community infrastructure program to support investment in regional communities to develop economic infrastructure and grow their capabilities as a foundation for future jobs and economic growth. Funding for the community infrastructure program can be provided from \$200,000 to a maximum of \$1 million, with leveraged funding at a minimum ratio of \$2 for every \$1 grant. Thirdly, the country cabinet program, worth \$150,000 per year, is part of the country cabinet.

There were 88 expressions of interest received in round 2, with the funding sought so far exceeding the amount of grant funding available. Forty expressions of interest seeking a total of more than \$50 million have been shortlisted for full application. Thus far the Regional Development Fund's program has produced some great results that will have a positive and lasting impact on regional communities in South Australia.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Member for Elder do you have another question?

Ms DIGANCE: Yes, I do, thanks. Minister, it is to do with Regional Development Australia. Will the minister please advise the committee what financial commitments the state government has made to the Regional Development Australia associations in South Australia?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you, Mr Chair, and again I thank the honourable member for her question. The state government has developed strong relationships with the South Australian RDAs. The RDA program is a nationwide commonwealth initiative, and in South Australia it was based on a tripartite understanding between the commonwealth, state and local governments. Importantly, this collaborative approach acknowledges the existing and separate relationships that each party has within the three spheres of government, and the benefits that these relationships can bring to maximising investment for regional development.

I acknowledge and appreciate the RDA funding from the commonwealth government and the local councils as part of the RDA program. In the past, funding for RDAs from the regional development portfolio contributed to an administrative and operational expenditure of RDAs. RDAs commonly refer to this as core funding. In 2010, a decision was made to cease funding to RDAs as the federal government established and funded RDAs throughout the nation. The RDAs were advised at this time. That funding was worth \$3.98 million excluding GST.

Funding was provided to individual RDAs through five-year funding agreements and was contractually tied to co-contributions from local councils on a \$3 to \$1 basis, that is the state and the

local. A range of governance, administrative and operational obligations were required of RDAs, which is no longer the case.

In 2014, Regions SA worked with the RDAs to establish a new framework for regional collaboration which recognises that both parties have a strong alignment of roles and responsibilities for advancing the economic prosperity and growth of the regions. RDAs will provide a three-year project plan outlining how the funds will be used. RDAs were also consulted on funding arrangements for the next three years and collectively determined the distribution of the \$3 million per year between their associations. In a tight budgetary environment, this is a significant investment of public funds.

The RDAs will receive state funding to identify and drive priority activities that will generate economic development in regional areas, taking into account the resources and aspirations of communities, as well as the plans and priorities of governments; assist stakeholders and proponents to develop viable project proposals and access funding sources; provide advice to governments on current issues, challenges and opportunities in regional areas; and assist with promoting awareness of government initiatives and access to government programs.

This distribution sees state government funding provided to RDAs based on agreed grant funding guidelines that incorporate activities for all three tiers of government and that provide for a renewed emphasis on regional economic development. In particular, the funding will be directed towards growing regional economies, improving infrastructure and creating sustainable jobs.

The result of this funding arrangement is that the South Australian government is now the major funding partner of South Australian RDAs. The state government funding will enable RDAs to undertake a broad range of activities that will drive economic development and make a real and lasting difference in regional communities. In addition to the funding that is provided directly to RDAs, the RDAs are also eligible to apply for grants from the expanded \$15 million Regional Development Fund. RDAs can identify projects that are being considered in their communities and ensure that all available avenues are pursued to progress them.

Therefore, the RDAs are able to provide advice and assistance to proponents in assessing not only the \$15 million Regional Development Fund but also the federal government's National Stronger Regions Fund. The RDA role in identifying and facilitating funding for priority projects in the past has been vital and doubtless the RDAs will continue to make a valuable contribution in this regard in the coming years.

I am confident that the funding arrangements that have been put in place for the RDAs for the next three years will enable them to achieve some fantastic results for regional South Australia. The RDAs collaboratively determined the regional distribution of the funding based on the competitive needs of each region. The RDA Barossa asked for \$380,000; the RDA Limestone Coast, \$400,000—this is for 2015-16 to 2017-18—RDA Far North, \$400,000; RDA Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, \$425,000; RDA Murraylands and Riverland, \$450,000; RDA Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula, \$470,000; and RDA Yorke and Mid North, \$475,000. Again, I compliment the work of the RDAs across all of South Australia.

The CHAIR: Member for Goyder, do you have any more questions?

Mr GRIFFITHS: I do, Chair, but the member for Mount Gambier has asked permission to ask a question of the minister.

The CHAIR: Go ahead.

Mr BELL: Budget Paper 3, Budget Statement, page 106 to do with the country cabinet committee. Could you explain why it has taken seven months between the first country cabinet meeting to occur and the one scheduled for October 2015? Would you agree that, if you do not achieve the promised three visits per year, it is an indication that the committee has lost interest in the regions? You met in March 2015 and your next one is October 2015, and I am wondering why the seven-month delay, and will you get the three in this year? That is the crux of it.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: We will achieve three every year. The frequency and the location is determined in conjunction with myself and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr BELL: And the reason for the seven-month delay?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I do not have the exact reason here but obviously we have to mix in with the availability of all ministers and also with the sitting of parliament. I cannot give you a definite answer but I guarantee—

Mr BELL: But you can give a commitment that it will be—

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I can give you a commitment that there will be three every year.

Mr GRIFFITHS: If I may return to the Regional Impact Assessment Statement. I appreciate the response provided by the minister to the last question that I asked on that. Indeed, as part of that, he referred to regular meetings that he had with minister Hunter about the marine park and the RIAS for that. Can I just seek some clarification, though, because in listening to the minister on radio one day—I hope I am correct and not putting this incorrectly— but my recollection is that he said that no matter what the input is or the feedback is, there will not be any changes to the sanctuary zones. That is my recollection of what he said. In the discussions that the minister has held with minister Hunter, is there an understanding from you that if changes are required changes will be made?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I think the member for Goyder can recall he asked this question in the chamber and I answered the question in the chamber.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I remember the day well, minister. Can I ask then how many meetings have you had with minister Hunter about the marine parks RIAS?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I know they are scheduled on a regular basis, bearing in mind we have to collate the meetings between the ministers and my visits into the regions, which is very important. I have regular meetings, and I think it is on around a monthly basis. I cannot give you the exact dates.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I take your word on the monthly basis. Have any issues arisen during those discussions such that you felt that an adjustment to policy needed to occur?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: To date, the RIAS, as we indicated earlier—I think the Institute of Goyder and SACES are fulfilling that. I have not been advised of anything outstanding at this point.

Mr GRIFFITHS: To clarify, do you see any form of regular update as part of that 12-month cycle before the final report has to be handed down? Are reports given to you on an interim basis?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The RIAS are still being finalised from discussions. Michael O'Neill has been out to all the different regions, and he is collating that. It will be coming back to me. In discussions nothing has been brought to my attention at this point. As I said earlier, the RIAS are being handled by minister Ian Hunter MLC, but nothing has come to my attention at this point.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Have residents of the communities of Kangaroo Island, Ceduna and Port Wakefield that you have referred to contacted you about the marine park sanctuary zones, and have you found it necessary to take up discussions on those communities' behalf with minister Hunter?

Mr PICTON: On a point of order, Chair, what budget reference is this pertaining to?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Page 107.

The CHAIR: You could loosely draw that link, but I do not think the minister needs to go into conversations he has had with other ministers. This is examining his responsibility in terms of the appropriation.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Absolutely.

The CHAIR: Alright. So, the minister does not need to detail his meetings with minister Hunter.

Mr BELL: Unless he is willing to do so.

The CHAIR: Unless he is willing to do so. I am advising that he does not need to.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: To answer the question, minister Hunter gives me a progress, as I indicated. I had a phone call last week from one person in Port Wakefield, and other than that there has been no contact to me directly.

The Hon. P. CAICA: I refer to page 34 of Budget Paper 4, portfolio statements Volume 4, Program 3. Minister, can you please explain how the government is continuing to support the key outcomes of the Limestone Coast Economic Diversification Forum, as detailed by the region's business and community leaders?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the honourable member for his question. In 2012 the Limestone Coast experienced a significant downturn in some of its key industries, including forest processing and dairying, and the regional leaders came to the state government requesting assistance to look at options for diversifying the economy.

The Premier convened a forum in September of that year, bringing together the Limestone Coast businesses and community leaders, to identify the key priorities for the region. The task for implementing these was picked up by a regional group under the framework of the South-East Local Government Association (SELGA). The work of the Limestone Coast Economic Diversification Group is currently orientated around several projects, including fostering collaboration within and across all industry, and mobilising industry and business leaders.

The state government has been pleased to support one of these projects through the 2014-15 Regional Department Fund, the Regional Food Initiatives Program. The Limestone Coast collaborative received \$80,000 over two years and has employed a part-time project officer to implement this project plan. This group of like-minded organisations and individuals came together out of a leader's forum convened by the Limestone Coast Economic Diversification Group. The focus is on capacity building for agriculture, food, wine and tourism businesses and, through collaboration, development of a regional brand.

In this financial year, the state government is pleased to partner with Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast by contributing \$15,000 to further foster and mobilise industry and business leaders. The Regional Leadership Development Program intends to develop an overarching framework for a regional emerging and alumni leadership program that is supported by businesses willing to fund and sustain it long term. Following the identification of the best fit model for the region, a process for implementation will be developed, including engaging with regional businesses and identifying potential participants.

To develop and gain support for implementing these projects, the Limestone Coast Economic Diversification Group has engaged with all levels of government, industry and business leaders, and across the education, research and development sectors. As intended, the group has been successful in informing the projects and programs of the state government's strategic priorities of 'Premium food and wine from our clean environment' and also 'Growing advanced manufacturing'.

The membership of the group includes representatives from the South East Local Government Association, Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast and the South East Natural Resource Management Board. It continues to work with the state government through Primary Industries and Regions SA and the Department of State Development, the Australian government through the Department for Industry, and with the 2012 forum facilitator Mr Dennis Mutton as required.

I look forward to discussing progress of the diversification of the region's economy as well as understanding other priorities and issues of concern when I meet with businesses and community leaders in the Limestone Coast as part of the Regional Roadshow program, which will be held in August 2015.

The Hon. P. CAICA: Again, Budget Paper 4, Program 3 in the agency statements, page 34—minister, can you provide details of any program in the Job Accelerator Fund that specifically targets the employment of young people in regional areas?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Again, I thank the honourable member for his question. As part of the state government's \$10 million Jobs Accelerator Fund, a \$2 million Regional Youth Traineeship Program will be offered to all 57 regional local governing bodies which, for the sake of simplicity, I am calling 'councils' but which comprise regional councils, the Outback Communities Authority, Aboriginal community councils, and the APY and Maralinga areas. The state government funding

will take the form of a grant for part of the costs of employing each of 57 trainees for two years, with the participating councils contributing the remaining funding.

Each council will receive up to \$14,500 per annum, or \$29,000 over two years, independent of individual council awards and enterprise bargaining conditions. The individual council is responsible for all other costs in engaging the trainee. The purpose of the program is to assist each council to offer entry-level employment to a young person aged 17 to 24 who is a resident of regional South Australia to increase workforce participation. This program aims to assist young people in regional areas to participate in the labour market through paid full-time work and education and training or combined learning and work.

The selection criteria for the program will consider an applicant's previous work history, with a preference given to those who have not previously been employed. The program will be delivered by the Local Government Association of South Australia on behalf of the state government. It is intended that trainees who have successfully met the set criteria could be offered an ongoing entry-level role after the completion of the traineeship depending on council priorities and funding. Trainee opportunities are likely to involve office work such as administration, IT, website development or accounting, or skilled outdoor work such as horticulture, parks and gardens, or welding or mechanical.

The traineeship is full-time for 24 months from commencement, and the level of training is envisaged to be at Australian Qualification Framework level 3 or above. The program is designed to create sufficient incentive for regional local governing authorities to continue employing these trainees following the conclusion of the program. In closing, I think this program is being well received by all councils across regional South Australia.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Minister, I will refer back to the regional impact assessments again. This one is about WorkReady, which I understand is not a portfolio responsibility of yours, but impacts on regional South Australia, so I am referring it back to page 107 of Budget Paper 3, where you talk about regional impact assessment statements. There is quite a bit of paperwork on that.

I presume that you would have sought and been provided with briefings prior to the announcement of the policy change in mid-May—so only a couple of months ago. Were there any issues attached to that that you expressed concerns about and believed that a RIAS should have been undertaken for?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for Goyder for his question. This is a matter of importance to regional communities, and it is of interest to me as Minister for Regional Development. However, this matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of another minister in the other place, and so, with respect, I would suggest that you refer this question to that minister so you can receive the most appropriate accurate response. I am led to understand that minister Gago has already faced the estimates committee.

Mr GRIFFITHS: If I may just add to that, minister, I am certainly aware that the minister has met with—

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I apologise, I meant the minister in this place (the Legislative Council), not in the other place.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes, I did know what you meant. I am aware that minister Gago (from this place) has indeed met with various RTOs from regional areas. I do not necessarily need to provide you with feedback on that; they have spoken to me about it. My understanding is that RTOs have also contacted you directly, and I believe that you have had a conversation with at least one RTO. Has there been any outcome, from your point of view, from that discussion? Did you give them any assurances of things that you would undertake, and has that occurred?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Mr Chairman, as the member for Goyder is, I think, well aware, Caroline—

Mr GRIFFITHS: Graham.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: —Graham came in and saw me. Yes, I gave a commitment to talk to minister Gago, which I have, and my understanding is that there are discussions with minister Gago and Ms Graham going on at the moment.

Mr GRIFFITHS: If I can just seek clarification please. Minister, thank you for the detail. So, have you relayed that back to Mrs Graham? I have not asked her this, so I do not know. I am not trying to trap you out on this, but I just want to make sure that there is an opportunity for the information that presumably Mrs Graham, on behalf of her own organisation and other RTOs in regional South Australia, provided to you about the concerns on WorkReady so that there is feedback actually occurring.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I have not spoken to Ms Graham personally, but I will take that on board. I am sure that we would have communicated with her, but I cannot answer that question at the moment for the member. Certainly, she is the only one who has spoken to me, to my recollection.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Minister, if I can refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, page 35. This is a numbers-based question. You actually highlight, at about the two-thirds spot on that page, that there are 48.1 FTEs for the 2015-16 budget. Can you just confirm how many of those actually operate within the regions and how many are based within the metropolitan area?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: To answer the member, Regions SA has 29. Of those, we have five regional coordinators and the rest are other people coming out of Regions SA's allocation who go out into the regions. Regions SA has 29 and, of those, five are regional coordinators.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Given that the budget papers show 48.1, can you clarify where the other 19 are?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I will get Mr Frater to elaborate on that further.

Mr FRATER: The previous decision to create Regions SA was for an employment figure of around 30 FTEs. We are currently running at around 29. In addition, there are nine staff in the minister's office. Also, there is an indigenous economic development initiative; there is one staff member working on that. The remaining 9.1 staff are what is called the overhead allocation, where they take all the corporate, all the ICT, all the other processes and they smear them across the rest of the department.

Mr GRIFFITHS: My thanks, Mr Frater, for the details on that. I refer to Budget Paper 3, page 112. It is a question about the Skills for Jobs in Regions program, which was part of last year's budget papers. I am just seeking some clarification on whether that program still exists. For example, a commitment was given prior to the 2014 election to expand the Skills for Jobs in Regions by \$213,000 per year over the next four years to help an additional 1,000 older South Australians, and the 2014-15 budget includes the expansion of the same program, which will target communities facing the greatest employment challenges with the goal of 6,000 more people in jobs over the next three years. Does the Skills for Jobs in Regions program still exist?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: What page was that?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Page 112, minister. I will accept some criticism for being creative with my reference. It talks about population and unemployment. This program is a strong driver of employment opportunity and helping fix our unemployment in regional South Australia. It quotes the statistics there, which are rather concerning. Is the minister able to confirm whether that program still exists?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for the question. Again, this matter is of great importance to the whole state, to regional communities, and it is of interest to me as the Minister for Regional Development, but as this comes under the portfolio of minister Gago I would, with respect, suggest that you refer this question to her so that you can receive a most appropriate and accurate response. It is minister Gago's portfolio.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I do respect that, and I know that I was being creative in the reference page that I gave, but I would have hoped that, as part of the substantial information that is no doubt provided to you as part of the estimates process, details of programs as they operate in regional in

South Australia would have been provided to you. That is why I wanted to put some clarification there.

Ms DIGANCE: I would like to take the committee's attention back to Budget Paper 4, Volume 4, Program 3, page 34. Will the minister explain how the state government's support of the South Australian Regional Awards assists in delivering Primary Industries and Regions SA's objective of facilitating strong, vibrant and sustainable regional industries and communities?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the honourable member for her question. The South Australian Regional Awards, coordinated by Brand SA, are held annually across the state to celebrate and showcase the achievements of individuals, groups and organisations contributing to regional South Australia. The program provides a benchmark for excellence by publicly recognising the achievements and successes of those who make a difference to the state's seven regions.

The awards reward and provide a standard for excellence within regional South Australia in all sectors, including small business, sport, the arts, food, wine and tourism. PIRSA, through its Regions SA division, is the major partner for the 2015 South Australian Regional Awards and the category sponsor of the Premium Food and Wine from our Clean Environment—Wine Award.

The 2014 regional awards, which were also sponsored by PIRSA, saw 2,346 nominations and 646 entries received across state—the highest figures the program has ever received. The 2015 nominations have now closed, and Brand SA has again reported excellent responses across each of the categories in all regions. The presentation evenings will be held across the state during October for the 2015 awards. Again, I will be attempting to get to as many as those as I can, and I encourage all local members to attend as well.

Through its involvement in the judging process and presentation evenings in each of the seven regions, PIRSA will continue to collaborate to support regional stakeholders and identify future opportunities for growth and sustainability across all regional economic sectors. An example of collaborative success can be demonstrated through two inductees to the Regional Awards Hall of Fame in 2014 having received supporting funding from PIRSA for significant regional projects. Almondco Australia received \$1.9 million through the Riverland Sustainable Futures Fund to assist in the installation and commissioning of new pasteurisation equipment, and Golden North at Laura received \$200,000 through the 2013-14 Regional Development Fund towards the expansion and upgrade of its Laura ice cream production facilities—and, if I may say so, it is the best ice cream in South Australia.

Ms DIGANCE: I agree with you, absolutely.

Mr GRIFFITHS: We are very short of time, but I have a question about the northern Adelaide irrigation scheme. Has the minister been briefed on that and on the opportunity it presents in the northern areas as well as the Mallala and Two Wells area? What level of support exists to help fund that infrastructure?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I have not had a full briefing at this stage. I am aware of it and I am getting a full briefing, and I am looking forward to the implications of that because it offers great opportunities.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Just a point of clarification. You referred to the Jobs Accelerator Fund and the Regional Loans Scheme and I know you talked about the dollar values attached to it, the \$200,000 versus the \$2 million maximum, but how does it actually work from an interest cost point of view for the businesses that apply for that support? That was page 108 in Budget Paper 3.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: We will take that question on notice. We do not want to give you the wrong information, but we are happy to take that on notice and get back to the member, bearing in mind that interest rates are up and down.

Mr GRIFFITHS: They are reasonably static at the moment, actually.

The CHAIR: With that, according to the agreed timetable, I declare the proposed payments for the Department of Primary Industries and Regions and the administered items for that department completed. Thank you, minister, and thank you to your advisers.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE, \$560,412,000
ADMINISTERED ITEMS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE, \$7,928,000

Membership:

Mr Speirs substituted for Mr Pederick.

Mr Goldsworthy substituted for Mr Bell.

Minister:

Hon. G.G. Brock, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Local Government.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr S. Moseley, General Manager, Information and Strategy Directorate, Development Division, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Ms A. Hart, Acting Manager, Office of Local Government, Information and Strategy Directorate, Development Division, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Mr B. Cagialis, Chief Finance Officer, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

The CHAIR: Welcome to the Minister for Local Government. I declare the proposed payments open for examination and I refer members to portfolio statement, Volume 3. I call on the minister now to make a statement if he wishes and to introduce his new advisers.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you, Mr Chair. I would just like to introduce the people alongside of me: Mr Stuart Moseley, General Manager of the Planning Division, DPTI; on my left hand side is Alex Hart, Acting Manager, Planning Division, Office of Local Government; and on the far side is Bill Cagialis, Chief Finance Officer for DPTI.

The Office of Local Government is in the formation of the strategic directorate of the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and is a small and responsive unit that provides advice to the Minister for Local Government on the constitution and operations of the local government system, including the legislative framework of governing councils; the relationship between the state government and councils and other associated representative groups; whole of government policy and legislative frameworks as they affect local government; and the statutory authorities that are responsible to the minister for local government.

These statutory authorities are the Local Government Grants Commission and the Outback Communities Authority. The government is committed to ensuring that the framework for the operations of the local government sector is as effective as it can be. I recently introduced the Local Government (Accountability and Governance) Amendment Bill 2015 into parliament to address a range of proposals for improving the Local Government Act of 1999, including some that have accumulated over the past couple of years and others that have arisen during my term to date as the minister.

The bill contains proposals to amend local government legislation to improve local government accountability and governance, implement recommendations made by the South Australian Ombudsman and make miscellaneous amendments to achieve a more consistent and contemporary legislative framework for the local government sector. The bill also makes a number of technical amendments to and clarifications of existing provisions, together with important changes that will seek to clarify the conflict of interest provisions of the 1999 act.

In December 2014, a discussion paper was jointly released by the Office of Local Government and the Local Government Association for the purpose of promoting discussion and ideas on the reform of the conflict of interest provisions. Consultation on the paper attracted

significant support for amendment to the provisions, notably by providing clarity in relation to routine matters and the difference between actual and perceived conflicts of interest.

The bill has been extensively consulted upon, but now is the time to progress these necessary reforms to the local government legislative framework. South Australia has a long tradition of constructive working relationships between the state and local government for the benefit of a shared constituency. In the past year, the government has reinvigorated the Premier's State/Local Government Forum, in keeping with my agreement as the member for Frome with the Premier, and has finalised a revised State/Local Government Relations Agreement.

The Premier's State/Local Government Forum provides the opportunity to bring together leaders of state and local government through the Local Government Association, to deal with issues of mutual concern. The forum is held four times a year: an annual formal meeting and three times a year as a core group of executive members to oversee and progress matters. Topics of discussion have included local government reform, local government finances, road funding for South Australia, economic development and regional development.

A revised State/Local Government Relations Agreement was signed by the Premier and the president of the LGA at a forum executive meeting on 28 January 2015, witnessed by myself as Minister for Local Government. The agreement recognises the need for state and local government to work collaboratively to achieve better outcomes for all South Australian communities through the improved efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of state services and infrastructure.

A schedule of priorities for 2015-16 has also been developed, which highlights agreed annual priorities that are to be advanced in a spirit of cooperation and in the best interests of the South Australian community. These priorities include local government reform, such as models for regional delivery and governance, investigating a greater role for the local government in delivering key local infrastructure in collaboration between the two spheres of government in implementing the state government's economic plan. I look forward to building on a constructive relationship with local government by progressing matters of mutual interest and enhancing the intergovernmental cooperation.

Mr GRIFFITHS: To the minister, given that we both have some background there and, I believe, a level of mutual respect for what local government does, can I support the minister's words. I think we should all be proud of the fact that Adelaide City Council has celebrated its 175th anniversary in South Australia as the first council, probably, in the nation. For it to occur four years after the settlement of the state is indeed an achievement. The numbers have gone up and down. In the Depression era, certainly, a lot of councils went by the wayside then through amalgamation, up to 137, then 118, now down to 68, so the numbers have changed a fair bit.

Legislative review is an important part of that, so I appreciate the fact that the minister put on the record some of the history behind the bill that he has introduced in the parliament, which is unlikely to be debated this week as I understand it; I do not think it is on the schedule but it will be some time in the future. I will point you to a reference, Mr Chair: there is only one page and six lines about local government in the budget, and that is on pages 79 and 80 of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, so all of my questions relate to that area—plus the fertile mind which can find a link somehow.

I am intrigued, though: as part of the preliminary briefings that you were good enough to provide me with about the bill that has been introduced into the parliament, and I am grateful for that, there was a clause in there about the transfer of housing stock to NGOs from Housing SA and then some issues related to the rebate that local government has to provide of 75 per cent of the rates on the basis that those groups apply for it.

Therefore, minister, given that in your opening statement you referred to the bill at some length, can you provide for the record details as to why the draft bill that you showed me included a clause that would deal with that, but that was removed when the bill was finally put before the parliament?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you, Mr Chair. Just for the two new members, both my ears are blocked so if you can bear with me when you ask questions, alright? You were not here before; my ears are completely blocked today. It is just that the two members here are staring at me as if there is something wrong.

The CHAIR: Maybe their ears are blocked as well!

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for Goyder for his question. Under section 161 of the Local Government Act 1999, community service organisations that provide community housing are eligible for a 75 per cent reduction in council rates. However, former SA Housing Trust (SAHT) properties did not receive the council rate rebate with full council rates payable by the relevant state agency.

In conjunction with the commonwealth, the state government has approved the transfer of approximately 5,000 SAHT properties to the community housing sector. I am advised that 1,100 of those properties are currently in the process of being transferred. If all of the transferred properties were immediately eligible for the 75 per cent rate rebate, this could be a significant revenue shock to the affected councils. Accordingly, a previous minister for social housing agreed to remove the 75 per cent rate rebate eligibility through contractual arrangements with the community housing providers for the first 1,100 homes to be transferred.

During the process of developing the Local Government (Accountability and Governance) Amendment Bill 2015, there was a proposal to amend section 161 of the act to address any impact on council rates through the future transfer of properties. However, the Minister for Housing and Urban Development, the honourable John Rau MP, has advised me that he intends to continue to consider the question of the application of council rate rebates on a case-by-case basis through contractual arrangements with community housing providers.

He has also advised me that he is committed to working with the affected councils and the Local Government Association to discuss the terms of any future transfers from SAHT properties to the non-government sector. Any further questions on this matter should be directed to the minister responsible for the South Australian Housing Trust Act 1995, the Hon. John Rau MP,

Mr GRIFFITHS: I seek clarification and thank the minister for the details. Indeed, the reason I posed the question to you, minister, is the fact that it was part of a bill that you introduced in the house and that you have spoken about today. Is it, therefore, a fact that that aspect of it is not your portfolio responsibility and it is the Hon. John Rau's, or was a decision opportunity taken away from you and used by another minister, then?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The consultation with the member for Goyder on the draft bill preceded consideration of the issue by cabinet and the provision of assurances by the Minister for Housing and Urban Development after that—which was minister John Rau. I will read part of the letter to me as the Minister for Local Government from the Hon. John Rau MP. It states:

My position is to enable the rates rebate to form part of the contractual negotiations on a case by case basis that considers both benefit and costs for each local council and the community.

As the Minister for Housing and Urban Development, I am committed to continue working with the Local Government Association and Councils regarding the terms of transfer for the next 3,900 homes to ensure the impacts are managed and opportunities for the mutual benefit of vulnerable people, local communities and local government are created.

The CHAIR: The member for Elder, you have been very patient.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Have I had three questions?

The CHAIR: You have had more than three questions.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I thought it was two, actually.

The CHAIR: Let me clarify: there is some leniency. There are no supplementary questions in an estimates committee hearing. I could assess it to be about eight or nine questions but I called it three.

Ms DIGANCE: I refer the committee to Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, portfolio statement, pages 79 to 80. What initiatives are being undertaken to strengthen the relationship between state and local government?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The government is committed to maintaining strong and productive working relationships with the local government sector in South Australia. There is no question that

there are substantial benefits to be had for the state as a whole and the communities within the state from a constructive relationship between the two sectors of government. The relationship between the state and local government is based on mutual respect and a commitment to cooperative and productive work on issues of mutual importance.

In the past year the government has finalised a revised state/local government relations agreement which we will call 'the agreement' and reinvigorated the Premier's State/Local Government Forum, which we will call 'the forum'. The agreement and the forum are two of the formal mechanisms which will be underpinning the relationship between the state and local governments in South Australia.

A revised agreement was signed by the Premier and the President of the Local Government Association at the Premier's State/Local Government Forum executive meeting on 28 January 2015—as I said earlier, witnessed by me as the Minister for Local Government. The agreement recognises the need for state and local government to work collaboratively to achieve better outcomes for all South Australian communities through the improved efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of state services and infrastructure.

A schedule of priorities for 2015-16 has also been developed which highlights agreed annual priorities that are to be advanced in the spirit of cooperation and in the best interests of the South Australian community. These priorities include local government reform, regional deliverance and governance, utilisation of local government equity and the state government's 10 economic priorities.

The forum provides advice on matters of priority to both the state and local government that requires the cooperation of both sectors of government to reach effective resolution. The Premier chairs the forum and members include leaders and administrators of local government and state sectors. As Minister for Local Government, I am a member of that forum. As Minister for Local Government I am keen to ensure that the forum is a valuable mechanism which meets the needs of both sectors.

The forum met on 26 September 2014 and forum executive meetings were held on 28 January 2015 and also 29 April 2015. The next forum executive meeting is scheduled for 16 September this year. A communique which provides a summary of outcomes is released after each forum meeting and is available on the Office of Local Government's website. I am looking forward to building on the constructive relationship with local government by progressing matters of mutual interest and enhancing intergovernmental cooperation.

The Hon. P. CAICA: I refer to the second page of this component of Budget Paper 4, Volume 3, portfolio statement, page 80. What progress has been made in revising the codes of conduct for elected members and council employees?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the honourable member for his question. The codes of conduct for council members and council employees came into operation as part of the amendments made to the Local Government Act by the introduction of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption in South Australia. The code of conduct for council members came into operation on 1 September 2013, while the council employees code of conduct came into effect on 13 February 2014.

As the mandatory codes were a new concept in South Australia, it was always intended that a review of the operation of the codes would be undertaken after they had been in place for a reasonable period of time. I am aware that some issues have been raised by elected members and staff about some aspects of the codes implementation in practice.

In June 2014 I initiated consultation with key stakeholders with regard to reviewing the operation of the codes of conduct. I sought comments from the Local Government Association, which has coordinated comments from councils, the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, the Ombudsman and the relevant employee organisations. In addition to meeting with the LGA, I have discussed the operation of the codes with the ICAC Commissioner, the Ombudsman and employee representatives, the ASU and the AWU.

Feedback on the operation of the codes of conduct has been carefully reviewed, and I anticipate that any necessary codes amendments will be finalised in the second half of this year. The

new codes will be prepared in the form of draft regulations, and there will be an opportunity for councils and other interested parties to comment on the proposed wording of the regulations. I think it is helpful to keep in mind that the purpose of these codes is not to impose undue burdens on those seeking to participate in the local government sector but rather to provide a uniform framework for both council members and employees to adhere to in relation to good public administration.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I refer to page 79 and have two questions as part of your response. You talked about constructive relationship and spirit of cooperation. It was rather a surprise to find in the budget papers the impost of a \$1 million extractive royalties cost for local government. Can the minister confirm, as part of the budget process, when he was first told about this new fee?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Questions regarding this matter should be referred to the Treasurer and Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Hon. Tom Koutsantonis MP. From 1 July 2015 the local government is liable to pay extractive royalties where the land being mined is not covered by a permit, a claim lease, licence, tenement or a private mine under the Mining Act 1971.

The LGA has expressed concerns regarding the impact of this measure, particularly on small regional councils. I understand that the LGA has surveyed councils on possible cost imposts and is intending to raise this matter with the Treasurer. The LGA has noted that section 294 of the Local Government Act enables councils to obtain earth, minerals, or timber from land to carry out a function or responsibility of the council, including road work.

However, I understand that the former department of manufacturing, innovation, trade, resources and energy received legal advice that states that own use is not an exception to the obligation to pay royalties imposed by subsection 7(1) of the Mining Act 1971. The LGA and councils may seek further advice on the application of section 294 of the Local Government Act as part of their ongoing discussion on this issue with the Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy.

Mr GRIFFITHS: If I may, Chair, just seek clarification. Minister, I did ask when did you first become aware of it?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I would have been advised, and I stand to be corrected, through the normal budget process through cabinet, but I cannot recall the exact time.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Minister, I thank you for that. I am aware that the Local Government Association has spoken to the Minister for Mineral Resources. I have had some feedback on that. I suppose the dilemma for me, though, and the frustration that I have—and I know that no decision timing is perfect—is that, in this case, all 68 councils had actually determined their rates for the 2015–16 year and then there was this additional cost put upon regional LGAs. I presume that regional LGAs and the LGA have spoken to the minister. Have they asked you to advocate on their behalf with the Minister for Mineral Resources about it also?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I have had regular meetings with the President of the Local Government Association, and they are asking for more information through the relevant minister. The LGA are getting more information back to myself about the true impact on councils that will be out there. If I can, I will just refer to *Hansard* on 30 June 2015. The member for Goyder has indicated that he was told that the estimate provided to him from staff within the Yorke Peninsula council was \$150,000. My information is that the impact on the Yorke Peninsula council will be \$11,000.

Mr GRIFFITHS: For the interest of disclosure, I have a very good head for numbers, and the \$150,000 quote I got came from the mayor of that council. I noted when I saw the LGA report of the summary of the councils that they contacted that Yorke Peninsula was the smaller compared to the figure that I was told also. I do know that there is a variety of figures across the area, too.

If I may ask a question, though, and this is page 79, about the Local Government Association in its ordinary general meeting having voted on a position that the minister be required to ensure that impact statements upon local government are prepared as part of the cabinet process. Do you have a position on that, has that been communicated to you, and have you followed that through the process to see if it is achievable?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: That discussion was brought up at one of the Premier's local government forums. The member for Goyder is probably aware of all this. The intent from that was

to ensure that government agencies consult with the relevant local government agencies from there as required.

Mr GRIFFITHS: So, has anything stemmed from that?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: My memory of the discussion of that is that the emphasis was on the councils to actually liaise closely. I think that is still going at the moment. The agreement itself articulates the aspirations of the two spheres of government with the aim of delivering greater benefits for the South Australian community through more strategic collaboration. It is in two parts: the agreement itself, which sets out the principles of engagement between the local and state governments, and a schedule of priorities. That will continue to happen, but certainly it was discussed at that forum.

Mr GRIFFITHS: In relation to the emergency services levy, which is also charged upon local government, have you been provided with a dollar figure about the impost from the changes for the remission removal from the 2014-15 financial year and the 2015-16 financial year?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Can I ask member: are you talking about the 2015-16 budget?

Mr GRIFFITHS: That was my question: the 2014-15 result and the 2015-16 estimate.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: As the member would know, this matter is very important to regional areas, but this is under a different portfolio and, to my recollection, I have not had anything come in. The LGA have not raised that with me for the 2015-16 budget year. The LGA have not given me any details at all, from memory.

Mr PICTON: I refer to the same budget papers, and ask the minister: following the local government elections in 2014, what action is being taken to improve the operation of local government elections?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you, Mr Chair, and I thank the member for his question. As members of the committee are aware, the local government elections were held in November 2014. At those elections, the average statewide voter turnout was 31.99 per cent, which is essentially on par with previous elections, and indeed with voter turnout in most systems which involve a voluntary voting process.

I am advised that, before the introduction of postal voting in local government elections in 1997, the rate of voter participation in contested elections rarely exceeded 20 per cent. Since 2000, when postal voting was used statewide for the first time, participation rates have been consistently above 30 per cent. However, after the peak year of 2000, when 40.1 per cent of voters participated, the percentage has dropped to: in 2003, 32.67; in 2006, 31.62; in 2010, 32.88; and at the most recent local government elections in 2014, 31.99.

As the member for Goyder will certainly appreciate, rural councils have consistently achieved higher rates of voter participation than metropolitan and provincial city councils. In the 2014 local government elections, the average metropolitan turnout was 27.74 per cent, compared with 43.28 for non-metropolitan councils—this being broadly consistent with previous years.

At the 2014 local government elections, 1,334 people nominated to stand as candidates, which was the highest number of candidates since the council amalgamations in the late 1990s. Of these candidates, 28.56 per cent were women, which is the highest proportion of women candidates to stand in local government elections. This flowed through to elected members, with a record 206 (29.35 per cent) won by women. But of course there is still more to do to get the balance right. It is a matter of gender equity for sure, but I think it would also bring real benefits to our communities to have many more women effectively involved in local government.

At the moment the Office of Local Government, the Electoral Commission and the Local Government Association are reviewing and evaluating the voter turnout rate and the operation of elections. The joint officer level review is focusing on specific matters that will improve the operation of the elections as well as voter turnout, rather than a broad examination of all systematic and policy-based matters, which has previously been undertaken. These matters include: the possibility of electronic voting in local government elections; automatic property franchise entitlement; caretaker

provisions; concurrent timing of state and local government elections; candidates' access to electronic copies of the voter roll; and the disclosure of a candidate's residential addresses.

A discussion paper will soon be circulated to councils and stakeholders for comment. The Local Government Association and the Electoral Commission will also be invited to provide a formal submission on the matters raised in the discussion paper. I also invite the member for Goyder, and indeed all members of parliament, to take the opportunity to provide feedback on these matters.

I anticipate that the review of the 2014 local government elections will be completed in 2015-16 and I look forward to considering any proposals that can strengthen the elections process and improve outcomes for our communities. Any necessary legislative amendments will be consulted upon and considered in time for the next local government elections in 2018.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I appreciate the good, detailed answer. Indeed, the numbers on voter turnouts in different periods interest me. You have talked about the review and the automatic property ownership franchise entitlement, and I am interested in that. Because you have invited me to have input in that, I have to ask the question: why, when I introduced a private member's bill earlier this year, did the government choose not to support it?

It would have removed the requirement for the re-enrolment to occur because enrolments at the end of the four-year cycle have to go, and from 1 January following an election year you have to start again, particularly when supplementary elections are held. I know Yankalilla council, I believe it was, held a supplementary election. Very little time was given because of the loss of that carry-forward and the turnout was very disappointing. To me, it is a monty, minister. I am intrigued as to why the private member's bill was not supported and why it is now one of the discussions points in the paper. Why wasn't there serious consideration earlier?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: A change of that nature requires consultation in the normal way. The member for Goyder is very aware that there was a short period of time. It is an option that may emerge from the current review. At that particular period of time it did not warrant the support of the LGA itself.

Mr GRIFFITHS: No, that is incorrect, minister. The Local Government Association did support me.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: If I can, we are going to have a complete review of this. As I said before and as I indicated to the member for Goyder, I will give him credit if we bring it back. The point is that I want to be able to do true consultation out there and do the whole lot in one hit.

Mr GRIFFITHS: If I may continue with the same budget reference, this question is about council rates. I asked a question in last year's budget estimates on this and the understanding of the CPI level that exists in South Australia. I understand that there is a local government Consumer Price Index calculation that occurs also.

The percentage increases vary considerably, from Adelaide City Council—which I believe is 0 per cent—out to figures, in some cases I believe, of 8 per cent; however, it is more in the mainstream of the 3.5 to 4 per cent increases in council rate income. The question I asked last year was, from the minister's point of view, about initiatives that you have instigated to attempt to keep rate increases to an absolute minimum. Are you able to provide the committee with an update on what your responsibility as a minister has allowed, and give details on initiatives that you have undertaken in that time?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Local government, as a whole, recorded an operating surplus of \$19 million in 2013-14, after adjusting for timing changes which occurred in the receipt of the FAGs grants. The sector's annual financial performance has improved steadily over the last decade, and the operating surplus of \$19 million in 2013-14 compares with an operating deficit of \$75 million in 2000-01.

As we are all aware, before setting their rates each year councils are required to adopt an annual business plan and a budget and rating strategy between 1 June and 31 August. Since 2007 each council has been required, as the member knows, to go through a process of producing a draft annual business plan and consulting the community on the proposed spending and revenue

requirements of that draft plan. Each council must take into account the views expressed by its residents and ratepayers before finalising its annual business plan and spending rates.

I have always encouraged councils and community groups to comment on council annual business plan spending and revenue requirements and rating options. This assists each council to strike an appropriate balance between providing the services and infrastructure that the community demands and the revenue needed to pay for it. The act also provides ratepayers with a number of mechanisms to object to an increase in rates or to seek relief through the application of submissions for rebates or caps.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Thank you for the answer, minister, but I suppose many of those issues relate to arrangements put in place some time ago. I am particularly interested in the question, now that you have been minister since March last year, of what initiatives, under your stewardship, have been created to keep rate increases to an absolute minimum.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I have indicated before that the councils themselves have to go through public consultation and things like that. I have been out there, and I have been encouraging councils to resource share the opportunities; by doing that they will be able to keep their expenditure or rates down a fair bit. Councils out there need to provide the services that their communities expect.

It was interesting that in 2003 some councils went up 15 per cent; in years after that other councils were 6 per cent, 6 per cent, and 7 per cent. The issue is that councils need to raise that amount of funds if they are going to increase their services and opportunities in each of the regions. If they are not providing the services they have the mechanism, as the member for Goyder knows, to ask for a review of the capital value. Certainly, it is an issue that the councils themselves need to have the funds to be able to grow and get the extra opportunities. Councils are ultimately responsible to their community for the decisions they make, the services they provide and the rates they set, and they have elected members to be able to go back to discuss those issues.

Ms DIGANCE: Staying in the same area that the questioning has been occurring in, can the minister tell the committee what steps are being taken to engage with local government at the council and regional level?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member for her question. I am continuing to make it a key part of my business to meet with all our councils while I am the Minister for Local Government. I believe as much face-to-face contact as possible is the best way to communicate and to get a better understanding of the challenges councils are facing, and to talk with those community leaders about opportunities that are presenting themselves. It has always been a contention of mine that council members and staff are the closest to the people and are in a unique position to convey to me the views and needs of the people they serve.

There are 68 councils in South Australia, with about two-thirds being in non-metropolitan locations. I also work very closely with the Outback Communities Authority to support their important work assisting those communities in the non-council areas. I have had personal contact with about 62 of the 68 SA councils so far and invitations to arrange specific visits have been issued to more councils just recently, those being Burnside, Light Regional, Playford, Mitcham and Unley. Another two councils, Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs, are included in the schedule for an upcoming visit I intend to make to the Far North of the state.

Of course, over the period of me being a minister, I have met members and staff from all councils, particularly at LGA events, including the AGM, the OGM, regional LGA meetings, SAROC, Metropolitan Local Government Group meetings, local government managers' conferences and a range of LGA seminars. I also attend meetings of the Upper Spencer Gulf MPs and mayors' group, and bodies like the Yorke Peninsula Lions and the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group.

I have been very pleased with the positive response the government has received through holding country cabinets, with a key part of these events being the opportunity for the relevant councils to make presentations directly to cabinet members about the opportunities and the challenges they each face. Likewise, from the metropolitan councils' perspective, the community cabinet program has allowed the same kind of opportunities for metropolitan councils to present directly to cabinet ministers and for the ministers to visit local businesses, schools and community organisations during that cabinet visit.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I have a question about the Local Excellence Expert Panel, the group chaired by Mr Greg Crafter, which prepared a rather extensive report about the future of local government. I am looking for feedback from you on any of the recommendations or initiatives contained in that report that you are investigating further.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I thank the member again for his question. These issues are always being discussed at the Premier's local government forums, including how we can have boundary facilitation and regional governance, as well as matters of priority for both state and local government that require the cooperation of both sectors of government to reach effective resolution, including from the Crafter review. We are continuing to look at that and certainly it is being discussed at the Premier's local government forum on a regular basis.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I might just seek clarification. Are recommendations from that going to form any of the work that you undertake as part of your significant review of the Local Government Act 1999, which you flagged with me is to occur next year?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you, Mr Chair and to the member. Yes, it may form part of it. It depends on the consultation of the review, the Greg Crafter report. As I think the member for Goyder would agree, the consultation needs to be part of the LGA, and I will also continue to look at that opportunity. I am sure that as we move along we will continue to keep the member for Goyder, as the shadow minister for local government, involved as much as we can.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I would appreciate that, minister. I have a question about the Premier's State/Local Government Forum then, because I know the election commitment in 2014 was for three meetings to be held per year, and now you have changed to a different structure of one actual meeting and then the executive meetings. Why the change?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you to the member for Goyder. The first 12 months have been a learning phase, and from the discussion through the LGA and through these meetings it was decided that that is the way it would be. However, this year we will have three executives and one forum. We find this a more effective way to get the real results and drive outcomes. Certainly, from where we are currently at the moment, there will be three executives and one forum in the 2015-16 year.

Mr GRIFFITHS: You offered for me to be part of processes before it comes to reviews and that sort of thing, and I think stemming from that I wrote a letter to you asking if it was possible for me to be an attendee at the forums or the executive meetings, but I do not believe I have had any form of reply to that.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: That is a matter for the Premier and I will take that on board.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I wrote to you, minister.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I cannot recall receiving a letter from you.

Mr GRIFFITHS: You will pursue that for me; I am grateful for that. Can I just seek clarification on why it took, as I understand it, 10 months for the State/Local Government Relations Agreement to be signed and released? You talked about the 28 January date, I believe it was. Why was it 10½ months after the March 2014 election before the agreement was reached and signed?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: To my recollection and my information, there was a time frame in agreeing with the processes and things like that. I cannot give you anything other than that there, but the agreement has been signed and the operation of the Premier's State/Local Government Forum is going very well, and we need to also continue to look to the future.

The CHAIR: Member for Goyder, you have 5 minutes to read your omnibus, if there is one.

Mr GRIFFITHS: It will not take me that long; I read quickly.

The CHAIR: Fair enough. I am very strict with the time.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I understand. This is the last session; I do understand that. May I ask probably my last question about—and I believe I asked you the same one in estimates of last year—

the emergency management council, of which you are a member. Can you confirm that the council has met in the last 12 months and that you were an attendee?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: There are two committees. Last year there was a bit of confusion. There is the emergency management committee and the emergency management council. I am on the EMC.

Mr GRIFFITHS: They are both EMC, sir.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Well I am on the council and, yes, in actual fact I have another meeting this Friday.

The Hon. P. CAICA: Can I ask a supplementary; is that a cabinet committee?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Yes it is; it is a cabinet committee but I have a meeting on Friday and they are regularly done.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I will read the omnibus questions, Mr Chair, and then we will see how we go and how much time is left.

1. Will the minister provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure on consultants and contractors above \$10,000 in 2014-15 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 2014-15, please provide the number of public servants broken down into heads and FTEs 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 the financial year 2014-15, for all departments and agencies reporting to the minister, what underspending on projects and programs (1) was and (2) was not approved by cabinet for carryover expenditure in 2015-16?

4. Between 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015, will the minister list the job title and total employment cost of each position with a total estimated cost of \$100,000 or more—(1) which has been abolished and (2) which has been created?

5. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, please provide a breakdown of attraction, retention and performance allowances as well as non-salary benefits paid to public servants and contractors in the years 2013-14 and 2014-15.

6. For each year of the forward estimates, provide the name and budget of all grant programs administered by all departments and agencies reporting to the minister and, for 2014-15, 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 grant, and whether the grant was subject to a grant agreement as required by Treasurer's Instruction 15.

7. For each year of the forward estimates, provide the name and budget for each individual program administered by or on behalf of departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

8. For each year of the forward estimates, provide the name and budget for each individual investing expenditure project administered by or on behalf of all departments and agencies reporting to the minister.

9. For each department or agency reporting to the minister, what is the budget for targeted voluntary separation packages for the financial years included in the forward estimates by year and how are these packages to be funded?

10. What is the title and total employment cost of each individual staff member in the minister's office as at 30 June 2015, including all departmental employees seconded to ministerial offices and ministerial liaison officers?

The CHAIR: Good work. Excellent work, member for Goyder. You have a minute or so if you would like to ask another question.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes, certainly. This one is about the boundary adjustment facilitation panel which was one of those bodies that was removed. Can you outline how that process is undertaken now?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: The panel was abolished on 1 July 2015 and its functions have been transferred to me as Minister for Local Government. I will follow the requirements under the Local Government Act to consider all proposals in light of the principles that determine council areas and, importantly, to consult on proposals with affected councils and communities.

It is essential that I have all relevant information available to me when I am making a decision about a council boundary. I also intend to review the relevant section of the Local Government Act with a view of considering options for improving boundary adjustment processes to enable the system to deliver optimal benefits to communities in both the metropolitan and regional areas. Discussion on the review, which will be undertaken in close conjunction with the local government sector, has already commenced through the Premier's local government forum.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Minister, I know the LGA paper I viewed a couple of days ago talked about a commission or a commissioner advisory panel opportunity there. Have you got any thoughts on those options?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Member for Goyder, that is the LGA paper you are talking about?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: My information is that they are still waiting for comments to come back from all the councils.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I still have some questions. Can you advise whether your office has been involved in assessing applications for the \$15 million Local Government Stimulus Program? Was that something that your staff did?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I think that is through the minister, the Hon. John Rau, but we will take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Thank you for clarifying that, minister. With that, I declare the examination of the proposed payments for the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and administered items for the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure both in part completed.

At 18:15 the committee adjourned to Tuesday 28 July 2015 at 10:00.